

ROOM SERVICE

THE IDEAL SPACE isn't defined merely by how it looks, but by how it feels. Color and texture, form and function, light and layout: They all work together to achieve a balanced, inviting space. But what looks easy is almost never easy to achieve. Which is why we asked six of Houston's top interior designers to share what they love about their favorite rooms—along with their best tips and tricks—and, for even more inspiration, visited a Houston building where each condo is more beautiful than the next. Then we combed the city in search of its greatest home design stores, seeking out shops capable of turning our wildest designer dreams into reality.

BY
**SARAH
RUFCA**

Bold and Beautiful

SALLY WHEAT INTERIORS

When a client of Sally Wheat's moved into a larger house in Southside Place with her family, she knew she wanted to do something special in the sitting room adjacent to the front entrance. "She wanted it to be really *wow*," says Wheat. "She wanted people to walk in and say, 'Oh my god.'"



SALLY
WHEAT

Wheat complied, turning the formerly traditional parlor into a dark, dramatic jewel box, starting by painting the paneled walls a matte black (specifically, Farrow & Ball's Off Black). The showpiece of the room is the sofa, covered in a graffiti-inspired fabric by UK's Timorous Beasties—perfect for a smaller room, Wheat says,

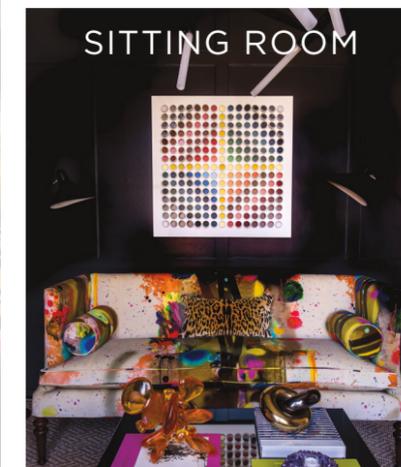
which makes a great place to experiment with a bold color or prints.

"That sofa is the star and everything else kind of plays off of it, so it's not too loud," she says. "When something is really bold like that, I try to tone everything else down."

Among the supporting pieces are a three-dimensional work of art found at

the Contemporary Art Fair Houston, a vintage sheaf of wheat table, a contemporary Roll & Hill-inspired light fixture that holds its own in the space, and accessories with a glam '70s vibe.

"I like things that are a little different from the norm," says Wheat. "It's this tiny little box of awesomeness."



COURTESY SALLY WHEAT INTERIORS

Where to Find...

LISTINGS BY SARAH RUFCA AND JEANNE LYONS DAVIS

... Extravagant accessories you never knew you needed

MANOR

Houstonian Beth Delozier-Hayes's online shop is filled with girly home goods from coasters to lamps, affordable art prints to furniture. shopthemanor.com

MECOX

This Southampton-based store will add a dose of drama to any interior, whether in the form of a glorious malachite secretary or a jadeite-colored, recycled-glass coffee table. 3912 Westheimer Rd., 713-355-2100, mecox.com

MERCHANT & MARKET

You're guaranteed to find something you simply *must* have at designer Gino Vian's eclectic storefront. Maybe it's a miniature clawfoot tub, a ches-terfield sofa, a bust of Mozart, or a tobacco and patchouli candle—who knows? The possibilities are endless. 1637 Westheimer Rd., 346-204-4596, mrchmkt.com

...Impressive objects from around the globe

ARKA LIVING

At this fascinating store, global inspiration joins forces with minimalism to create striking stone-and-wood furniture that beautifully melds simple shapes with brilliant textures. 4715 Main St. Ste. A, 832-455-9859, arkaliving.com

BALINSKAS IMPORTS

This shop's contemporary exterior belies its treasure trove of architectural antiques, textiles and furnishings, imported from places like Nepal, Afghanistan and Mexico. 410 Martin Rd., 713-227-7919, balinskasimports.com

