

A man with dark hair and a goatee, wearing sunglasses and a bright orange and black jacket, is sitting on a large, weathered rock. Behind him are the ruins of an ancient building with multiple levels of columns and arches, carved into a reddish-brown rock face. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

“What I try to do  
is shoot their vision  
and then mine.”

**GLOBE EXPEDITION**

Artist and photographer Robert Curran  
on one of his many voyages

# Cycle of Success

WORLD-TRAVELED AND WORLD-FAMOUS, THIS PHOTOGRAPHER HAS BEEN CALLED MIAMI BEACH'S AMBASSADOR.

By Vanessa Valera | Photography courtesy of Robert Curran

**T**he New York City-born and Peruvian bred Robert Curran blends more than just cultures. Combining wildly successful commercial photography with a commitment to artistic integrity, this superstar is now sharing his creative vision with Miami Beach. His latest building, Cyclon, is a world all its own.

**HL:** You were born in NYC and moved to Peru with your father at an early age. Do you consider yourself Peruvian, American or both, and how does this influence your artistic expression?

**RC:** I'm more open to new ideas and more accepting of different cultures. Certain things that are acceptable in Sweden are not in the States and vice versa. I'm proud of both my U.S. and Peruvian heritage, but I like to consider myself a citizen of the world.

**HL:** What inspires you?

**RC:** Beauty and character. A successful portrait involves capturing at least one of these—it's great when you get both.

**HL:** What was your entry point into the world of photography?

**RC:** Photographing my father with his clients at the family engineering firm. It was a PR move that allowed him to send a memento of their meetings. I got two bucks a photo.

**HL:** Do you have a personal motto?

**RC:** Life's short, and you only live once.

**HL:** You've explored over 80 countries. Do you have a particular city or country that inspired you?

**RC:** There are so many great places in the world. I recently bought a house in Bali because I'm so fascinated with the Balinese culture. It's almost illegal to be unhappy there. Bali is a big part of my new photo book, *Asian Dreams*. And I was just in the Amazon with the Shipibo tribe doing an article on ethnobotany.

**HL:** Regarding your South Beach building restorations, do you have any upcoming ones we should be looking forward to?

**RC:** Cyclon was built from the ground up; it wasn't a restoration. I'm building a minimalist guest house with a pool next door.

**HL:** What can people expect from you during your time in Miami Beach?

**RC:** In the short term, I'm doing a show during Art Basel in collaboration with seven other photographers. We are calling ourselves F8. The work will span from photojournalism to fashion.

**HL:** How do you successfully integrate art into real estate?

**RC:** Architecture is art, and often developers shoot themselves in the foot by trying to scrimp on design. Good design is essential; buildings should be more than just an organized set of bricks. Read *The Fountainhead*.

**HL:** You've worked with a diversity of clients, from top fashion and lifestyle magazines like *Vogue* and *Playboy*, to international corporations like Corona, Reebok and Nokia. As an artist, how do you approach each client?

**RC:** Each client is different. Often you

cannot agree on a mutual vision, and in art, compromise can diminish the final product. I can work relatively quickly since I usually use a single light. What I try to do is shoot their vision and then mine. This allows us the flexibility to choose later.

**HL:** Working with celebrities can be fun or stressful—who is your favorite celebrity to photograph?

**RC:** Well, Shakira is very cool and sweet - she knows all her best angles and is great to photograph. Roy Jones Jr. is easy to photograph because he's almost oblivious to your presence. And Sophia Vergara because she is so full of curves and in touch with her body.

**HL:** Real estate has gone mainstream; people are using it as an alternative to the stock market. Do you think it's just a cycle?

**RC:** Some markets will take a hit, others will not. Let's just say that Miami is one of the best places in the world to live, and more and more people are discovering this. Thanks to TV, even the most remote village in Cambodia has heard of Miami.

**HL:** Who's your favorite artist?

**RC:** I have many, but Botero, Modigliani, Irving Penn and Peter Beard are some. ■