

SCENE

WRITTEN BY PAULETTE PEARSON



TALKING SHOP

AUGUST SAGE

Austin-based Rowena Lei continues to capture our attention with the understated beauty and subtle sophistication of the artisanal handcrafted goods she offers through August Sage—from ceramics to furniture and so many things in between. Lei collaborates with artisans all over the world—Kenya, Mexico and beyond—to produce modern home decor with uncompromising materials and master craftsmanship. Read on as we chat with Lei about her endeavor. augustsage.com

Tell us about yourself. I grew up near Seattle and moved to Austin in 2016. I'm first-generation Chinese-American. Over the years, I slowly transitioned into a creative direction—with a house remodel, studying interior design and then with August Sage.

Why did you decide to launch August Sage? I began feeling wasteful styling my home with meaningless pieces. I would hold on to a few treasured items from my

travels that were made with time-honored artistry and technique, and it dawned on me: I wanted things people had taken care to create. I valued natural materials and soulful craftsmanship.

What does August Sage offer? Handcrafted, natural-material home accents.

Describe your aesthetic. A juxtaposition between raw and refined, with neutral, earthy materials in elegant forms. At August Sage, we embody sophisticated and philosophical ways of living, such as Japanese wabi-sabi.

How do you support artisans around the world? We deeply value our artisan relationships. Our partnership support connects them to the global economy and helps them develop business structures. The goal is to create opportunities for them to pursue growth in their own business, or to explore other personal passions.

FIRST LOOK

NATUZZI ITALIA DALLAS

Now you can infuse a little bit of *la dolce vita* into your own home, right from the heart of the Lone Star State. Natuzzi Italia Dallas has opened the doors to its freestanding location in the burgeoning Knox-Henderson area. Customers may peruse the full range of products—sofas, armchairs, tables, beds and more—available from Natuzzi Italia, which has developed a worldwide reputation for combining the beauty and craftsmanship of Italian design with comfort since it was founded by Pasquale Natuzzi in 1959. Providing a comprehensive range of customization options—from upholstery to finishes—for every product from the brand's expansive collection, the showroom offers expert interior design assistance from seasoned designers well-versed in the company's Italian-made products and interior design planning tools. Look for new collections from celebrated designers Marcel Wanders, Mauro Lipparini and Massimo Iosa Ghini set to debut this year. That's amore, indeed. natuzzidallas.com



TALKING SHOP PHOTO: BENJAMIN HOLTROP.
FIRST LOOK PHOTO: COURTESY NATUZZI ITALIA.



WORK IT

FUNCTION MEETS DESIGN IN THESE OFFICES TO INSPIRE CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Designer Katie Davis of **Katie Davis Design** used the upbeat aura of her client, Courtney Paddock, founder of the event planning firm Little Coterie Studio, as a jumping off point for her home office in Houston (above). “She’s a party planner, she’s exciting and bubbly—this is *her* space and we wanted it to reflect her personality,” says Davis. To that end, Benjamin Moore’s Wythe Blue-painted walls form a backdrop for cheery pink sofa upholstery by Schuyler Samperton Textiles and heirloom chairs recovered in chartreuse Maresca Textiles fabric. Meanwhile, an oversize coffee table provides ample space for vendor presentations and meetings, and a center cabinet between two workstations ensures plenty of storage. Let the event planning begin. katedavisdesign.com



For a corporate office in The Woodlands, designer Julie Dodson of **Dodson Interiors** created a sophisticated, classic and warm environment nodding to the client’s home country of Argentina. With Abel Design Group also onboard to assist with the architecture, Dodson created what she calls a “masculine transitional” look—mixing traditional styles with streamlined silhouettes and modern artworks. “We wanted it to feel light and airy but grounded at the same time,” explains Dodson, who replicated the chairs in front of the desk after a family heirloom of the client’s for a personal touch. “Even if it’s corporate, you can add personality by introducing something that reminds the client of home.” dodsoninteriors.com

A LA CARTE

Sunday Press: What’s old is new again in Houston’s Garden Oaks area, where gin design group’s creative director, Gin Braverman, tackled the transformation of an abandoned stand-alone dry-cleaning building to create the newfangled Sunday Press. Complete with a drive-thru, the high-end yet fast-casual café is a reimagining of the traditional coffee shop concept. The goal “was to create an environment that feels so good patrons experience a different vibration upon entry,” says Braverman, who juxtaposed playful shapes and colors with refined modern lines and finishes. “We want guests to feel cared for and experience hospitality on multiple levels. The sensory experience is fully considered from the music to the lighting and the tactile elements.” gindesigngroup.com; sunday-press.com



Up Scale: San Antonio native Crystal Sinclair, of the eponymous Crystal Sinclair Designs, jumped at the opportunity to renovate a beloved 1880s structure located in her hometown’s King William Historic District. Working with local firm Voges Design, and with contributions from DeliaKenza Interiors, the designer helped bring the space back to life as the chic New American restaurant aptly named Up Scale. “We wanted to make the space functional yet beautiful, unforgettable and, of course, ‘upscale,’” she says. Case in point: custom chinoiserie silk wallpaper wows in the back garden room dotted with red geometric chairs (below), which were fabricated by Litmus Industries and upholstered by Under Cover. crystalsinclairdesigns.com; upscalesouthtown.com