LAURIER BLANC

Owner Suzanne Coppola travels the globe in search of interesting and beautiful objects. Visit her expanded store near Rice Village, and she'll tell you all about how she found her gilded Burmese trunks, Parisian prints and beaded Kenyan jewelry. 1926 Bissonnet St., 713-485-0071, laurierblanc.com

...Mid-century styling for vintage prices

HIGH FASHION HOME

Whether your style is organic-midcentury, Hollywood Regency-glam, or eclectic-urban contemporary, this five-story showroom will have what you're looking for. 3100 Travis St., 713-528-3838, highfashionhome.com

JOYBIRD FURNITURE

Love vintage furniture but hate how small the sofas are? The internet brand's first and only showroom solves that problem with midcentury styles that are completely customizable. 1735 Westheimer Rd., 832-831-3037, joybird.com

TB3HOME

The midcentury-inspired pieces at this warehouse studio are shockingly affordable. You'll find good-looking tables, chairs and sofas, the last of which start at less than \$800—basically, IKEA money. 2301 Dallas St., 713-322-4264, tb3home.com



...Everything for elegant entertaining

BERING'S

Houston's *ne plus ultra* of hardware stores offers the big names in tabletop décor—Riedel, Le Creu-



LAURIER BLANC

set, Reed & Barton and the like—along with all the grills and kitchen gadgets you could ever need. Multiple locations, berings.com

BLUE LEAF

This neighborhood shop offers one of the town's most registry-worthy collections of china and dinnerware, by MacKenzie-Childs, L'Object, Anna Weatherley and more. 2303 South Blvd., 713-520-9975, blueleafhouston.com

SEEING PINK ELEPHANTS

It's no longer unusual to see vintage glass sets at stores around town, but this collection is unmatched, ranging from tiki glasses and bar carts to classic designs by Culver and Fred Press. 2311 Westheimer Rd. (in the River Oaks Antiques & Interiors Pavilion), 713-828-8613, facebook.com/midcenturybarware

...Cutting-edge design

CAROL PIPER RUGS

At this light-filled gallery space, the rugs are artworks in their own right, from a Miró-inspired textile hanging, to antique Khotans and Oushaks, to Piper's own collaborations with local artists and designers. 1809 W. Gray, 713-524-2442, carolpiperrugs.com

KUHL-LINSCOMB

Design aficionados can easily spend hours here, exploring lighting by Tom Dixon, textiles by Missoni Home, seating by Fritz Hansen and much, much more. 2418 W. Alabama St., 713-526-6000, kuhl-linscomb.com

TIENDA X

Owned by talented designers Garrett Hunter and Michael Landrum, Tienda X (pronounced 'equis') is the cooler-than-cool gallery to hit when you're looking for something amazing and a little avant-garde, whether it's furniture or artwork. 1420 W. Alabama St., 713-534-1257, tiendaequis.com

...Every light fixture under the sun

BROWN

If you'd rather get a root canal than shop from a cookie-cutter catalogue, this store's for you, offering antique lighting and custom creations you won't see on any other showroom floor. 2940 Ferndale St., 713-522-2151, shopbybrown.com

LIGHT

A purveyor of more than 130 world-renowned brands, this shop is a fixture in the design community thanks to its bright and airy showroom, chock-full of products for every style, space and budget. 4202 Richmond Ave., 713-640-5568, thelightcompany.net

THE NEON GALLERY

For more than 30 years, self-taught neon artist Tim Walker has been blowing glass and fabricating custom neon signs that are great for your local watering hole and your living room alike. 1416 W. Alabama St., 713-528-5922, theneogallery.com

...A piece of Houston's past

HISTORIC HOUSTON SALVAGE WAREHOUSE

This non-profit's members come here for yesteryear's preserved pine floors, plantation shutters, patina-ed hardware and intricate millwork. Non-members can explore, too, at the open house on Oct. 29. Joanna Gaines would be proud! 1200 National St., 713-522-0542, historichouston.org/salvage-warehouse



