

SUPER BOWL EDITION

# HAUTE LIVING

MIAMI

HAUTE  
TIMEPIECES  
BLANCPAIN  
SPÉCIALITÉS  
TOURBILLON  
DIAMANTS,  
HD3 BLACK  
PEARL, &  
MORE

**Wine & Food  
Festival**  
Miami's Top  
Chefs and  
Restaurateurs

**WINTER  
GETAWAYS**  
ASPEN,  
TELLURIDE,  
& LAKE  
TAHOE

## OWN IT!

MIAMI DOLPHINS  
OWNER STEPHEN  
ROSS WITH CELEBRITY  
MINORITY OWNER  
EMILIO ESTEFAN



# Own It!

By Stephanie Wilson / Photography by Donnelly Marks

STEPHEN ROSS, OWNER OF THE MIAMI DOLPHINS, HAS TEAMED UP WITH CELEBRITY MINORITY OWNERS TO BRING FLORIDA'S MOST CELEBRATED BRAND TO THE NEXT LEVEL. HIS ULTIMATE GOAL? TO RETURN THE TEAM TO SUPER BOWL GLORY. IN THE MEANTIME? CREATE A FAN EXPERIENCE REFLECTIVE OF THE MIAMI LIFESTYLE THAT WILL KEEP THE STADIUM PACKED, WHETHER OR NOT THE DOLPHINS ARE IN THE RUNNING FOR THE BIG GAME.

The last time I spoke with New York-based billionaire Stephen Ross was a little more than two years ago. He was going to be featured on the cover of *Haute Living New York*, along with his longtime business associate and friend Jorge Perez. The article was to be a "State of the Real Estate Union," so my questions focused on his long and celebrated career; Ross' Related Companies has been a force in the industry since its inception, with trophy developments like West Palm's CityPlace, New York's Time Warner Center, and Los Angeles' The Century developments under its belt, and major projects like the huge renovation of Penn Station and Aspen Snowmass base village under works.

Yet, Ross seemed distracted. He didn't want to discuss the projects he had going on at the time. Throughout our entire conversation, his mind seemed elsewhere. Two short days later, I found out why:

Ross bought the Miami Dolphins.

For a cool \$550 million, Ross had purchased 50 percent ownership of the team and stadium from Wayne Huizenga. No wonder he was distracted. It was the ardent football fan's lifelong dream realized, and he likely was afraid if he opened his mouth, the news would come pouring out.

Today, he is talking. And after last year, when he upped his ante to more than \$1 billion and became 95 percent owner of the team (Huizenga retains five percent), he immediately began to make changes that got the whole league talking. With his stadium serving as the host venue of the 2010 Super Bowl, these drastic changes will soon be on the lips of people around the country and across the world.

In the original game plan, Huizenga was going to stay active in the organization for two years before Ross fully took over, but the time frame was sped up. "I had to dive into it and take it on fully, yet I was so busy in my real estate business because it was at the same time that the industry and world were changing. It was challenging, exciting, and I had to move fast."

Move fast he did, even though he was up against some big opposition. When Ross assumed 50 percent ownership, the Dolphins were coming off a 1-15 season. One year later, the team had turned it around, finishing 11-5, but season ticket sales and fan morale were down. It

would take some drastic changes to get fickle South Florida fans back on the Fin bandwagon.

Luckily, Ross is used to rising to the challenge. You don't build a real estate empire that spans coast to coast by sitting back and waiting for something to happen—you make it happen. With an all-star lineup in place to handle football operations (because the ultimate goal is to return the team to its rightful place as a Super Bowl contender—and victor), Ross focused on what has been his central message: enhancing the fan experience.

