

# SCENE

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## TALKING SHOP

### THE SELBY HOUSE



Cat Carothers recently relocated to Dallas and opened The Selby House after living and working in the Big Apple, where she earned an MFA from the New York School of Interior Design.

"I took time to think about what motivates and inspires me and kept coming back to my love of decor and 20<sup>th</sup>-century design," she explains. Read on to learn more about what Carothers hopes to bring to Texas. [theselbyhouse.com](http://theselbyhouse.com)

**What is The Selby House?** A design studio focused on sourcing and restoring collectable vintage pieces for the home with a modern-day touch. We take a

fresh and forward-thinking approach by combining designs from different styles, periods and origins. We love historic objects and believe every item has a story; we give new life to the old.

**What inspired this venture?** Bringing the culture, energy and uniqueness of New York to Dallas. New York is a creative mecca at the forefront of change and collaboration. It taught me to push boundaries, question normalcy and embrace individuality. I want to modernize the outlook and feelings people have when buying and collecting furniture.

**Describe your aesthetic.** It's a mindful mix. I'm not drawn to a particular style but like combining various objects. I believe less is more and letting the design of a piece in its purest form speak for itself. I gravitate toward a more neutral, earthy and textural palette with pops of color in art, sculpture and accessories.



## INSIDE LOOK

### TRACI CONNELL INTERIORS

Designer Traci Connell of Traci Connell Interiors enjoys integrating antiques and heirlooms in fresh and current ways. Recently, a Dallas couple came to her with a settee and two cabinets that once belonged to the wife's grandparents. They escaped the Holocaust and had buried these beloved pieces underground in France before fleeing the country, eventually returning after the war to unearth and ship them back to the United States. To complement her clients' desire for a moody aesthetic with jewel tones, Connell re-covered the settee in an exquisite blush velvet for the formal living room (right). Meanwhile, the two cabinets—one of which the designer lacquered in black and fitted with a new stone top and the other, a chinoiserie curio style, she left untouched—now sit in the dining and living room, respectively. "I loved being able to incorporate family history into this couple's 1930s home," Connell shares. [traciconnellinteriors.com](http://traciconnellinteriors.com)



TALKING SHOP PHOTOS: VIGNETTE, GEORGE FIALA; PORTRAIT, MELINDA ORTLEY. INSIDE LOOK PHOTO: STEPHEN KARLISCH.



# PARADISE FOUND

URBANOLOGY PROPERTIES



When designer Ginger Curtis of Urbanology Designs set out to book a getaway, what she found was a void. “I would scroll for hours looking for a place to stay that was thoughtfully designed,” she recalls. In response, she founded Urbanology Properties to create intentionally designed vacation rentals conceived by her Dallas-area firm. Dubbed “The Cottage,” the inaugural property west of Fort Worth was renovated in 2022 in collaboration with Nuevo, Four Hands, Ann Sacks and more. The best part? Guests can visit the website to shop the space by room or category. “We plan to scale this nationally to destinations all over the country and partner with our favorite vendors and manufacturers to bring them to life,” she notes. “My goal is to elevate the world of short-term rentals to something luxurious and experiential.” [urbanologyproperties.com/shop-the-cottage](https://urbanologyproperties.com/shop-the-cottage)

# OPEN HOUSE

PALOMA & CO

Houston designer Paloma Contreras founded Paloma & Co in 2019 after years of dreaming about opening a storefront. She settled on a charming cottage as her first location, which quickly became a hotspot for acquiring original art, French antiques, one-of-a-kind finds, decor and tabletop items. Paloma & Co became so popular, in fact, that it outgrew that space and recently unveiled a larger showroom in River Oaks. Divided from its back offices by a wall clad in a beautiful Iksel wallpaper, the 2,100-square-foot shop showcases everything from fine antiques and large paintings to hostess gifts, all in a series of impeccably styled vignettes. “Our new space is ideal for gathering local customers and design friends,” Contreras says. “We are so excited to host more events this year.” [shoppalomaandco.com](https://shoppalomaandco.com)



# HAPPY HOUR

TILLIE'S

Stepping through the doors at Tillie's, an American Nouveau restaurant located on the grounds of Camp Lucy in Dripping Springs, feels like entering another time and place. It's housed in a 200-year-old town hall structure from the Ninh Binh region of North Vietnam, which was purchased and transported to its current spot by owners Whit and Kim Hanks. “Finding pieces from so many different cultures and mixing them together is what gives the space soul,” Kim explains. Brought to life by Camp Lucy facilities designer Paul Smith, Deborah Kirk Interiors and Kimmell Builders, Inc., the restaurant and bar nod to their Southeast Asia roots while embracing the Hill Country locale. Notable acquisitions sourced from Vietnam include both tile flooring and marble on the front-facing side of the bar, which Smith had cut on a diagonal and accented with brass buttons. [tilliesdrippingsprings.com](https://tilliesdrippingsprings.com)



## ONE TO WATCH

ERICA VOLKMER, EVENSEN DESIGN



Erica Volkmer, principal and founder of Evensen Design, is a mover and shaker on the Austin design scene. With experience both in hospitality

design and at a design-build firm, she ventured out on her own in 2015. Now, she says, "We specialize in high-end residential and hospitality projects, working closely with clients and investors throughout the process, from programming to design to implementation." Here, Volkmer shares more with *Luxe*. [evensendesign.com](http://evensendesign.com)

### How would you describe your style?

We love interiors that are collected and not contrived. Our work is layered with texture and interest, fusing high and low. We embrace fun moments and juxtapositions and aim to bring out our clients' inner styles.

**Tell us about your charming new office space.** Culture is important to our boutique firm, so the main goal was for it to be inviting, warm and a bit idiosyncratic. We always have music on and collaborate over coffee. This is our happy place and a creative vortex to flesh out ideas and pull projects together. So the space is bright, engaging and a clean backdrop for our creativity. Our storage solutions are simple, versatile and useful. We also love the downtown location. It's nice to escape midday and enjoy the energy of the city.

**What sparked your vision for the space?** There is a rotating inventory of antiques and art we love. I wanted a blend of styles. I was inspired by the idea of old bungalows receiving a bright refresh. It is curated and layered, yet edited and clean.

### What's on the horizon for your firm?

We look forward to several hospitality projects and working with new-to-us architects and builders. Travel is also on the docket, and we are excited to work on projects across the country.

ONE TO WATCH PHOTOS: AARON DOUGHERTY; IN GOOD TASTE PHOTO: LEONID FURMANSKY.

## IN GOOD TASTE

MALA SICHUAN BISTRO

For their new Mala Sichuan Bistro in Houston Heights, restaurateurs Cori Xiong and Heng Chen tasked designer Gin Braverman of gin design group with creating an environment that reflects their home province of Sichuan, China. "Having lived in Asia, I was eager to introduce the more subtle, organic side of Chinese design rather than what I felt has been the stereotype of a Chinese restaurant for so long," Braverman explains. With that in mind, the designer—with Course Construction, LH2 Architecture, LLC and KPK Lighting Design—aimed to celebrate the countryside's natural beauty through various art installations and finish applications. A handmade, scaled-down replica of a traditional Chinese pagoda roof crowns the central seating area. In the rear, dozens of linen wish lanterns float against an illuminated deep-blue background as if just released into the night sky. Guests will also find wall plaster and decorative details by Republic Finishes, a custom screen depicting moon phases fabricated by Objektfab, and oversize architectural elements including the backdrop behind the bar made by Gunnells Concrete Inc. [malasichuan.com](http://malasichuan.com)

