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EN GARDE!

LOS ANGELES CHAMPION OF DESIGN, GARDE, BRINGS ITS CUTTING-EDGE AUTHORITY TO DALLAS WITH A STUNNING NEW RETAIL SHOWROOM.

By Rebecca Sherman. Photography Lisa Petrole.



Roly Poly dining table and chairs are Faye Toogood, London. Ceramic sculpture by Re Jin Lee, NY. Mirror is Ben & Aja Blanc, Rhode Island. Giopato & Coombes light fixture, Italy.









Sofa is Pierre Augustin Rose, Paris. Emma Boomkamp wall hanging, Mexico City. Light pendant is Bec Brittain, NY. Rug is CC-Tapis, Italy.

Top left: Sofa, chairs, and ottoman are Pierre Augustin Rose, Paris. De La Espada wood side tables, Portugal. Bronze sculptures are Herma de Wit, The Netherlands. Chandelier is Paul Matter, India. Rug by Armadillo, L.A. Giopato & Coombes sconces, Italy.

Top right: Kerstens table and benches, Belgium. Apparatus Studio light pendant, NY. Ceramics on table are by Julie Nelson, England. Ceramics on shelf Vincent Van Duysen, Belgium. Rug by Armadillo, L.A.

Bottom left: Kitchen island by Edward Collinson, London. Paul Matter sconces, Italy.

Garde — one of the country's most forward-thinking purveyors of design — has opened a retail store near the Dallas Design District in a stunning 6,000-square-foot converted warehouse on Wycliff. Scotti Sitz, who founded Garde in L.A. in 2012, has brought her chic stable of international designers to the new Dallas space, with furniture, lighting, tabletop, and jewelry. It's all set against a moody, industrial backdrop of concrete floors and hand-plastered walls painted a dusky hue, punctuated by a 12-foot-long checkout desk clad in dark charcoal stone.

Dallas is Garde's third location (a small outpost in Summerland near Santa Barbara opened in 2018). Dallas wasn't initially on the radar, says Sitz, who co-owns Garde with her husband, John Davidson. "Dallas kept popping up as a great city, and it just started to make sense. There's an energy and hospitality and openness to new ideas here. The design community is really growing, and we want to be a part of that." Sitz is banking on the store's darker palette, spare styling, and dynamic roster of designers coming out of Europe and Latin America to set it apart. "We're bringing in merchandising and design that's very different from what Dallas



Garde co-owners
Scotti Sitz, John Davidson.

has had before," she says. "But we're also embracing this wonderful culture in Dallas, and we're hoping to put the two together so that someone comes in and says, 'Oh my God, I want to live in here' — instead of 'I'm looking for a sofa.' You know?"

Most of Garde's designers have not previously been available in Dallas, including works by a vanguard of Belgians such as Vincent Van Duysen and Michael Verheyden, both celebrated designers whose minimalist serving ware and objects have been featured at Garde since its inception. Rising stars include Armenian-born interior designer Noro Khachatryan of Khachatryan Studio, who began his career in Brussels at age 17. He creates elegantly reductive furniture and objects that emphasize materials, such as a refined suite of geometric side tables in solid brass and marble. A limited-edition solid-brass chair has the low scale and proportions reminiscent of traditional Middle Eastern seating. Also look for objects later this fall by Ben Storms, who designs and makes furniture and sculpture out of his studio in Brussels. In his hands, a heavy marble tabletop is honed so impossibly thin as to appear weightless, and an inflated stainless-steel wall sculpture takes the improbable shape of a soft cushion.

Garde is also showcasing lighting by Italy's Giopato & Coombes, which combines contemporary design with master Venetian-glass artistry and bronze and brass elements. And, from France, experimental designer Pauline Esparon has developed her own techniques to rework materials such as oil, wood, berries, leaves, and roots into useable products, including perfumes, tables, and rugs. Her exquisite, fringed ottomans, poufs, and sculptures are made from a weaving technique that highlights the raw, fluffy qualities of the short fibers of flax. Edward Collinson's sophisticated kitchen island — on display at Garde — is handcrafted in his London studio. The piece features a sink, tap, and induction unit of such understated design that it's easy to mistake it for a fine piece of living-room furniture.