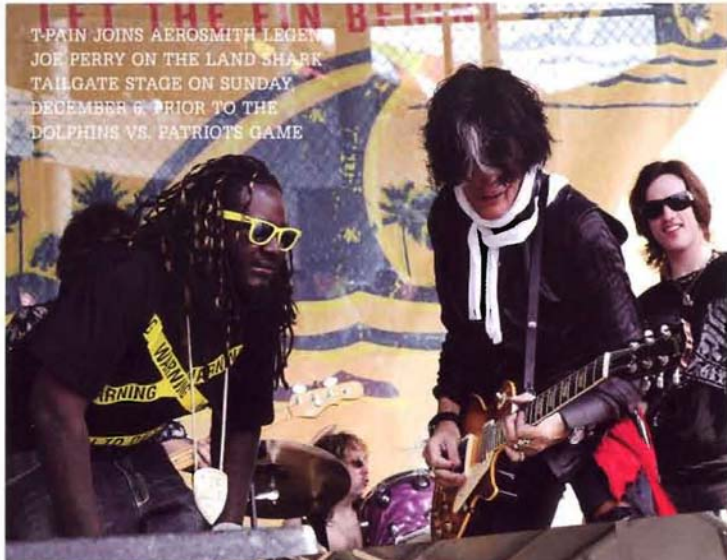
A game day at Ross' stadium is all but guaranteed to be a good time, something that the most fervent football fans from around the globe will get to experience when they descend upon Miami for Super Bowl XLIV. But these atmospheric upgrades were not made with a national audience in mind. Ross is adamantly focused on the local crowd.

"My vision of a sport team is one that solidifies and brings a community together," he explains. To make that vision a reality, he wanted his ownership base to reflect what he calls "the face of South Florida." Look around; one thing is overwhelmingly apparent: South Florida is not just white males over the age of 50. South Florida is Hispanic, it's black, it's men and women. So that's whom Ross signed up. "I thought it would be good to bring in minority owners, people that those in the community had always looked up to, people that represented the community."

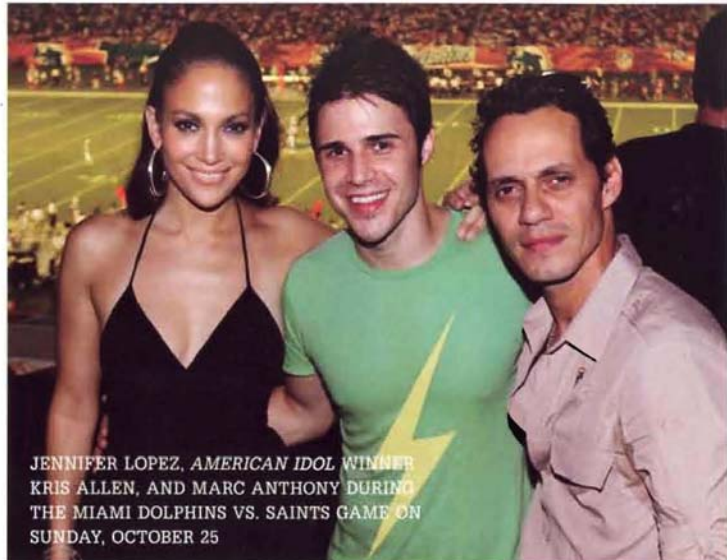
South Florida is also hot, entertaining, and sizzling with Latin flavor, so Ross didn't just go for local business leaders; He went for the star power. First, he recruited the likes of Emilio and Gloria Estefan. "There is no one who epitomizes the Hispanic community in Miami more than Gloria and Emilio Estefan," Ross says. In late June 2009, Ross held a press conference complete with typical Miami fanfare to announce that the Cuban power couple was now the team's first minority owners.

The Estefans are proud to represent their hometown team. "Steve is a very generous guy," explains Emilio. "He always wanted to give back to the community, and he felt that by bringing on minority owners, he was bringing on a little bit of the community. I think that this is great, because people now feel that the team belongs to everybody, and now there is a great community effort to support the team."

