

HOUSTON

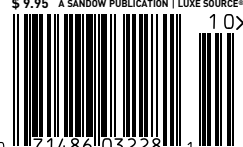
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# ALL IN THE DETAILS

WITH A LOVE OF EUROPEAN DÉCOR, HOUSTON-BASED PROPRIETOR RUTH GAY OFFERS A VARIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS THAT ARE PERFECT FOR BOTH MODERN AND TIME-HONORED SPACES.

WRITTEN BY TATE GUNNERSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE LESUEUR

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Thinking about what can be done with our products really excites me,” says Ruth Gay, founder of Houston-based Atelier Domingue, a custom fabricator of low-profile steel-and-glass windows and doors. Inspired by 18<sup>th</sup>-century designs found throughout Europe, where Gay lived as a child, the company’s products are locally made by a team of skilled artisans and include handmade European hardware. “I believe that even the smallest details count,” Gay explains. “The minimal muntins on the windows and doors not only bring the outdoors in, but also allow the architecture to shine; they are just as beautiful in an old-world setting as they are in an ultracontemporary one.”

For confirmation, one needs look no farther than Atelier Domingue’s sister company, Chateau Domingue. This 15,000-square-foot showroom effortlessly pairs those striking doors and windows with centuries-old stone flooring, fireplace mantels and other pieces from the 15<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that Gay has reclaimed from chateaus and farmhouses throughout Europe since she began taking regular scouting treks 15 years ago. “It’s like a big treasure hunt every time,” she says. “We’re giving these pieces a second life.”

Over the years, Gay has taken on such complex jobs as the disassembly of an entire ferry station in southern France, two private chapels in Houston, and a 19<sup>th</sup>-century orangery. Currently, she is negotiating the purchase of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century stone chapel in the French countryside. “It’s the most amazing place I’ve ever found, and if all goes as planned, it should fill up 60 containers,” says Gay, who only needs about two or three fabulous pieces to make a project worth scouring.

However, no matter what century of origin a piece may be from, what Chateau Domingue and Atelier Domingue have in common is a laser-sharp focus on authenticity and fine craftsmanship. Presently, Gay is debuting her Bastide Domingue collection of newly quarried stone flooring that’s aged to look old. “What started as a love for reclaimed European architectural elements has blossomed into a greater passion to bring the entire aesthetic right to my clients’ fingertips,” she says. “I enjoy seeing people inspired by the possibilities.” ■



Ruth Gay is shown left in Chateau Domingue, which includes a room (opposite page, top left) where reclaimed doors ranging from the 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are on display; one of Gay’s favorite elements to source is old hardware (opposite page, top right), which she uses on the doors that Chateau Domingue restores. Atelier Domingue’s metal-framed windows and doors (opposite page, bottom left) feature a low-profile, European feel that adheres to today’s construction demands.