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DEFINING VISION

THE MODERN MAN

Restoration Hardware chairman and CEO Gary Friedman is once again shaking up the industry, this time by redefining retail and launching RH Modern.

By Phebe Wahl

“It’s not what was; it is what is and what is next,” says Restoration Hardware chairman and CEO Gary Friedman, referring to modern design. The industry icon, who rose through the ranks at retail giants like Williams-Sonoma, Pottery Barn and The Gap before taking the reins at Restoration Hardware, is always evolving, and his latest unveiling, RH Modern, epitomizes his design aesthetic. The luxe launch involved a star-studded cast, from world-renowned designers Barlas Baylar, Anthony Cox, Thomas Bina, Rudy van Thiel Sr. CONTINUED...



GENERATION NEXT From top: Boule de Cristal round chandelier in burnished brass, from \$4,195, Modena track arm sofa, from \$4,195, Milo Baughman model No. 3426, 1968 Fabric chair, from \$3,395, and Shagreen Cube rectangular coffee table, from \$1,395, all by RH Modern at Restoration Hardware, The Gallery at The Estate in Buckhead; Gary Friedman, chairman and CEO of Restoration Hardware.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RESTORATION HARDWARE



"WE TRY TO CONCEPTUALIZE
SOMETHING NEW AND BETTER,
NOT JUST NEW AND DIFFERENT."
—GARY FRIEDMAN



...CONTINUED and Rudy van Thiel Jr., who conceived the collection, to famed art director Fabien Baron, who designed the massive 540-page editorial-style *Source Book* and the corresponding campaign. "We decided to jump in with both feet and not just dip in a toe," says Friedman of the launch, which spans all categories and includes a massive retail presence in several stores like the new 15,000-square-foot gallery in Los Angeles. "We placed a big bet," he adds.

Friedman spotted a convergence of trends in the marketplace and saw the opportunity to establish a retail market for modern housewares that wasn't just behind the "to the trade" iron curtain. "You can look at it the way a surfer studies a wave," he muses. "You have to really study how the waves are coming in, how the swells are building and anticipate when a meaningful wave will come," he continues.

A careful curator, Friedman worked with the designers to ensure the collection demonstrates their delicate touch. He explains that in today's fast-paced society, where technology is ubiquitous, "there is a need to go somewhere where there is less information." Organic textures like leather and shagreen, stone, and refined woods mix with metals like brass and bronze, lacquers, and glass and aged mirrors for an elegant and sophisticated yet simple beauty. Standout pieces include lighting from Jonathan Browning and Mariano Fortuny; rugs by Ben Soleimani; outdoor offerings from Leo Marmol and Ron Radziner, Ann Marie Vering, and José Gandía-Blasco; and reissues of iconic originals from midcentury design master Milo Baughman. "There has to be an element to it that you haven't seen before," Friedman says. "We try to conceptualize something new and better, not just new and different." rhmodern.com ■

TOP BRASS Clockwise from top left: Chandelier, from \$3,295; Royce leather chaise, \$3,295, Machinto panel 4-door media console, \$3,295, and Cannele double scone in burnished brass, \$499; Wythe live-edge table in polished brass, from \$12,995, Ellison high-track arm chairs, from \$449, Cannele linear chandelier in burnished brass, from \$3,095, and Maxim panel double-door cabinet, \$3,595; all by RH Modern at Restoration Hardware, The Gallery at The Estate in Buckhead.