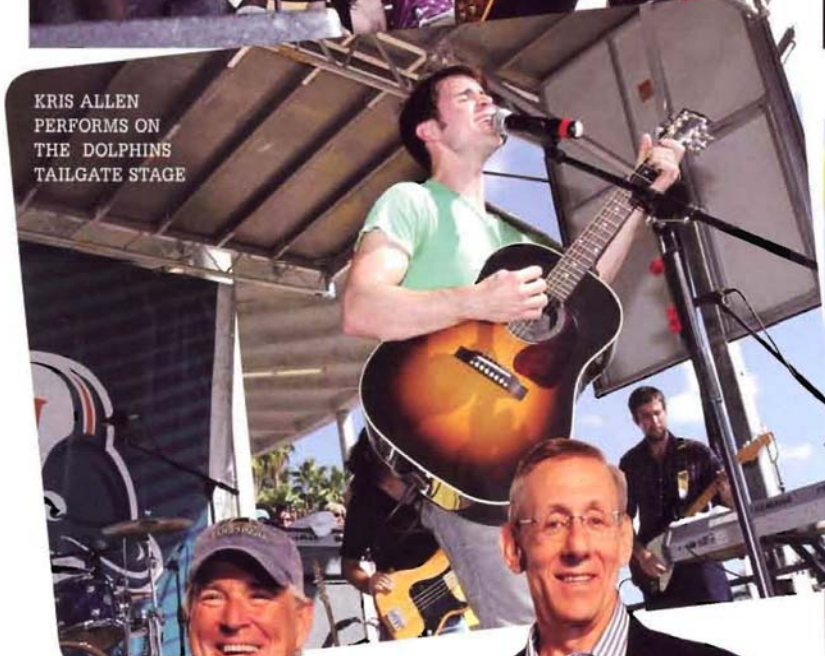




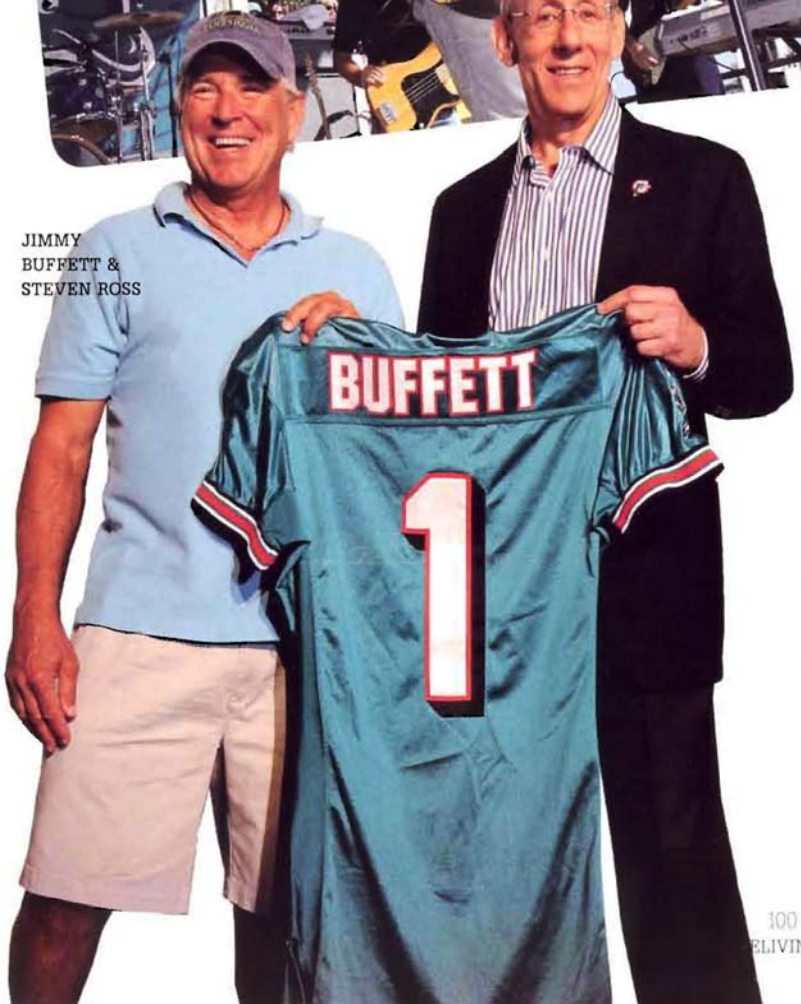
T-PAIN JOINS AEROSMITH LEGEND JOE PERRY ON THE LAND SHARK TAILGATE STAGE ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 6 PRIOR TO THE DOLPHINS VS. PATRIOTS GAME



