



Douglas Friedman

[design + decorate](#) > [house tours](#)

## TOUR RADIO HOST TOM JOYNER'S STYLISH MIAMI DIGS

*"Beige came here and died."*

BY STEPHEN WALLIS PUBLISHED: OCT 17, 2024

“**O**h, yeah. Oh, yeah.” Those are the words **Tom Joyner**, the retired longtime syndicated radio show host, repeated over and over during his first walk-through with the designer of his revamped seaside apartment in Sunny Isles Beach, part of the Miami metropolitan area.

When Joyner bought the 5,000-square-foot, three-bedroom residence, located on a midlevel floor of the 60-story **Porsche Design Tower**, a few years ago, he was attracted by the panoramic views, the large balcony, and the car

elevator that enables him to park his Rolls-Royce Cullinan in an attached garage. Not to mention the fact that the building has room service. “You can order an espresso martini in the morning or the evening,” he says. “What’s not to like?”



Douglas Friedman

In Tom Joyner’s apartment in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida, which was designed by Rodrigo Albir of Studio Roda. The living room’s nubuck suede sofas are by de Sede, and the Seungjin Yang balloon chair is from the Future Perfect. The cocktail and green side tables are by Objects with Narratives, the glass stool is by Sebastian Herkner for Pulpo, and the rug is custom. The artworks (from left) are by Ernie Barnes and Blair Thurman.

But the apartment’s decor, conservatively styled in wall-to-wall neutrals, was too bland for Joyner’s tastes. Architect Wesley Kean, who had worked on Joyner’s previous home, recommended Rodrigo Albir, whose Miami firm, Studio Roda, is a regular collaborator. So Joyner invited Albir for a meeting at the apartment, where Joyner greeted him wearing sunglasses and a Versace kimono, with a Swarovski-crystal-encrusted cane—his preferred chilling-at-home look. “Tom gave me a tour and said, ‘I need color. I want the apartment to be fun, to have a wow factor,’” recounts Albir. “He used the phrase ‘beige came here and died.’”

Joyner had just a few specific requests, such as more space in his bedroom for storing and displaying his extensive collections of kimonos and shoes, including several pairs of Christian Louboutin studded loafers. The follow-up meeting to discuss Studio Roda’s concepts was a breeze. “Tom approved everything on the spot,” Albir says. “He was like, ‘Just go with it. Shoot for the moon.’”

---





Douglas Friedman

The dining table is framed by three artworks (from left): a Picasso tapestry, an Anish Kapoor wall piece, and a Rob Pruitt panda painting. The resin table is from Antica Collection, the Jorge Zalsupin chairs are from Espasso, the Hannes Peer chandelier is by 6:AM. The plaster wall finish is custom.

---

A native of Tuskegee, Alabama, and a friend of Lionel Richie's since childhood, Joyner was briefly a member of the Commodores in the late '60s. But he left the group before it became famous and started his own storied career as a radio DJ that lasted for nearly half a century. Albir sought to channel elements of disco-era glamour in his design, incorporating lots of mirror and shimmering metallics, along with pops of retro color. Walls and ceilings were refinished in sumptuous Venetian plaster throughout.



While the designer left the apartment's layout unaltered, he introduced some separation between the entry and the living area by installing a chrome-and-glass folding screen that refracts natural light during the day and casts an elegant glow at night, thanks to uplights along its base. The sleek partition complements the elevated groovy-chic vibe that permeates the living room, where Albir added a bronze-mirror fireplace surround and anchored the seating area with a pair of de Sede suede sofas, designed in the early '70s by Ubaldo Klug, with a sculptural form Joyner describes as "extremely comfortable." Albir rounded out the furnishings with an organic tiered cocktail table, side tables in smoky glass and lustrous lacquer, and a silk rug with lava lamp-like swirls of maroon, burnt orange, and ochre.

Amping up the panache, the adjacent dining room features a spectacular chandelier composed of textured panels of amber, smoke, and clear glass suspended above a lime-green resin table and svelte Jorge Zalszupin chairs. The surrounding walls, finished in an eye-catching mottled green plaster, host a Picasso tapestry, a glittery panda painting by Rob Pruitt, and a mirrored stainless steel disc sculpture by Anish Kapoor that casts animating reflections.





Douglas Friedman

The primary bedroom's custom headboard conceals shoe storage on the other side. The bed linens are by Sferra, the custom chandelier is by 6:AM, and the CTO Lighting sconces are from Avenue Road.

---

The art in the apartment was selected from Joyner's collection, highlighted by a canvas of a radio DJ he commissioned in the '80s from Ernie Barnes that hangs in the entry. "I told him I wanted a piece about what I

do, and he said, ‘All right, tell me some stories,’” recalls Joyner. “I talked about DJs I looked up to when I was young, including this old guy at a radio station in Montgomery, Alabama. It’s all in this painting, called Father Rock.”

Before setting off for Las Vegas, where he lived during the six-month renovation, Joyner threw the Studio Roda team one “curveball,” as Albir puts it, insisting that the apartment’s study be converted into a lounge. “And it needs to have a dance pole,” Joyner told the designer.



Douglas Friedman

In the lounge, the custom bar cabinet has a finish inspired by disco balls. The Moon Light sconce is by Ben & Aja Blanc for the Future Perfect.

Albir outfitted the space with serpentine banquettes in cognac velvet, added expanses of mirror, and finished the walls and ceiling in a plaster flecked with gold dust. A bespoke bar cabinet, surfaced in disco ball-inspired



bronze mirror, has an interior in cherry red, Joyner’s favorite color, while the brass dance pole ascends to a custom lighting element lined in gold leaf. Asked if the dance pole gets used, Joyner merely replies, “Mm-hmm.”

Albir admits to feeling nervous the night Joyner arrived for the big reveal. “He hadn’t seen anything. He just took this leap of faith,” says the designer, whose fears were allayed as soon as Joyner uttered his first “Oh, yeah.” Stepping into his bedroom, Joyner announced, “I’m finally home,” recounts Albir, adding, “when we got to the club room, he said, ‘We’re ready to party.’”



*This story originally appeared in the November 2024 issue of ELLE DECOR.*

---