

# PATRON

ART / CULTURE / DESIGN

BY PEGGY LEVINSON



photographs to the collection. Reagan Hayes is another Los Angeles designer who brings her own playful vision and humorous descriptions to her classically inspired upholstery and tables. An example: “Cynthia (dining chair) is a California dreamer, casual, calm, and collected. She has attained a rich balance in life with daily meditation sessions on the beach while still knowing how to turn up the finesse to 11.”

Christopher Boots Prometheus II chandelier in polished brass



Cynthia dining chair by Reagan Hayes

## PARIS ON HI LINE

Just when you thought the Dallas Design District couldn't get any better, along comes Jean de Merry.

My first thought on entering Jean de Merry was “Wow! Am I still in Dallas?” The new Jean de Merry showroom is hard to categorize—is it a showroom, or a perfectly curated gallery of art, sculpture, and furniture? Or, do we have a new museum straight from Paris just a couple of blocks over from the Dallas Arts District? Over two years in the making—including numerous construction delays and a complete change of venue, the 15,000-square-foot space more than delivers on the promise with which Dallas designers familiar with the line have eagerly awaited it. Founders Jean De Merry and Christian Darnaud-Maroselli have not only created a collection of their own estimable designs, but also have amassed some of the most talented designers in the world and brought this visual, sensual, and tactile delight to Hi Line Drive in the Dallas Design District.

Jean De Merry is more than a modern interpretation of great French designs from the 1940s; ancient Greek pieces are represented, as well as sleek modern sofas and chairs. Christian Darnaud-Maroselli has designed the space, placing every chair, table, and vintage photograph “just so,” and nothing is left to chance. Please don't look for any matching finishes or designer vignettes; there is nothing quite so pedestrian here. Books on tables are perhaps slightly askew as if inviting you to thumb through one. The variety of finishes on tables including shagreen, molded plaster of Paris, straw marquetry, and sculpted bronze beg to be touched. The sculptured yet sumptuous upholstered chairs and sofas invite you to sit down and be comfortable. But, don't sit on Bella, the resident chocolate

lab, who is usually enjoying a comfy, silk velvet-upholstered wing chair. In other words, the space invites you to come in, make yourself comfortable, and imagine having one (or more) of these lovely pieces in your own home.

Jean De Merry and Christian Darnaud-Maroselli have mentored many of the artisans represented here. De Merry grew up in the south of France where his family has been involved in operating a tanning company for four centuries. The Corsican-born Darnaud-Maroselli brought his own knowledge of centuries-old traditions of working with wood, leather, shagreen, and bronze, and introduced these age-old French techniques to American artisans. Some of the highly acclaimed Los Angeles designers who have collaborations here include Phillip Nimmo, Reagan Hayes, and Kimberly Denman.

The names of designers and artisans shown at the Jean de Merry showroom represent an international Who's Who of the best and most sought-after designers in the world, including Jean-Louis Deniot from Paris, Christopher Boots and the Hamel+Farrell design firm hailing from Australia, and Heijden & Hume by way of Amsterdam. Azadeh Shladovsky and Natasha Baradaran bring their Persian influences to lighting and decorative objects. Alexander Dumont brings European and Japanese decorative finishes to his art.

The monochromatic space has a masculine feel, yet the sensual shapes add a feminine and almost playful nod to the yin and yang quality of the showroom. Hamel+Farrell create an artful and animated take