



## Creative Spaces: Tranquil Tones and Mid-Mod Design Make Paradise for Canadian Couple in Miami Beach

Posted by Guest Blogger Tuesday, June 14, 2011 11:40 AM

**A corporate director and an internationally renowned entrepreneur, consultant and author, take refuge from Toronto's cold winters in their Miami Beach condo. Evoking colors and textures of the beach and filled with '50s and '60s vintage designs, this modern beach house is a private paradise.**



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

*Photography by: John Parra*

**Who: Ana P. Lopes** is a social entrepreneur and corporate director who is active in the arts and health sectors. She is the immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and has been appointed as Vice-Chair of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Foundation, Canada's preeminent mental health and addiction hospital. [Don Tapscott](#) is an entrepreneur and internationally sought consultant on business strategy and society in the digital age. He is also the international best selling author of 14 books. His latest is *Macrowikinomics: Rebooting Business and the World* (Penguin, 2010) .

**What:** Condo apartment in a prominent architect-designed building in Miami Beach, FL.



*Ana and Don in the great room*

***Rana Florida: You've been Torontonians for decades and now you've chosen South Beach for your warm weather retreat. Why did you select this location?***

**Ana & Don:** Ana was born in Portugal but has lived in Toronto for the past 40 years. Don has been in Toronto for the past 30 years. Though we love Toronto and our wonderful lake house three hours north of the city, the cold weather was definitely getting to us. Also, Ana grew up by the sea in Lisbon and had always wanted a home at the shore. Portugal was just too far away (though we considered it...).



*South Beach view from terrace*

**A&D:** Florida seemed like a much easier place to get to and of course, Miami has the vibrancy in every aspect that we were looking for -- a wonderful culinary scene with every chef having opened a restaurant; amazing galleries with of course Art Basel Miami Beach as the major attraction in December of each year. Great music, great climate and an incredible international scene. You can't beat Miami and South Beach...it is close to everything to keep you amused while also giving you the opportunity to do nothing...you can be as busy as you want or you can just lie on the beach. It does not feel like the US, let alone Florida. It is the best.



*Entrance console*

**R.F.:** *Your entire home was a renovation. Tell us what you did.*

**A & D:** We bought the condo as “decorator ready.” Though we had looked around at older buildings I was not interested in having to rip out somebody else's 30-year-old “reno.” I loved that the building was new, that a prominent architect and designer had worked on it, and that we could put our personal stamp on it without having to deal with remnants of other people’s “stuff.” It was very exciting to pick the doors, hardware, wall finishes, flooring, AV system, etc. It was pretty much a blank slate – unlike our home in Toronto which is over 110 years old (but we love it) and our lake house, which is another historical property. It was really fun for us to realize a totally different look and feel in our surroundings in Florida.



*The Great Room*

**R.F.:** *The floors blend right into the walls. That is so unique, what material was used and what was the process?*

**A & D:** Though most people have stone or tile floors in Florida, we really wanted to use wood for the floors. The vision that we had was of a “modern beach house.” We wanted to use natural materials that were warm and inviting and the colours of the beach and the sea. The oiled wood floors from Belgium just felt right for this kind of environment. They are beautifully warm, non-glossy because of their oiled finish...they look like driftwood applied to the floor. To add visual continuity our designers at [Billy Blanco Designs](#) came up with the idea of doing the main wall in the Great Room in the same wood as the floors. It was absolute genius and has become the key conversation piece.



*Dining area*

**R.F.:** *Your home feels like vintage art deco meets mid-century modern. Does that sound right?*

**A & D:** It is certainly vintage but more inspired by the '50s and '60s Miami with a twist of modern beach house -- plus some of my favorite Italian designers.

**R.F.:** *Who did you look to for design inspiration?*

**Ana:** I am a compulsive design magazine browser. I also love design books and just perusing shops for inspiration. I keep an ongoing “inspiration” file that I continuously add to as I clip pictures and articles from my most trusted sources.



*Kitchen*

**Ana:** The main inspiration for the design was the beach – the color of the sand and of the sea. I wanted the space to feel seamlessly wed to the outside environment and most importantly I wanted it to feel restful and somewhat organic.



*Guest room*

***R.F.:*** Describe the design team you worked with. How did you work together given your international distance?



**Ana:** I can't say enough about Billy Blanco Design. David and Billy, the two principals, were a joy to work with. We had some initial conversations about the look and feel Don and I were trying to achieve, and they were unbelievably responsive and receptive to our ideas.



*Guest room desk*

**A&D:** We collaborated on everything. We shared websites, photos, magazine clippings, colour samples, etc. online. We met face to face four times during the six-month design process but, thanks to the internet, we were able to be in daily contact on everything.



*Master bedroom*

**Ana:** Occasionally Billy and David had to send physical samples to Toronto, but not often. If I knew that items were available in Toronto, and I needed to actually see or test something prior to them being ordered, I would go to the Toronto supplier. However, everything was ordered from Florida and delivered to Florida.



*Master bedroom viewed from master bathroom*

**Ana:** Miami has an amazing Design District where all the great modern design houses are represented: Poltrona Frau, Poliform, Flexform, Waterworks, Holly Hunt, Richard Schultz, Artemide, etc. Miami Mid-Century is a dream. They are the masters of mid-century Hollywood glamour pieces...great '50s Murano, lacquer pieces and LUCITE!!



*Master bath*

***R.F.:*** *You clearly take a lot of time sourcing your furniture, how do you find some of your more unique and vintage pieces?*

**A & D:** I am a huge fan of [1stDibs.com](http://1stDibs.com) . It links all the top antique dealers – primarily in North America but some from France and the UK. Many of the dealers were in Miami or Palm Beach so I was able to shop online but could easily check out the pieces if I was in Miami by visiting the shops. North Miami has some very interesting dealers, many of whom specialize in mid-century or Deco -- fabulous!



*Vintage office desk*

**R.F.:** *What is your favorite space in the house? What is the most used room in the house?*

**A & D:** I love our bedroom and I love to work at the fantastic vintage desk. And Don is very comfortable in the den. It is very important for us to be able to work from Miami if we are there during the week. Our goal is to spend 7-10 days a month in Miami Beach over the winter – so it is important for us to not just relax but also to get some work done.



*Master dresser*

**Ana:** Having said that, our favorite place is the terrace that overlooks the beach and the ocean. From the fourth floor we are at the perfect height, not too high above the beach. I love being 100 feet from the ocean...whether it is morning coffee, lunch, or cocktails...we seem to always gravitate to the terrace.



*Terrace*

