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July / August 2026



Let me entertain you

As RH opens its latest lavish homeware-meets-hospitality gallery in the heart of London's Mayfair, Chairman and CEO Gary Friedman reveals the dynamism behind the growth of this global luxury brand...



During the frenzy of Milan design week back in April, you might have expected the most talked-about happening to have been the launch of a cutting-edge piece of furniture from one of the bastions of 'Made in Italy' design, maybe a collaboration with one of Milan's world-famous fashion brands or a reissue of a classic from one of the Italian maestros – but no. The event on everyone's lips this year came instead from a brand hailing from the US, with a spectacular bash attended by Hollywood celebrities including Margot Robbie and Zoe Saldana, DJs suspended in a treetop booth 20 metres above the dancing crowds, champagne and cocktails flowing and enough canapés to fill a stadium. It was a party so raucous that revellers compared it to being at a debauched, Gatsbyesque soirée of the Twenties. This is how luxury furniture and hospitality brand RH announces its arrival into a new city, and Milan and its residents didn't know quite what had hit them. While the grand sign on the frontage of the elegant Palazzo del Principe di Piombino on Corso Venezia 'RH Furniture, Design, Food & Wine' may have made some snobbish Italians baulk, it left no doubt as to RH's intentions: this is glamorous interiors retail at its most bold,



and this company means business. 'That plaque just highlights that we don't do anything that we're not really passionate about,' says chairman and CEO Gary Friedman, who is credited with rescuing the company from near bankruptcy when he took over the helm in 2001, and transforming it into an enterprise worth almost \$3 billion today. 'Nobody cares about our business more than we do.'

Friedman is sitting at his home in California overlooking Sonoma valley vineyards, discussing this month's launch of RH London, 'the final piece in the jigsaw' of an extensive global expansion plan that started back in June 2023 with the launch of RH England housed in the magnificent 17th-century stately home Aynhoe Park in the Cotswold countryside. Outposts in Munich and Düsseldorf followed later that year, Madrid and Brussels opened the year after and Paris's gallery opened in September 2025. 'Years ago, I remember hearing a quote from Bernard Arnault [CEO of LVMH],' says



Opposite, clockwise from top The restored exterior of the new RH London gallery on Savile Row, Mayfair; RH chairman and CEO Gary Friedman photographed on a landing at RH Paris; an opulent interior at RH Brussels
This page, clockwise from above The James and Sophie Perkins Stairway to Heaven at RH England; RH Madrid's Great Room, featuring seating and an intricate chandelier; the architecture and design library found at RH Paris

'We wanted to bring out the beauty of these old buildings. I thought it would be a lot less expensive [than building new], but it's just the opposite. It's an expensive habit, fraught with challenges, but you learn so much each time'

Friedman. 'Someone asked him how to create a luxury brand in China, and he said "you build great stores in Paris, London and New York". So our grand plan was always that we'd open in New York first and that would be our bridge to Europe, and then we'd do Paris and Milan, because they are the centres of home design, and London was always part of that plan, of course.'

The new RH London gallery that opens 27 June is in one of the capital's most prime locations. Spanning five levels and more than 5,000 sq m in the middle of Mayfair, the site includes a Palladian mansion adjoined by three other landmark properties set at the end of Savile Row between the high-end boutiques of Bond Street, influential art galleries and the vibrant energy of the West End. It becomes the latest in an increasing list of heritage properties that RH has taken on, and took around five years to fully restore and renovate. 'I love the new buildings that we do from the ground up,'

says Friedman, 'but it's so costly to build great architecture today, so most people don't and you end up with these inexpensive glass towers. We wanted to bring out the beauty of these old buildings, and at the start I thought it would be a lot less expensive, but it's just the opposite. It's an expensive habit, fraught with challenges, but you learn so much each time.'

As well as becoming famous for its expansive luxury furniture pieces and these ambitious property projects, since Friedman's involvement RH has become known for offering so much more. 'Most retail spaces are windowless boxes that lack humanity,' says Friedman. 'No fresh air, no natural light. Plants tend to die in most department stores, so they can't be good for people either, so we've tried to blur the lines between shopping and hospitality. Everything that we do has to render the product more valuable. Inspiring architecture, interior-design services ►

update



Clockwise, from above The World of RH bar and lounge at RH Paris; The Paloma Collection, RH Estates at RH Milan; the architecture and design library at RH England; RH England's impressive location, Aynhoe Park, a Cotswolds stately home

and having great restaurants elevates the experience and makes the brand more meaningful.'

So as well as a restaurant, wine bar and tea salon on its ground floor, RH London will include The Perch Bar and restaurant and The World of RH lounge on its second level, overseen by legendary designer and hotelier Anouska Hempel, whom Friedman has long admired. 'She's one of the one of the greatest interior designers that ever lived,' he enthuses. 'When I first went to Blakes [created by Hempel in 1978] years and years ago, I was just so amazed by her obsession with and attention to detail, the use of colour, how architectural and impactful it was. We finally became connected around the time we opened RH England, and I'm so thrilled she agreed to work with us on this. She's 85, but she's like the godmother of the boutique hotel.'

The London opening will also coincide with the launch of the brand's new design concept, RH Estates, which focuses on a more traditional market and includes luxury furnishings, lighting and décor for both indoors and out, and exclusive collections from the archives of famed US-designer Michael Taylor, who is

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credited with creating the California Look. The company's other brand sectors, RH Interiors, RH Modern and RH Outdoor, will also be represented, alongside rare art, antiques and artefacts sourced from around the world. As Friedman notes: 'Like most British things, it's going to be quirky, eccentric and really interesting.'

'Our journey is to try to create the first fully integrated luxury home brand in the world,' says Friedman, 'and this feels like the best place to continue where we're going. It's another foundation for building a strong global brand. We believe that by chasing our hopes and dreams, we inspire others to chase theirs, and by fighting for what we believe in, we encourage others to do the same.' rh.com **LD**