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A fusion of French nobility and Moroccan flair, Restoration Hardware's dazzling 19th-century French Empire crystal chandelier, which features hundreds of hand-polished glass beads, exudes classic sophistication.



organic revival.

WRITTEN BY JORGE S. ARANGO | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN BECKERMAN

To create the recently opened Gallery at Highland Village in Houston, Gary Friedman, Restoration Hardware's chairman and co-CEO (with Carlos Alberini), assembled major industry players: architects Howard J. Backen and Jim Gillam; retail concept designer Richard Altuna; lighting designer Ross De Alessi; and landscape architect Rick Scheen. Together, they brought the space to life with novel amenities like a Bellocq Tea Atelier, a floral boutique, and a rooftop garden and conservatory. The luxurious touches herald a new era for the company. "We think of ourselves as curators rather than retailers," says Friedman regarding the process by which he culls materials from every continent and design era to bring a wealth of options to his clientele. "Vision is everything." That vision includes replacing in-mall storefronts with stand-alone galleries exhibiting comprehensive collections amid the grand architecture of new or handsomely restored buildings. "This is just the beginning," says Friedman. "We have a new, original expression of our brand and I couldn't be more excited." restorationhardware.com; 713.328.3100

Photos depict the new 25,000-square-foot Restoration Hardware showroom, Gallery at Highland Village, in Houston. The brand's revamped look is amply scaled, solid in a masculine way and meticulously symmetrical.





Design icon:

I went to the Blakes Hotel in London about 20 years ago and was so inspired by Anouska Hempel's creativity and imagination, and her sense of balance, order and scale. Her work is very original.

Words of wisdom:

In Steve Jobs' commencement speech at Stanford he said, "The only way to do great work is to love what you do." That is the best advice I have ever heard.

Coveted item:

The first time I touched clay, when I was 11, I made a statue that resembled Rodin's *The Thinker*, which I still have. I still scratch my head and ask, "How did I do that?"

Greatest indulgence:

When I want to get away, I go to J.K. Place Capri off the coast of Italy.

Most people don't know...

I grew up with a single mom in a one-room apartment and didn't live in a proper house until I was 43. I'm probably the least likely guy to be doing what I'm doing.

I love what I do because...

I enjoy reconceptualizing and building things. I delight in the sense of discovery and evolution of what we do.

I'm reading...

The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems, by Pablo Neruda.

Personal style:

Very casual. You'll see me in jeans 95 percent of the time with a henley or chambray shirt.

A well-designed home is...

Harmonious to the environment it's in, to the architecture and to the resident. It must create a sense of place and balance.

Current project:

We are working toward our next gallery, which will be housed in the circa 1863 New England Museum of Natural History in Boston.

Insider tip:

Do what you love with people you love, because shared inspiration and excitement are critical.