

# MAMI HEAT

Everyone covets an invitation to the treasure-filled Florida home of real estate magnate and Design Miami founder *Craig Robins*

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20th-CENTURY-MODERN  
MULTIPLES, INCLUDING  
A WHITE PIANO STOOL,  
AND PETER GALLOTTI LAMP,  
AND A PAIR OF STOOLS  
BY CHARLOTTE PERSSON  
AND WITH OBJECTS OF  
MORE RECENT VINTAGE, LIKE  
A LIMITED-EDITION LONDON  
LAMP BY TOMMY NORTON  
AND A STYLISH LAMP BY TOM  
DIXON, IN THE LIVING ROOM  
OF CRAIG ROBINS'S SUNSET  
ISLAND HOME WHICH, MORE  
DESIGNED-TO-BE-SELLER  
AND ARCHITECTURE-BUILDER  
DIXON HAS OVERSEEN THE  
HOUSE'S RENOVATION. FOR  
DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.



"White walls and decent lighting are all I need," *Robins* declares. "The art and design should be allowed to do all the talking."



AMBER LEE, THE FAMILY'S OTHER DOGS IN THE LIVING ROOM, WERE AN OFFERING BY SPUR-LAUREY JONES. DAVID, JOHN, CURRAN, AND JOHN BALDREAN LIVE THE WALLS.

FRANK PHILLIPS' BUSHROOM CHAIR IS A HOLLAND & SHERRY MODEL. IT BEHINDS DAVID IS A HOLLAND & SHERRY CHAIR, AND A TON OF CONCRETE PIECES BY MAX LAKE SURROUND

A LIMITED-EDITION BORGAL AND BRAGA BOURBOULEU' COGNAC TABLE, HAND-MADE TO ORDER, WAS BY BORGAL. LITTLE BLAU' BRONZED CHAIR-BORNS ON THE L-SHAPED SOFA,



**I**f Miami is the Magic City, Craig Robins is its tireless conjurer. As founder and chief executive of the real estate company Diava, Robins has been pulling off seemingly impossible feats since the late 1980s. He transformed the moribund Art Deco neighborhood of South Beach into a glittering destination. More recently he has turned the Design District, a virtual wasteland south of Miami's downtown, into a culturally infused luxury shopping mecca.


This survivor of South Beach also waded his way over the renovation of his home in Miami Beach's exclusive Sunset Islands. Robins had owned the two-story waterfront property for nearly two decades, but in the run-up to his 2011 marriage to Jackie Toffler (a powerful South Florida real estate developer in her own right), he enlisted architect Walter Charbon and interior designer Julia Hillman to update the house and build an addition. (Considered but not overly appointed, the new living, just over 6,000 square feet, place is as much a functioning family home [the couple have six children] as it is an outlet for their boundless artistic passions.)

"I'm not into the idea of living in an uptight showpiece," explains Robins, who is sitting on a custom-made U-shaped sofa in the living room that looks out onto Sunset Lake. "People get so crazy with finishes. White walls and decent lighting are all I need. The art and design should be allowed to do all the talking."

And what a setting for artful conversation: Robins and Toffler have created a tour of the home reveals an international Who's Who of mid-century and contemporary design, including furniture and chairs by Gio Ponti (lots and lots of those!), Maria Pergo, Marc Newson, the Brno brothers, the Campana brothers, and Tom Dixon—even a concrete Ping-Pong table by Ron Arad. Almost all of the pieces, Robins points out, are from Design Miami, the agenda-setting design fair that he launched in 2005. "There are clearly no boundaries between my personal and professional lives." —



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARRIS. COURTESY OF HOKMAA  
RENDERING BY JAMES HARRIS. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOKMAA  
DESIGN. AND LEFT IN THE BACKGROUND, COURTESY OF  
HOKMAA DESIGN. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOKMAA DESIGN.  
RENDERING BY JAMES HARRIS. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOKMAA  
DESIGN. AND LEFT IN THE BACKGROUND, COURTESY OF  
HOKMAA DESIGN. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOKMAA DESIGN.



"I once walked in on *Martba Stewart* doing an impromptu shoot with photographer *Todd Eberle* in the bathroom."

QUEST AT THE WOODS PARTIAL BUBBLE HOTEL HAS BEEN KNOWN TO LATHER IN THE SCULPTURAL WATERS BATH FASHIONED BY JANA HANDEL. FITTING BY BOPPE.



