



# CELEBRITY DRIVE

*The Ultimate  
Guide to*  
ART BASEL  
MIAMI BEACH  
2010

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CLUB



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and More**  
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the homes  
of Miami's  
biggest stars

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Examples of Tui Lifestyle designs for the dining/living room and bedroom

## INTERNATIONAL STYLE

*Jet-setting interior designer Tui Pranich creates dream homes at a moment's notice. By Tom Austin*

Jason Atkins of Tui Lifestyle is at his office in the company's 280,000-square-foot warehouse off I-95 in the Design District, dealing with 14 things at once and riding the new age of Nomad World. People who might move between half a dozen homes come to Miami for a pivotal weekend—say, Art Basel Miami Beach—and have a great time; they buy an apartment on a whim, pack up the caravan, but don't want to have to come back and furnish the place for their next fun weekend here. At that point, a Realtor—or one of the many Tui Lifestyle sales reps at any of the major condominiums in the area—might suggest the option of Tui Lifestyle: It's possible to order an entire spectrum of Tui Pranich-designed furniture and accessories—from couches to electronics, towels and silverware—and have a complete, well, *lifestyle*, delivered and installed in the unit within 72 hours.

Atkins, who describes himself as a “serial entrepreneur, in the business of doing business,” has owned a surveillance firm and a sedan service for transporting the injured, among other endeavors, and has an unusual background for the design trade: “After high school, I enlisted in the Marine Corps and went into Special Forces, doing reconnaissance missions in places like Somalia, Bosnia and Indochina. Once I threw hand grenades—now I'm throwing decorative pillows.”

While Pranich's job is design, Atkins runs the business side of the partnership—for which he says his military training comes in handy: “Combat is about observation skills, logistics and paying attention to detail, which is what this industry is also about. We have a Tui Lifestyle showroom on Greene Street in New York, and we want to be everywhere, with design packages tailored to places like, say, Atlanta. This is the age of instant gratification, and we have bottled up that high-end Tui Pranich look and created a series of complete packages, ranging from Innovative to Glamorous, which start at \$12,000. I spent almost 10 times that when Tui did my apartment years



Tui Pranich

ago; now I have a Tui Lifestyle package at my new home on La Gorce.”

The Tui look, done on a one-on-one level, isn't cheap, and Pranich is accepting the realities of the modern rich. “Everything moves fast now, with the Internet and all that, and people have multiple homes and no time to deal with meeting a designer, shopping together for furniture, putting a look together. I've seen it all in design and we do everything: I design good-quality furniture, have it built in factories from China to Italy and the US, and then we warehouse it. You can go to our showroom in the Design District, pick the style you like and have a completely furnished home—all you need is a toothbrush.”

So far, the concept has proven popular with a wide range of people. Recently, the partners launched a “Marquis myPad” model residence at the Marquis in downtown Miami, and developers will often throw in Tui Lifestyle furnishings to close the sale of a condo.

This being Tui Pranich, a Thai native of good family who has seen something of the wealthy and celebrated, a few boldface names have bought into the Tui Lifestyle concept.

“We did the apartment for Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony [at Icon Brickell]. They sold their big North Bay Road house here, and just wanted something easy for short trips. And Francis Ford Coppola used Tui Lifestyle for the condo he bought on Ocean Drive. I see him, and it's very casual. I showed him some things for the apartment, and we have dinner occasionally. I think



Tui Lifestyle CEO Jason Atkins in the company's Design District showroom

he's writing a book about Miami. His daughter lives in Paris now, where I have a place, and he's here in Miami for a few days at a time. I travel constantly, like my clients, living between my places in Miami, Palm Beach, Paris and New York. Each one is different. New York is nothing like my Palm Beach place, which has lots of white and old chairs I found at the Lincoln Road flea market. I understand how much work goes into furnishing and maintaining different residences. It's not easy, but Tui Lifestyle makes it quick and convenient.”

For his part, Atkins is looking forward to expanding the Tui Lifestyle brand. “Since we control all facets of the business, from manufacturing to distribution and design services, it's kept at an affordable price point. In the military and in business, you have to change up the game, do things bigger and better. And correctly, too.” **DD**

Tui Lifestyle's Avenue design package at Atkins' home



## TUI PRANICH Unplugged

“I GREW UP IN THAILAND; my father worked for the UN and then the World Bank, and my mother, who's very stylish, had been educated in Switzerland. In Thailand she's a Lady, part of the royal family there, which sounds pretentious, but it was just a part of our life and never something I used to advance my own career. I went to school in Switzerland and Connecticut, then to Cornell for a degree in architecture. I'm the third generation in my family to go to Cornell. My grandfather was one of the first Thais to ever leave Thailand for college in America.

“Growing up, I had tremendous exposure to different cultures and design all over the world, which has

helped my own work. My background meant being around all kinds of people—Carolina Herrera, Bianca Jagger, Elizabeth Taylor.



Bianca Jagger

We traveled on Malcolm Forbes' private jet, but none of it impressed me, which has helped me with clients, from the Hamptons to Paris. After Cornell I went to work in Palm Beach, eventually doing The Brazilian Court Hotel & Beach Club and private homes there. In 1990 I sold my own house to a former prime minister of Canada and came to Miami; Palm Beach is very small and I wanted to be where no one knew me. I bought a house on La Gorce Island, and one day Esther Percal came over with Shakira. She'd been looking at the house next door. My house wasn't for sale, and I didn't know who she was, but she wound up buying my place, so I moved. I enjoy renovating homes, and in nine years I bought, renovated and sold so many, selling all the furniture with each house and moving on to another property.



Jennifer Lopez

That was a different era.

“But today I still have fun: For the opening of our showroom in the Design District, I brought in a Thai drag queen. And my last Halloween party got so big I moved it to the Ice Palace. The men dressed like women, the women like men. That was something to see.”



Pranich chose vibrant design (above) for pop superstar Shakira's Miami home.

