



Celeb Designer Thom Filicia Bring His "Queer Eye" to Miami

By Kara Franker

Thom Filicia shares his inspirations for the design of a residential building that he believes will reflect a city that's fast becoming an international icon.



Photo by: Brett Hufziger Photography

Thom Filicia's trademark inventiveness has made him an Elle Décor A-List Designer, one of House Beautiful's Top 100 Designers, and the preferred choice of Tina Fey, Peter Jennings, Jennifer Lopez, W Hotels, Delta Air Lines, and countless others. Thom's New American style can also be seen throughout his product in the Thom Filicia Home Collection and his two design books, "Thom Filicia Style" and "American Beauty: Renovating & Decorating a Beloved Retreat."

Buyers shopping for a celebrity-designed luxury condo in Miami won't have to decide between the city and the sand anymore – now they can have both. New condo development, Biscayne Beach, offers a private beach club in Miami's urban core and resort-style spaces designed by celebrity interior designer Thom Filicia.

Known for his role on the show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, Filicia has signed on to create the beach chic designs for the project's common area amenity spaces and members-only Beach Club. Home to 399 residences and rising 51 stories along the bay in Miami's East Edgewater neighborhood, Biscayne Beach marks Filicia's first high-rise condominium design project.

Thom Filicia's Designs for Biscayne Beach



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We interviewed the designer to learn more about the inspiration for his designs.

Q: Tell us how Miami's global appeal influenced your vision for the style of Biscayne Beach.

Filicia: Miami has committed itself to a multitude of influences. And over the years, Miami has evolved and matured so that the food and culture and theater and museums and arts from people living and traveling here from so many different parts of the world have provided the layers that make this a true global city. I've been to Barcelona, Panama, Brazil. I would say that travel is an amazing opportunity, but even more so connecting with the culture and the people.

Q: When you travel, where do you find design inspiration?

A: When I travel, I go to all the recommended places, hit all the iconic things that you want to see, but I always end up at the local watering hole, meeting people, whether I speak the language or not, staying out until the sun comes up, being behind the scenes. I come back with some sense of the locals — what they're feeling, their sense of humor. These are the things that inform design. I always tell people who are about to go somewhere that connecting with people is your biggest takeaway. It's a gift — it comes from how you were raised — and that's the springboard for everything you do as a designer. If you become successful, or very affluent due to your success, you can lose your ability to connect. Being open is the biggest gift you can give yourself because that fuels your inspiration, your ideas, your creativity.

Q: Why did you choose Miami as the location of your first-ever residential design project?

A: I think Miami has gone through a series of moments, dating from the 1920s. They hit and then they disappeared. Fifteen years ago, Miami was an adolescent, hip and young and fun, a party town. But now Miami is a beautiful woman in her 20s, more mature and interesting. I've been coming here since college and remember thinking that you could visit five or six times and be exhausted by it, or outgrow it, but now you can come at every stage and there's something for you and it's a place that you can call home.

Q: What makes Miami an international icon?

A: It has transcended South Beach, and emerging neighborhoods like East Edgewater are the foundation for what will make the city iconic.

Q: What is your role as the designer for Biscayne Beach?

A: To be the decorator on a project of this size, to be working as the design director, working with the architects and overseeing the sensibility of the decor — the beach club, the public spaces, the amenity spaces, all the fit and finish of the units — is great. I've never been involved in a project at this level. My role includes everything from uniforms to materials to what restaurateur we'll have, to logos and colors and branding. I'm the person who's saying, 'This is our vision, and we have to make sure that all of these pieces contribute to the vision.' I couldn't be happier to be part of this.

Q: What makes Biscayne Beach unique among the dozens of other luxury condos on the market?

A: I love the central location, and I love that it's close to the Design District and Midtown. And I love that it's on the bay because there's such a movement toward using the water in a different way than it's been used before, with water sports and activities. It's different from the beach lifestyle of catching some rays, jumping in the water — and then you start drinking. People want to do something healthy and active. I'm a boater. I love kayaking and paddle boarding. I'm one of those people who want a bay lifestyle. Luxury has a different meaning than it used to — not just pampering and comfort, but access.

Q: What does the future hold for Thom Filicia, Inc.?

A: In addition to my work at Biscayne Beach, we are also working on the redesign of the Grace Bay Club hotel in the Turks & Caicos. Another recent project is the opening of our first to-the-trade showroom, Sedgwick & Brattle, in the New York Design Center, which will feature products from the Thom Filicia Home Collection, a curated collection of items from around the country, as well as one-of-a-kind vintage antique pieces.