



Creative Spaces: An Enchanted Treasure Trove of Art & Design in Miami -- A Private Museum!

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This high-rise condo apartment in Miami Beach was custom built for a banker and art collector who has a taste for the bold and unique (one sculpture was so large it had to be lifted into the building by crane before its walls were finished). “I am fearless when it comes to mixing things up,” he declares. “If it is beautiful and well crafted, I will try to make it work.”





By: *Rana Florida*, [Creative Class Group](#); [Special Contributor to HGTV.ca](#)
Photography by [Moris Moreno](#)

Who: A banker who left Wall street for the relaxed yet vibrant scene in South Beach, Florida. He has a passion for collecting contemporary art and dabbles in interior design.

What: A custom built and designed two-bedroom penthouse in an exclusive condominium building. It was built in 2009 and is about 3,000 square feet. The home owner designed it to have large entertainment spaces and an extensive open kitchen to accommodate his love of cooking. It was important for the homeowner to reference the ocean in his design, hence in every room there is a connection to the water.

Where: The building is on a quiet cul-de-sac in Miami Beach, overlooking Biscayne Bay.



Living room: bronze chandelier by Herve Van Der Straeten; wall art by Louise Nevelson.

Rana Florida: *Why did you pick this location?*

Anonymous Homeowner: I used to have a house with beautiful downtown Miami views on a nearby island, but wanted the ease of condominium living. When a developer got approval to develop a piece of land with similar views, I immediately contacted him and bought the square footage I wanted. He built the space to my plan.



Living room detail: Alex Sweet, Self portrait, burnt wood; credenza by Belgian ceramicist, Alfred Hendrickx.

RF: *Where is your favorite spot to relax and take in the view?*

AH: Strangely enough, I have a blue, black and white “canopy chair” in the living room that has a really high back and isn’t the most comfortable piece of furniture. But I love to sit in that chair and look across the living room and out the windows at the view and the water. The sky, the water and the sunsets all reflect off the white glass floors...it is really spectacular.



"Palomino" Horse by Deborah Butterfield

RF: *Your art collection is amazing. Can you tell us a bit about it?*

AH: I like to collect contemporary art from well-established artists such as Louise Nevelson and Deborah Butterfield as well as younger artists who may just be starting out. I am involved with one of the contemporary art museums in Miami and am constantly being exposed to wonderful new artists. I have always been intrigued by artists who have a unique technique or craft. For example, in the living room, there is a self-portrait above the credenza that looks like an oil painting. But it is actually by a young Miami artist, Alex Sweet, who burns wood with an old-fashioned wood-burning tool – it takes him months to do a single piece!



RF: *Two particular pieces stand out: the chair and the horse. I understand the space was designed around the horse. Tell us more!*

AH: The chair is by an artist called Daniel Arsham. His work often deals with movement and architecture. This piece involves a chair that is literally being blown through a wall... to me it looks like the day after a hurricane. The installation required the artist to actually come to my condo and plaster it into the wall. And it is completely functional – if you need to put on a shoe, you can sit down right on it! I think it works well with “Bang Pots,” the ceramic pieces by Steve Tobin. He makes different textured ceramic bowls, sticks a piece of dynamite in them and blows them up. I love the fact that he has no control over the final shape.

AH: The horse is a piece by Deborah Butterfield from 1981 called “Palomino” that was made from the metal and wood from her barn. Because it would have been too large to get into the space after the building’s railings and walls were completed, it was craned into the apartment almost a year and a half before I moved in and sat crated during the construction. I have some amazing pictures of the horse floating 14 stories in the air above Biscayne Bay!



Dining room detail: chandelier by Jeff Zimmerman; "Palomino" Horse by Deborah Butterfield.

RF: How do you select your furniture? Where are most of the pieces sourced? Are you interested in certain designers?

AH: My furniture is primarily non-mass produced mid-century European. Usually it is made by an artist who later became a furniture craftsman. To me, it really is just another type of art. For example, the credenza in the living room was made by a Belgian ceramicist, Alfred Hendrickx, who later became a furniture maker. And the glass coffee table was made by a French glass blower, Jean Daniel Salvat, who later began making glass furniture.



Hallway: functional chair installation by Daniel Arsham; “Bang Pots” ceramics by Steve Tobin

AH: I also have a real weakness for unique light fixtures. The bronze chandelier in the living room was made by Herve Van Der Straeten in Paris – it looks like a giant piece of hanging jewelry. The fixture in the dining room was made for the space by a glass artist in Brooklyn named Jeff Zimmerman. What is wonderful about it, in addition to its unique shape, is that it looks great even during the day when it is not lit up. Jeff produces a wonderful opaline glass that is similar to the technique used in old Tiffany glass lamps.



Guest bedroom

RF: Creativity and design are the focal points of your home. Where does your design inspiration come from?

AH: The truth is, I just really love beautiful and unique things. I think it is such a blessing to be able to be surrounded by art or furniture that has been made by truly creative and talented people. I am fearless when it comes to mixing things up – if it is beautiful and well crafted, I will try to make it work. I think it is important for people to walk into a space you have designed and know that it couldn't be anybody else's place but yours.



Guest bedroom detail



Dressing table in guest bedroom



Master bedroom



Master bedroom



Outdoor terrace

