

## The MODE Lifestyle Blog

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# THOMAS KRAMER – Global Networker, Entrepreneur & Philanthropist

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IN MODE LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE JAN/FEB 2012 EDITION:

By Sarah Curtis

Photography By MODE Studio

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**Thomas Kramer's larger than life persona has always made him a good candidate for interviews. So of course sooner or later the MODE team had to do an interview of this entrepreneur that has had such an impact on Miami luxury building development.**

Thomas Kramer (nicknamed TK by his family and friends) was born in Frankfurt/Main (Germany). His father Willi Kramer, a successful stock trader, was TK's greatest idol and his mother, Ingeborg, his biggest fan. Thomas has two younger siblings, Sylke and Olaf. As the oldest son, TK naturally always took care of each family member and quickly became the social leader, especially when things didn't go very well! He studied at the Bad Soden



as his "red enemy" was gone from his immediate environment (80% of the students in Salem were center-right oriented!). During a school project, he became fascinated by the fact that so much money could be earned by the simple rise and fall of shares in the stock market. Thus, he began to invest his money in stock options and futures, following the advice of his dreams, and quickly increased his wealth beyond his imaginations.

His first TRADING OFFICE was the only public call box at the boarding school in Salem and he spent his breaks there calling in stock exchange orders. As a result of this forage into entrepreneurship TK made his first million D-marks at the age of 17! After completing his schooling, TK studied

Elementary School and later at the Eichwald Secondary School, also in Bad Soden.

At the age of 13, TK earned his first taste of money by publishing the school newspaper "ACTION 72" which he credits with triggering his interest in politics. At 14, he ran for the board of the political party "Junge Union Hessen". TK's parents saw his political activities as potentially dangerous (thanks to the then politically turbulent times) and decided to send their son to the "Elite Boarding School Schloß Salem" (or Schloss Salem) - for the good of the family and the peace of the republic!

At the boarding school in Salem, TK looked for new areas of interest,



at the Johann von Goethe University in Frankfurt and later at the Harvard University in Boston.

Following his father's example of success as a stock trader and with his help, at the age of 18, TK moved from Boston to New York and traded on stock exchanges across the world! At the beginning of the 1980's, he worked as a trader sharing an office on the 102nd floor of the World Trade Center with Shearson American Express who did his clearings. Over the next few years TK watched how the southern tip of Manhattan gradually expanded and grew out of landfill and skyscrapers seemingly sprouted from nowhere. Today this new district is known as "Battery Park Plaza" and it became a major

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## — MODE Interviews Thomas Kramer at His 5 Star Island Office - Jan/Feb2012

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In 1985, he moved to Munich, following his then girlfriend Alexandra von Rehlingen. In 1987, TK correctly predicted one of the biggest stock market crashes of all time months before it actually happened and became one of the super-rich and famous overnight. After the end of his relationship with Alexandra, TK met his future wife, Catherine Burda, and married her in 1989.

In 1990 TK made his formal entry into the real estate market. Searching for a super-apartment in New York, he inevitably encountered the Trump Tower on 5th Avenue. He disliked what he described as Trump's small kitchens, closets and showers, even in the 10-million-dollar penthouse. TK expressed his dislike to the real estate agent who immediately called "The Donald" for help. Donald Trump tried to explain to TK why it was impossible to sell these ideas to an average consumer. TK was impressed by Trump even though they disagreed, and they soon became friends, and competitors.

During a vacation in Miami Beach, TK took a helicopter ride over South Beach on New Year's Eve 1991/1992 and, quite out of the blue, was struck by a stunning vision of the future. That vision was to create a New York's Battery Plaza on the southern tip of Miami Beach where the inauguration of the original city of Miami Beach took place in 1913 with its northern border, 5th street. Within weeks he had moved to Miami and, as is often said, the rest is now history. The realization of his vision would lead to the lasting legacy for which TK is well known.

### The TK Towers of South Pointe:

- Portofino
- Apogee
- Murano
- Murano Grande
- Icon
- Yacht Club
- Continuum Towers



At the same time, TK created the exclusive Star Island community out of Miami Beach's former garbage dump. TK's crown jewel was the creation of his private residence "5 Star Island". Following the path his vision had laid out for him he also invested in numerous restaurants and clubs throughout Miami Beach and became the founding investor of the world famous Ocean Drive Magazine.

In 1992 TK's daughter Joya was born. Joya moved to 5 Star Island in spring 2011, after completing her schooling in Aiglon, Switzerland. From 2011 Joya has continued her studies in Miami and at the same time stars with her father in their own US reality TV show.

All has not been roses though for the real estate mogul. In 1995 he wife Catherine divorced him and everything seemed to go downhill from there for almost 10 years. After his "Total Burnout" TK conducted a "Self-Cleansing" program and stopped drinking alcohol. His goal was to transform himself into the man that he felt he really was.

TK is a noted philanthropist and the Thomas Kramer Foundation has supported many local and international charities donating millions of dollars to



— MODE Interviews Thomas Kramer - Properties He has Helped Develop - Jan/Feb2012

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Island estate for charity events like the “Give a Lift for Paralysis Benefit” gala, hosted by Paris & Nicky Hilton.

Today, he is a global networker with over 100,000 friends and fans on Facebook, and 110,000 Twitter followers. He has set up a new real estate brokerage firm, “TK Global Realty,” that focuses on high-end properties. He is also currently in the planning stages of a big international real estate project and has launched TK’s Miami App, a leading concierge service. He keeps healthy by going on bicycle-tours with friends, gym workouts in his own fitness-center, paddle boarding in summer and skiing in winter. In his leisure time, TK spends a lot of time in his big kitchen at 5 Star Island, where he loves to cook for family and friends.


Thomas Kramer is definitely one of those characters with a strong personality that often lands him in trouble. But at least one thing’s for sure, no one can deny that he has not led a boring life and that he has definitely had a big influence on the look of the new South Beach.

**HONORS & AWARDS:**


- \* Miami Beach Police Athletic League (1992 & 1995)
- \* Miami Beach Development Corporation (January 1993)
- \* The City of Miami Beach Appreciation Award (February 1993)
- \* Miami Beach Police Department Appreciation Award (March 1994)
- \* South Beach Latin Chamber of Commerce (October 1995 & 1996)
- \* Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Trustee Membership (1996)
- \* Lincoln Theatre Appreciation Award (1997-1998)
- \* Association for Retarded Citizens (2002)
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**NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS:**

- \* “The Man Who Made South Pointe” - Ocean Drive Magazine, January 1999
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- \* “No Party Rentals in Miami Beach? Really?” – New York Times, 5th April 2011
- \* “Visionary or Villain?” – Sun Post, 26th May 2011
- \* “Scheingefechte” – Süddeutsche Zeitung, 9th July 2011



*Thomas Kramer and Alexander Michaels at his office in 5 Star Island*





— MODE - Thomas Kramer and Alexander Michaels at His office In 5 Star Island - Jan/Feb2012

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The full article is in the January/February 2012 Edition of Mode Lifestyle Magazine. For more information contact us at [info@ModeLifestylemagazine.com](mailto:info@ModeLifestylemagazine.com)

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