As if to prove his point, Robbins is wearing clothing by Tom Ford and sandals by Berluti—two of the prestige brands he has listed to the Design District. Typically, he says, he would be in his more-edgy, regular uniforms, “Rick Owens or Saint Laurent” (his retail partners), but he had a meeting earlier with a wealthy client so opted for something more subtle.

A longtime art student turned avid collector, the normally restrained Robbins is effusive when talking about the sometimes-hefty art collection in the home. “I don’t care how much it costs or what people say it’s worth,” he says, marveling at a series of first-edition Francisco de Goya prints hanging in a hallway outside his apartment. “You can’t do better or have anything more important than art like this.” Elsewhere, Robbins’s hang next to Carraro, Marlene Dumas shares pride of place in the dining room with Louise Bourgeois, and Theo van Doesburg appears locked in an eternal standoff with Joseph Beuys.

Not that it’s all blue-chip names on display. An oil painting resting on a shelf in the library turns out to be by Robbins’s actor friend Robert Downey Jr. As for the ceramic trove of unrecognizable grotesques? “Oh, that,” Robbins deadpans, “is a new piece from a genius ceramicist called Marlon Robbins,” referring to his 15-year-old son.

Robbins and Soffer were pretty much in agreement when it came to imagining their respective collections. (“If anything, we inspire each other to collect outside our comfort zones,” he says), but a battle erupted over the yard—a tropical idyll created by Nathan Browning, the formidable landscape designer who is also responsible for the Design District’s beguiling greenery.

While the couple agreed to extend the theme of collectibility by having Browning transport and plant a significant collection of rare Caribbean palms, they locked horns over

what to do with the rest of the 100-yard-wide space.

“Craig was adamant about having the pavilion that David Adjaye built for Design Miami in 2011,” Browning explains, “and Jackie was adamant about building a basketball court for the kids and felt that the Adjaye would block the view.”

The result is a harmonious balance that doesn’t feel crowded or precious. “We love it out here,” Robbins says, “and we party much out and entertain outside from November through May. Why have a house in Miami if you don’t live outside?”

Dinner at Casa Robbins is often served on an outdoor table for 12 close to the dining room and kitchen. The guests are typically as rowdy as the resident wild parrots and as divinely disparate as the art on the walls. “He’s like a curator of people,” says Harmony Korine, the director/actor/artist, who recalls sitting next to the show designer Christian Louboutin on a recent night. “He likes to throw people in the mix and see what happens, but it never feels forced.”

The Miami-based supermodel Karolina Kurkova concurs. “You never know who you are going to meet,” she says. “It could be someone from fashion, business, art, or a bunch of Harvard professors, but it’s always interesting and fun.”

While the guests may be gleefully unpredictable, at the end of each soiree they inevitably end up in the spectacular master bathroom designed by Robbins’s dear friend and collaborator, the late Zaha Hadid. “I once walked in on Martha Stewart doing an impromptu shoot with photographer Todd Elberle in the bathroom,” Robbins recalls. “To be fair to Martha, I think she asked for permission at some point in the night, and as far as party antics go, it’s less raucous than what a lot of people get up to in Miami bathrooms.”

BELOW A POLISHED STAINLESS-STEEL, PINE-TIMBER TABLE BY BOULANGER STUNDS BEAUTY IN THE BATHROOM (COURTESY MARCH BROSCH, DRESSING BY THE BLUE COMPANY). OPPOSITE THE JOURNAL ROOM: BEAUTY & PLEASURE BY JOHN CURRAN.

A LIMITED-EDITION SOFA TABLE BY LOUIS BOURGEOIS, SEVERAL COVERS BY PAUL A. HARTMAN, AND A THERIACAL “MADNESS” PRINT BY THE WALLS ARE PAINTED IN A COOL BLEND OF BELLARINI BROWN’S LABORATORY’S WHITE AND LIVEN WHITE.





A LEATHER PENDANT BY  
MORIS AND ERICA  
MILANO, AT WORK IN THE  
LIBRARY, A SCULPTURE  
BY STUDIO MARK GUNDEL  
BY THE WALL,  
LANTERNA PLANTING  
OPPOSITE A BUILT-IN READING  
TABLE THAT SITS IN THE  
CORNER, CHAIRS BY JEAN  
POLLON, STOOD BY MORIS  
LANTERNA LIGHT FIXTURE BY  
GIUSEPPE GARDINER.