LONGORIA COLLECTION

LEFT TO RIGHT: TB3, MAX BURKHALTER, LONGORIA COLLECTION, JOYCE HORN ANTIQUES

THE RECLAIMED WOOD SHOP

Town meets country in this shop's vast selection of rustic salvaged pieces, which includes cypress beams, butcher blocks and barn doors complete with original hardware. 2102 W. 34th St., 832-206-7300, thereclaimedwoodshop.com

RECOOP DESIGNS

This custom shop offers lighting, art and reclaimed furniture. Want to preserve a fallen tree? They'll make it into a custom dining table for you. 1714 W. 23rd St., 346-352-4921, recoopdesigns.com

...Sleek European modernism

BEDESIGN

This is a one-stop shop for furnishings that are Euro-chic without looking cheap. Think Paola Lenti seating, Nanimarquina rugs and Pianca couches. 2016 W. Alabama St., 713-623-1177, be-design.us

CANTONI

This contemporary purveyor boasts not only the largest selection of modern furnishings in Houston, but 11 on-staff interior designers. 9889 Westheimer Rd., 713-787-9494, cantoni.com

INTERNUM

A showroom stocked with high-end Italian furnishings? Now *that's* amore. Emphasizing quality European craftsmanship, the place stocks sought-after brands like B&B Italia and Kasthall. 3303 Kirby Dr., 832-242-9470, internum.com

...The best pieces to beautify your bathroom or kitchen

EXPRESSIONS HOME GALLERY

Everything you want (a Kohler steam shower) and forgot you needed (flush-mount lighting and door hinges), you'll find at this well-stocked destination. 7071 Southwest Fwy., 713-781-2222, expressionshomegallery.com

SNAIDERO

Admit it: The kitchen is your favorite room of the house. So deck it out in a decadent design from this award-winning Italian cabinet outfitter. 3801 Kirby Dr., 832-426-4764, snaidero-usa.com

WESTHEIMER PLUMBING & HARDWARE

Family-owned and -operated since 1976, this revered Houston institution offers decorative hardware, plumbing and fixtures. If its showroom doesn't inspire you to get cracking on that home renovation, we don't know what will. 3600 Kirby Dr., 713-942-9519, westheimerplumbing.com



JOYCE HORN ANTIQUES

...Villa-worthy European antiques

BACK ROW HOME

This isn't your great aunt's antique store. Showcasing early European and American furnishings, it also touts a wide variety of on-trend home accessories. 8570 Katy Frwy., 713-827-9292, backrowhome.com

CHATEAU DOMINGUE

Specializing in French, Italian and Belgian antiques, this is the city's premiere importer of European furnishings and architectural salvage, the perfect place to go to add a layer of *je ne sais quoi* to your home. 3615 W. Alabama St. 713-961-3444, chateaudomingue.com

JOYCE HORN ANTIQUES

For decades, the Horn family has scouted Europe a couple times a year, bringing gorgeous armoires, trumeaux and settees back to Houston. Insiders know to show up early on days when new containers arrive. 7065 Old Katy Rd., 713-688-0507, joycehornantiques.com

...The makings of an outdoor oasis

JANUS ET CIE

Rain, shine or snow—well, probably not snow—this industry leader's outdoor furniture, made with high-quality aluminum, will bring, and take, the heat. 3935 San Felipe St. 713-621-5950, janusetcie.com

RESTORATION HARDWARE

This design institution continues to boast classic outdoor pieces such as chaise lounges and teak dining tables, showcased on the third-floor open-air terrace of its spectacular Highland Village store. 4030 Westheimer Rd., 713-328-3100, restorationhardware.com

THOMPSON + HANSON

Turn that uninspiring lawn into an entertaining haven with help from this nursery and garden boutique, which is also a full service-landscape architecture firm. 3600 W. Alabama St., 713-622-0602, thompsonhanson.com