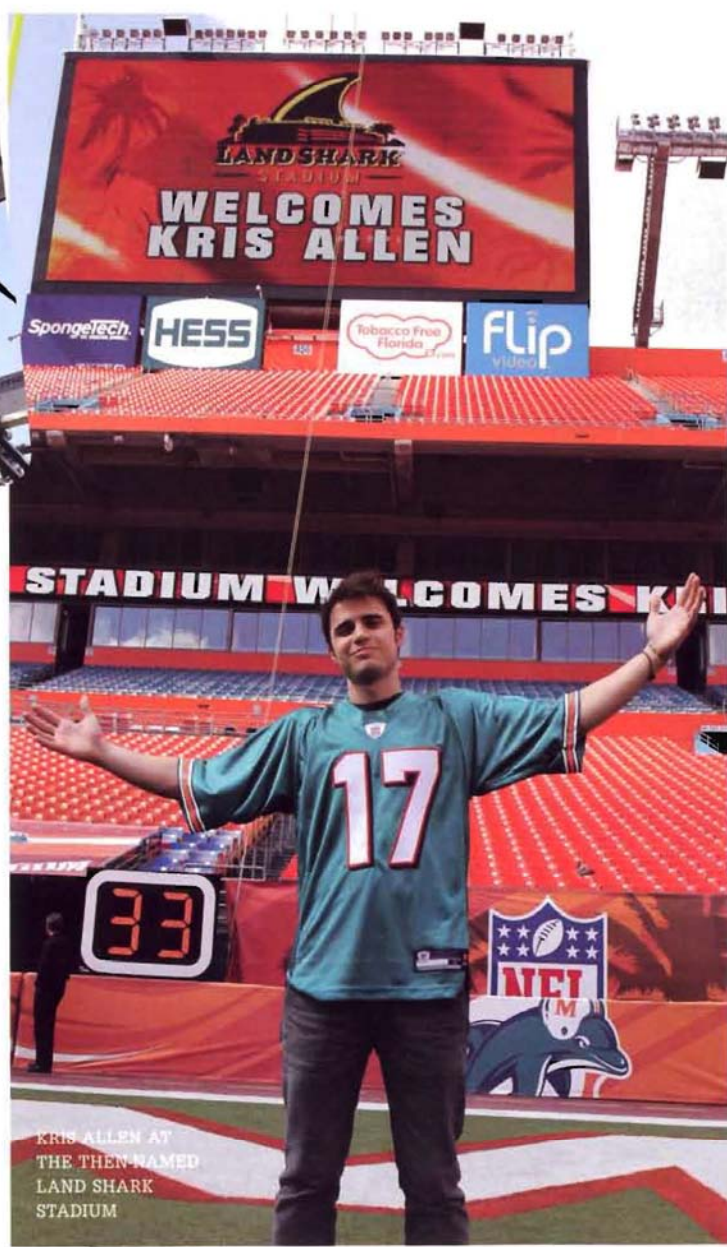
JENNIFER LOPEZ, AMERICAN IDOL WINNER KRIS ALLEN, AND MARC ANTHONY DURING THE MIAMI DOLPHINS VS. SAINTS GAME ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25



KRIS ALLEN PERFORMS ON THE DOLPHINS TAILGATE STAGE



JIMMY BUFFETT & STEVEN ROSS



KRIS ALLEN AT THE THEN-NAMED LAND SHARK STADIUM

# Dolphins Mobile Vision

As part of Ross' mission to enhance the fan experience, the Dolphins debuted this portable hand-held device during the 2009 season, complimentary to club level and suite ticket holders. "It allows fans to see all replays from multiple camera angles after every play," explains Ross. "They can listen to the game, watch other games occurring at the same time, and get stats on a real-time basis." The Dolphins are the only team in the NFL to offer this technology, and Ross' goal is to offer it to all ticket holders, free of charge, starting next season.



