



Nanimarquina's Little Field of Flowers rug

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WEST ALABAMA'S NEWEST DESIGN DESTINATION SPEAKS WITH A SPANISH AND ITALIAN LILT.

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It all started eight years ago when design impresario Adrian Duenas and his partner, architect Marcelo Saenz — co-owners of the international Homedentity brand — touched down in Houston as cultural tourists. Duenas, who hails from Ecuador (as does Saenz), remembers their first time driving by the Menil: “We didn’t know it was there, so we parked, got out and were surprised to see Renzo Piano’s first work [in America]. Then, visiting restaurants and feeling the vibe of the city ... We just looked at each other and said, “We will have a business here.”

The design-savvy business and real-life partners (the pair married in New York in 2014) acquired a prime West Alabama tract of land and its teardown building. From the ashes of the former palm-reader space, a new modernist structure housing BeDesign arose. The gleaming two-story, 4,400-square-foot building designed by Saenz serves as a showcase for a curated perspective on contemporary European home furnishings, beginning with the signature Paola Lenti collection, a Houston exclusive for an Italian brand heralded for its understated lines and restrained perfection. (Lenti is famed for a forward-looking show presented in a monastery during a recent Milan furniture fair). At BeDesign, Lenti is joined by futuristic Vibia lighting and minimalist Elitis wall coverings; the three collections hold court on the expansive first floor. Above is a Kartell shop-within-shop, designed by the brand’s Ferruccio Laviani. More Houston exclusives includes sculptural Spanish Nanimarquina rugs (Little Field of Flowers won



Adrian Duenas and Marcelo Saenz at BeDesign. Little Field of Flowers rug by Spanish brand Nanimarquina.



A look from Paola Lenti, one of BeDesign's Houston exclusives

our hearts), parent company Homedentity Italy's smart settees and sleek chrome coffee tables shaped like intersecting orbs, and a sinuous, functional illuminated room divider by Canadian house Molo, which, surprisingly, is made from cardboard (a steal at \$1,200 — and perfect for sky-rise living).



Sofa and coffee table by parent company Homedentity Italy

During a tour of the upstairs gallery, Duenas singled out design names never before in the Texan market: Triade (boasting designers including Philippe Starck and Patricia Urquiola), Cierre (quintessential Italian leather furniture), CasaDesus (Spanish sofas), Marset (Spanish lighting) and DB Barcelona Design (inspired by Salvador Dali, Gaudi and other artful luminaries).

We also sighted small treasures: Pop collages by Houston artist Curtis Gannon, salvaged from vintage comics (from \$1,800) and witty candles with a mid-century stance by Jordi Labanda, which double as table sculpture and make perfect hostess gifts for the architecturally inclined (\$60 to \$120).

BeDesign, 2016 W. Alabama St., 713.623.1177, be-design.us.

A MONUMENTAL DESIGN FÊTE: ARIA STONE GALLERY OPENING



ANNE LEE PHILLIPS ON A ROCKING EVENING. PHOTOGRAPHY EMILE BROWNE.

Architects and interior designers, with clients in tow, filled Aria Stone Gallery for the innovative stone boutique's grand opening. Vino in hand, guests perused aisle upon aisle of gorgeous natural stone, nearly 10,000 square feet of specimens displayed as if it were in an art gallery. Small wonder, then, that since the showroom's Houston debut (it opened in 2013 in Dallas), designers have begun treating stone like artwork, sourcing large slabs with intriguing patterns to hang on bedroom or dining-room walls and to cover shower walls in lieu of tile. Installations by Chris Wynn of Statement Furniture were also on hand — particularly striking was a long, dramatic custom Cielo petrified-wood table. A guitarist and a vocalist provided ambiance, and in a festive surprise, Brazilian dancers in full regalia burst onto the scene for a performance. Guests didn't leave empty-handed, besides inspiration, each left with a gift bag with an architectural scale, note pad, whiskey stones and scented candle. On the scene: Owner **Vinny Tavares** with team members **April Graves** and **Lisa Cline** mingled with designer **Gin Braverman**, **Payton Bauer**, **Courtney Blair**, **Lindsay Robinson**, **Scott Boyd**, **Laura Woods**, **Jennifer Loh**, and **Al Parrish**. For more party coverage, visit papercitymag.com.