Sitz is also making a big push to bring in new designers to Dallas from Latin American countries, including installation artist and furniture maker Brian Thoreen. Based in Mexico City and L.A., Thoreen pushes the boundaries of furniture design using materials like rubber. His dramatic 75-inch mixed marble, brass, and steel coffee table swaggers with angles and scale that could easily double as sculpture.

A native Angeleno, Scotti Sitz worked as a fashion executive in New York at Calvin Klein and Giorgio Armani before returning to L.A., where she turned her focus to interior design. The neutral, elegant minimalism of Klein and Armani heavily influenced her interiors work, but it was a job redoing a house in the Hollywood Hills for a French director and his wife that changed everything. "The wife only wanted me to use furnishings by European designers, but 10 years ago, you couldn't find anything like that in Los Angeles except vintage," Sitz says. Even in New York, small, under-the-radar European lines were almost nonexistent. "So we went to Europe and started exploring designers who were doing amazing work, and I thought, 'Why aren't these people here?'" A lightbulb went off, and the idea for Garde took shape.

Sitz convinced rising designers such as Faye Toogood in London and Vincent Van Duysen in Belgium to give her one piece to sell. "I started very small, with mostly accessories and gift items and tabletop and textiles. And then it snowballed." Van Duysen introduced Sitz to a raft of other Belgian designers including Michael Verheyden, who were all creating furniture and accessories with a beautiful, austere luxury that reminded her of what Calvin Klein was doing in the '80s and Armani in the '90s. Garde's first lighting collection was by Apparatus Studio, long before Apparatus's genius designers Gabriel Hendifar and Jeremy Anderson made a splash in New York and Milan with their experimental, exquisitely crafted lighting. Like Apparatus, many of Garde's early designers have become stars, including Toogood and Van Duysen. It's worth noting that all still sell their works at Garde.

"A lot of the people we represent make functional art," Sitz says. "I think it's a good fit for Dallas, which has such a love of art and amazing museums." As it turns out, not only is the city a perfect fit for Garde, it's also ideal for Sitz and Davidson personally. Earlier this year, the couple pulled up stakes in L.A. and moved into a high-rise overlooking the Dallas Arts District. They've bought property in East Kessler Park, where they're building a house designed by Phoenix-based multi-disciplinary firm Tennen Studio. "Dallas doesn't have an ocean or a Pacific Coastline, but the neighborhoods here are gorgeous," Sitz says. "There's something a little old school and traditional about Dallas that takes me back in a nice way. People are friendly; they like to go shopping and go to lunch. And, there's an energy that reminds me of L.A. 10 years ago. I keep pinching myself — saying, 'Why isn't everybody coming here?' And then I'm, like, 'Oh be quiet. They might be.'" *Garde, 1305 Wycliff Ave., gardeshop.com.*









Top: Chairs Pierre Augustin Rose, Paris. Table is Faye Toogood, London. Apparatus Studio light pendant, NY. Lamp on desk is Lost Profile Studio, Australia. Giopato & Coombes sconces, Italy.

Above: Apparatus Studio Arrow pendants, NY. Custom stone desk and ceramics by Jeffrey Loura, NY.

Middle right: Articolo light pendant, Australia. Chair Destroyers/Builders, Belgium. Table is Aldo Bakker, The Netherlands. Vase Alexa Lixfeld, Germany.

Bottom right: Totems by Robin Whiteman, NY.

Garde will host designer Robert Stilin on Thursday, September 23, 7 to 9 pm, with cocktails, salon talk, and book signing, as part of Texas Design Week Dallas. TXDW is a ticketed event; for tickets and complete schedule, go to texasdesignweek.com.