Throughout the next few months, Ross welcomed Venus and Serena Williams, Marc Anthony, and Fergie into the fold as limited partners, bringing them into an extremely elite circle of NFL owners, which previously had been an old-boys club. This is the new regime, the NFL on Ross' terms.

He is quick to point out that he wasn't simply looking to assemble the greatest collection of local celebrities. "I wanted to find people who were really enthusiastic about it, people who would get out in the community and spread the word, the name, and the deeds of the Miami Dolphins," he explains.

Not only did the stars take to the now-famous Orange Carpet (yet another Ross addition) on game days, each made it a personal mission to represent the team in each of their endeavors. Take, for example, Venus and Serena, who were photographed at the U.S. Open wearing Dolphin-themed jewelry designed by Ross' wife. Or Fergie, who wrote an all-out love letter to the Dolphins on her blog, which features a video of the Black Eyed Peas star singing Happy Birthday to former Dolphins coach (and the coach of the

only undefeated team in NFL history) Don Shula at his 80th birthday in early January. Emilio took it to another level, holding *American Idol*-style auditions for vocalists interested in singing the national anthem during home games, listening to almost 600 contenders.

Not only do these celebrity minority owners spread the word of the Miami Dolphins across the world, they bring the world to the Miami Dolphins. To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Emilio produced—and Gloria performed in—an elaborate and extraordinary half-time show, Celebration of the Americas, which took place during the Monday night game versus the New York Jets. Marc Anthony sang the national anthem before kickoff. "We went to Mexico and to Brazil," Emilio exclaims. "We brought in a lot of percussion, some mariachi—so many varieties of music from artists all over the world, things that had not been in the stadium before. And the response was great."

When Ross first announced that he was bringing on celebrity partners,



T-PAIN, WHO RECORDED A NEW VERSION OF THE DOLPHINS FIGHT SONG

ROSS WITH MINORITY OWNERS, THE WILLIAMS SISTERS

JOE PERRY ON THE ORANGE CARPET

many questioned the logic, but, judging by the roar of the cheering fans on any given Sunday, it was a brilliant play. "We were one of the few stadiums in the whole U.S. that was always sold out," says Estefan. Fathers that used to struggle to get their families to attend the games tell Ross that now their wives and children beg to go to the stadium to catch a glimpse of the stars. "Fans want to see Gloria and Emilio, Marc and Jennifer [Lopez]. They want to know that they are there and identify them, to see Serena and Venus sitting in the suite. They find it exciting," he explains. "It's all to create that buzz, to create excitement at the game, and to have something for everyone." That buzz resulted in national media attention that caught the interest of a new stadium sponsor, and Ross is laughing all the way to the bank.

This is the second corporate sponsorship that Ross has secured in the two short years that he has been calling the plays. The first—which was the first corporate sponsor for the stadium in years—with Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Enterprises, resulted in "Land Shark Stadium" being the home of the Dolphins for the duration of the 2009/2010 regular season. "There is nobody who represents South Florida and the way of life here better than Jimmy Buffett," exclaims Ross. "And there is probably no one who is more popular!"

