

Furniture Design Studio Head Opts for Simple, Casual and Functional

Carlos Junqueira on Brazilian real estate, decor and more

BY LUCY COHEN BLATTER | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 7, 2019 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#)

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Mr. Junqueira, with displays at ESPASSO, the premier design gallery in the U.S. and U.K. for modern and contemporary Brazilian furniture, art and design objects.
COMPOSITE: ESPASSO

Carlos Junqueira is the São Paulo-born owner and founder of ESPASSO, a retailer specializing in ultra high-end Brazilian furniture, much of which is made of wood.

Mr. Junqueira has homes in Miami and New York, and his company has locations across the globe, too. He opened a location in New York in 2002, in Los Angeles in 2004, in London in 2012, and in Miami in 2016.

Mr. Junqueira, 58, has worked with commercial projects such as Louis Vuitton, and staged high-end homes, too, including a townhouse in Tribeca which the company worked with developer DDG to do.

We spoke to Mr. Junqueira from his apartment in Miami to discuss the eclecticism of Brazilian design, why New York is a safe bet, and more.

Mansion Global: Describe your dream property.

Carlos Junqueira: I like things that are cozy and casual.

The location would have to be easy. As we grow older, easier is better. I travel a lot. I want to be close to where I work and where I eat. In New York, I live in Chelsea, which I love for that reason.

Here in Miami I have an apartment that's in front of the water, and it has a great terrace. I look onto one of the canals.

For me, it's most important that when I close the door I feel comfortable, amenities you can find outside your building.

For me, the most important is to enjoy every minute, and every place in my apartment.

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MG: Do you have a real estate property that got away?

CJ: If I'm not ready to buy, I don't put myself in temptation mode, because things come and go so quickly when they're good properties. I don't put myself in that situation.

But I used to have an apartment on the Upper West Side. It was a duplex penthouse on 72nd and Columbus. It was a perfect apartment and I had to sell it. In the beginning I felt sad, but I quickly thought "OKok, what's the next one?"

MG: What does luxury mean to you?

CJ: It's relative. But to me, luxury is simple, but with good taste.

MG: What's the biggest surprise in the luxury real estate market now?

CJ: How small some of the rooms are. I was recently involved in a big apartment in New York. It was a four-bedroom and the rooms were very small. This is a \$10 million apartment, so not cheap by any means. When you get that price, you should be able

to put a king-sized bed in the bedroom. That's important to me, because what I sell is very high-end, very luxurious.

Bedrooms are important. That's where you finish and start your day. You should be able to have a beautiful nightstand, and a credenza with a beautiful chair next to it.

MG: Where are the best luxury homes in the world and why?

CJ: I'm from Brazil, and it's not that Brazil has the best luxury homes, but it has the best nature around you. Nature is important to me when you talk about luxury—to be in a place surrounded by nature, water or gardens. In Brazil you have the ability to be close to those elements, but it doesn't necessarily have the most incredible homes.

But here in Miami, there are so many beautiful luxury homes; London, too. The Italian coast is beautiful, too, it's just all about access.

MG: What's your favorite part of your home?

CJ: For me, every part of the home has to be comfortable. I have clients who always buy the same chair for all their homes, because that's where they feel comfortable relaxing and reading.

For me, the living room is important. It's where you spend time with friends, watch TV or read a book. I love to have people around me and I love to be in that room.

My terrace in Miami, too, is my favorite. That's why I love this apartment the most.

My bedroom's important, too, though. Really every part has to be comfortable and cozy and relaxing.

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MG: What best describes the theme of your home and why?

CJ: Mine is simple and functional. I sell Brazilian design. I've collected those items for the last 15 years. I love to have these objects that I appreciate living with me.

My theme is Brazil. It's a mix of things, though. It translates to what Brazil is all about — it's a country with so many different cultures together. The theme is having fun. It's relaxed, but also elegant and well done.

MG: What's the most valuable item in your home?

CJ: In my home in Miami, I have a dining table by Joaquim Tenreiro. It's an important piece.

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MG: What's the most valuable amenity to have in a home right now?

CJ: A good pool, a nice gym, an extra room for watching TV, where you can throw yourself on a comfortable couch and you don't care if it's messy or not.

There's nothing nicer than when you're sitting in a room and can look out at a beautiful landscape.

MG: What's your best piece of real estate advice?

CJ: Be in front of the water. If you have a chance to be by the water, take it. And if you can wait a little time to sell, it will pay off many times over.

MG: What's going on in the news that will have the biggest impact on the luxury real estate market?

CJ: The stock market, it's going up and down and if people are thinking it's not as safe, they'll put their money into real estate. It's a safer bet for a lot of people.

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MG: What is the best area now for investing in luxury properties?

CJ: New York. There's just so much going on there. But it's still a place where you're spending 10%-15%-20% above market, so if you want to get more for your money, Miami is good. But it's getting expensive here, too. That's because it's not just a second residency anymore. That's good for me, because people want to invest in

better furniture in their main home.

Brazil is a great place to invest. The economy is not doing well, but it's a very beautiful place. People just need to look at it as an investment. They'll buy and hold things get more secure and more safe. You can get great real estate in Brazil. The coast between São Paulo and Rio is a beauty. It's called Litoral Norte, and there's beach after beach after beach, with the rainforest at the back. And the rainforest is very protected.

Angra Dos Reis in Rio is beautiful, too.

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MG: If you had a choice of living in a new development or a prime resale property, which would you choose and why?

CJ: It depends. I like older buildings in general because they're more spacious, but you don't have the amenities. If I have to choose though, I want the air conditioner to work, the pool to be nice. In a new development it's all new. But finishes are important to me, too. You pay so much money for the locations of some of the new condos, but you need to replace all the finishes, to make them right.

MG: What area currently has the best resale value? CJ: New York. Everyone who wants to invest in real estate invests in New York. You sell much easier than in any other places.

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