

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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Smart Moves

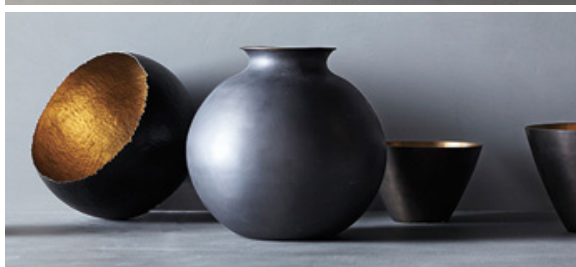
**NATE BERKUS +
JEREMIAH BRENT'S
DOMESTIC BLISS**

**HOW AD'S 2015
INNOVATORS
ARE CHANGING
THE WORLD**

**THE U.S. EMBASSY
IN SPAIN
GETS A CHIC
NEW LOOK**

**PLUS
SAN FRANCISCO'S
DESIGN BOOM**





DEBUT

A NEW ATTITUDE

RH Modern bursts onto the scene with a dramatic array of products created with some of the design world's biggest names

Go big or go home. It's a concept Gary Friedman understands implicitly. Since he became CEO of Restoration Hardware (now known as RH) in 2001, he has pushed the company to stake its claim in the design world through bold, provocative moves: opening vast galleries in high-profile venues, becoming a player in the contemporary art world, and seducing consumers with an avalanche of accessible, tradition-inspired furnishings showcased in mailbox-busting "source books."

Now RH is setting its sights on the modern design market. "RH Modern is not a new collection or subdivision, it's an entirely new business," Friedman says. "We see this as an opportunity not just to participate in a market but to create one. We want RH Modern to be the iPod of the furniture world—the innovation that changes everything."

Judging by the scope of the launch, he's not exaggerating. RH Modern bows this fall with an impeccably designed catalogue,

a website, and acres of floor space. The latter includes a dedicated street-level showroom at the company's store in New York City's Flatiron District and a complete rebranding of its former Los Angeles flagship on Beverly Boulevard as an RH Modern gallery. Then there's the product range concocted by major global talents, from AD100 architecture firm Marmol Radziner to rug maestro Ben Soleimani to Nicholas and Harrison Condos, the dashing Australian siblings who made their RH debut in May with three sleekly classical outdoor collections.

Friedman explains the genesis of the RH Modern juggernaut as a matter of connecting the proverbial dots. "Dot one was the confluence of two of our board members building modern homes—one

RH chairman and CEO Gary Friedman with the Maslow Spider desk from the RH Modern rollout. **Above, clockwise from left:** The Smythson Shagreen platform bed and Monroe Slimline tables, all designed by Van Thiel. The Luca chair. Brass vessels.



in Palm Beach, the other in Miami—at about the same time that I was buying a midcentury house in L.A.," he recalls. "We saw that there wasn't one truly comprehensive store where a person could furnish an entire modern home."

And yet the past two decades have seen an explosion of interest in vintage 20th-century furniture, not to mention widespread revitalization of urban districts replete with open lofts that cry out for modern decor. Friedman also cites the proliferation of game-changing

DISCOVERIES



buildings by global architecture stars, Apple's innovative product design, and the buying power of the millennial generation—weaned on technology and moving into their home-buying years—as impossible to ignore.

"We kept opening our aperture wider and wider, and the more ideas we saw, the more we thought that this could be big," Friedman says. As for product development, the CEO says, "We didn't get too specific too early. We looked at a huge range of designs, chose the very best, and let the aesthetic grow organically."

The list of RH Modern collaborators—or artisans, as the company likes to call them—is a constellation of high-profile international designers. In addition to Leo Marmol and Ron Radziner of Marmol Radziner, Soleimani, and the Condoses, the star-studded roster includes Jonathan Browning of San Francisco, L.A.'s Thomas Bina, Anthony Cox of Ho Chi Minh City, and New Yorkers Thomas O'Brien, Vicente Wolf, Barlas Baylar, and Aerin Lauder. For good measure, RH Modern is also reinterpreting and reissuing suave 1950s Milo Baughman pieces.

"There was absolutely no brief," says Browning, whose lighting collections for RH Modern utilize brass, lead crystal, borosilicate glass, and LED versions of Edison bulbs. "They simply wanted to see everything I could come up with, and then they picked the best." Bina, whose

designs incorporate concrete as well as richly grained woods from around the world, adds that Friedman was "so excited about the prospect of using warmer, organic materials in a wholly modern way."

"RH's concept of modern is one I share," Baylar remarks. "It's about clean lines, basic geometries, and solid materials crafted with integrity. I've been singing this same song for years, but Gary's got a much bigger platform to spread that gospel. He wants to make modern happen in a way that's never been tried before." *rhmodern.com* —MAYER RUS



From top: Jonathan Browning's Boule de Cristal chandelier. The Wexler Barrel-back dining chair. The Antoccino dining table. The Maxim media console by Van Thiel. Ben Soleimani's Palma carpet. A rendering of the first stand-alone RH Modern gallery, in Los Angeles.