There is certainly no one more fitting. Take, for example, Buffett's tune "Fins." In late 2008, Ross got the song stuck in his head, and he began

to envision a revision of the classic. When Ross initially brought the concept to Buffett, the laid-back crooner of tropical-themed melodies immediately jumped on the idea. During the 2009/2010 season, Dol-Fans at Land Shark Stadium were greeted by the fresh lyrics to a familiar beat, with the chorus serving as the new battle-cry:

*Can't you feel us circlin' Dol-Fans  
Can't you feel us schoolin' around?  
We got fins to the left, fins to the right,  
We're at the only game in town*

This inevitably led to the Fin Zone, a pre-game tailgating experience, and, of course, the availability of Land Shark Lager throughout the stadium. It certainly contributed to buzz that led to increased ticket sales and interest in what very recently was the worst-ranked team in the NFL.

While it seemed like there could be no better sponsor for the Dolphins than Land Shark, Ross was just setting the stage for an even bigger and better deal. On January 20, 2010, Dolphins CEO Mike Dee announced a new multi-dimensional partnership with Sun Life Financial. What is more representative of Miami than the sun?

But the name Jimmy Buffett will always conjure up images of parties in tropical settings, and Ross understands that. "The Jimmy Buffett brand

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-EMILIO ESTEFAN



"MY VISION OF A SPORT TEAM IS  
ONE THAT SOLIDIFIES AND BRINGS A  
COMMUNITY TOGETHER."

-STEPHEN ROSS



will still be a part of the Miami Dolphins," he assures. The Fin Zone tailgate and pre-game entertainment will continue, and, "Land Shark will be the official sponsor of the biggest Sunday party in South Florida," Ross states. "When people come to the games, we show them a great time. We've changed the whole atmosphere."

So now that Ross has upgraded the atmosphere, it's time to upgrade the stadium. Huizenga started the process three years ago, when he completed a \$250 renovation prior to hosting Super Bowl XLI. During that big game, an intense rain storm soaked fans and the field, leaving a foul memory in the minds of NFL executives, who have let it be known that, after 2010, Miami doesn't have a fighting chance at landing another Super Bowl unless improvements—like the proposed new umbrella/roof—are made. "As part of the community, it falls on our shoulders to make those upgrades happen, if Miami wants to host future Super Bowls and Pro Bowls," Ross says, although some of the funding will have to come from tax dollars.

The NFL touts that the positive economic impact on a city hosting a Super Bowl can near \$500 million; recent academic studies report that it can be less than \$100 million. Regardless of the total amount, in South Florida, where foreclosures and unemployment rates soar, any infusion of cash is a good thing. While newspapers and naysayers are spouting that the NFL inflates the impact in order to encourage governments to use tax dollars to fund stadium improvements (such as those that the

Dolphins just proposed), Ross is adamant that it is the community—not the stadium—that benefits from hosting the Super Bowl.

"I don't make any money from having the Super Bowl here," he explains. "The NFL sponsors everything, and I am just the host." (He jokes that it even costs him money, as he has to host a lavish party for all of the NFL owners the night before the big game at the new Viceroy. During the event, some of the minority owners will be performing—such as Gloria Estefan, who will be singing "Are You Ready for Some Football?") Ross stresses the benefits that the Super Bowl has on the community as a whole—more jobs, an influx of money, and priceless media exposure from around the world. During the entire Super Bowl week, news outlets will be broadcasting from the tropical city, catching the attention of viewers stuck enduring the harsh winter elsewhere. "We have such a great, fun city," Emilio says. "You can do anything here—the weather is fantastic, you can go from swimming to clubs, to great restaurants, the whole variety of the city is fantastic." This will lead to increased tourism following the big game, leading to even more money flowing into the community.

All of the owners of the Miami Dolphins are looking forward to welcoming the NFL and its merry band of followers to the city for Super Bowl weekend. But as Estefan says, "We hope next year the Miami Dolphins go to the Super Bowl!" He and Ross can rest assured that, thanks to their efforts, the entire community is behind them in their quest. ■



ROSS WITH  
MINORITY  
OWNER MARC  
ANTHONY

ANTHONY  
AND HIS WIFE  
JENNIFER  
LOPEZ SHOW  
OFF THEIR  
DOLPHIN  
SPIRIT