SHOPS

INSTANT CLASSIC

Featuring an eye-catching façade and a sweeping staircase, the new Hermès flagship in Miami's Design District makes a stunning statement

Long before it was known as the Design District, the swath of streets sandwiched between Miami's Little Haiti and Wynwood neighborhoods was dotted with low-lying white buildings. So when Hermès decided to open a flagship in the increasingly upscale area—joining a growing array of global fashion boutiques and high-end interiors showrooms—the French luxury brand aimed for a design that would be an elegant riff on those humble earlier structures.

"We wanted to remember the old buildings instead of creating something that came from nowhere," explains Denis Montel, artistic director of RDAI Architecture, the firm that designs stores for Hermès. "And, of course, here in Miami it's so hot that you're always looking for something that feels really cool and fresh."

A glass box covered in a striking exoskeleton of white steel beams, the building is a decidedly stylized take on its predecessors. Inside, the store is anchored by an undulating terrazzo-and-plaster staircase, which lures shoppers to the second and third floors with its organic, swooping form. Brilliantly white and sun-soaked, the space flutters with shadows cast by the latticed façade and greenery beyond. As Montel notes, "It's almost as if you're outside, surrounded by the city, trees, and sky."

Though a crisp contemporary feeling defines the interior, there are numerous nods to Hermès's heritage of craftsmanship, classic materials, and timeless style. Near the entrance, signature leather accents abound in the home section, evoking the brand's roots as a harness- and saddlemaker. In the first-floor Saint-Louis crystal shop, glassware and other vessels shimmer on darkly stained oak shelves. The jewelry-and-watch room on the second level, meanwhile, is distinguished by warm cherry paneling.

"We try to design buildings that have the company's DNA but also maintain a dialogue with the context," Montel says. "This is the latest member of the Hermès family." *hermes.com* —HANNAH MARTIN

From top: The new Hermès flagship in Miami's Design District, conceived by the Paris firm RDAI Architecture, boasts a dramatic plaster-and-terrazzo staircase. A jaunty porcelain *vide-poche.*

FROM TOP: FRANK OUDEMAN; STUDIO DES FLEURS