

GIORGETTI

PRINCE OF A BUILDING

HOW DID A 118-YEAR-OLD ITALIAN FURNITURE MAKER END UP DESIGNING HOUSTON'S FIRST DESIGNER-LABELED LUXURY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING IN HOUSTON?



Giorgetti family, circa early 1900s

Giorgetti Houston



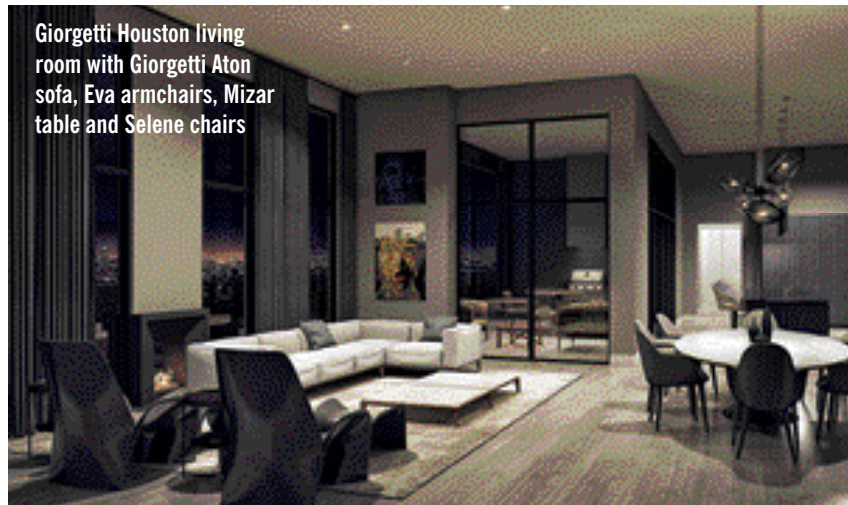
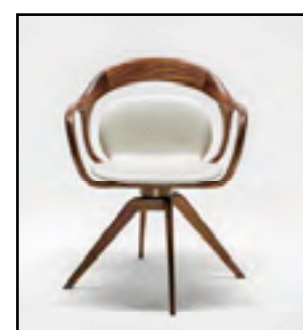
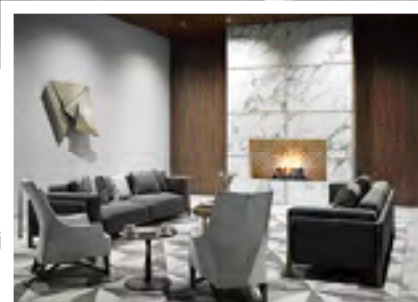
Clockwise from right:

Giorgetti Houston lobby, with Giorgetti Urban sofa and Mobius armchairs

Norah chair by m2atelier for Giorgetti

Progetti armchair by Centro Ricerche for Giorgetti

Oro dresser by Chi Wing Lo for Giorgetti



Giorgetti Houston living room with Giorgetti Aton sofa, Eva armchairs, Mizar table and Selene chairs

being designed by Giorgetti) will highlight each unit's entry.



Origami cabinet by Massimo Castagna for Giorgetti

BY REBECCA SHERMAN. PORTRAIT JAY TOVAR.

When things come full circle, you know they're just meant to be. The remarkable collaboration with Italian furniture maker Giorgetti that resulted in a handsome new Houston residential building began with the Giorgetti Progetti armchair — a sculptural marvel hand-carved from Brazilian Pau Ferro wood, which Houston architect Jerry Hooker purchased for the home that he shares with husband Jacob Sudhoff. Hooker is a principal with Mirador Group architects, which has a track record of designing luxury condominiums, and Sudhoff's residential sales and marketing powerhouse Sudhoff Companies has collaborated with The River Oaks, The Wilshire and Belfiore high-rises, to name a few.

Sudhoff and Hooker had been searching for a fine furniture and cabinet maker that could create a comprehensive residential environment, from the kitchen and outdoor cabinetry to lighting, closets, carpets, paneling, woodwork and furnishings for a luxury residential building. When they learned earlier this year from Internum manager Carla Muñoz that Giorgetti was launching its first bespoke cabinetry line and a new contract design division, they were on a plane to New York within 24 hours to meet with Giorgetti CEO Giovanni del Vecchio. They soon inked a deal.

A trip to Italy followed, with a tour of the factory in Meda and some time at the Milan

furniture fair with Giorgetti executives. (The company is now owned by private equity fund Progressio SGR, although members of the Giorgetti family are still heavily involved.)

Sudhoff says that while other luxury condominiums have designer names attached, often the kitchens, bathrooms, lighting and other details of those properties are a pastiche of different brands and levels of quality. He compares Giorgetti Houston to one of the world's most famous hand-built automobiles: "When you buy a Bentley, you're not getting an IKEA engine. Everything in the car is hand-built. A unit in the Giorgetti is like an original work of art."

The venerable name brings with it a storied history of design: Giorgetti has created bespoke furnishings for luxury hotels, showrooms and cruise ships across the globe, including the customization of a \$24 million penthouse for the Plaza Hotel in New York City in 2010. Giorgetti Ateliers — conceptual living spaces that replace the traditional showroom — have opened in elegant apartment buildings in Mumbai, Cologne, Antwerp, Singapore, St. Petersburg, Kiev and Jakarta.

Giorgetti Houston, slated for occupancy in 2018, is sited for Upper Kirby, on the northeast corner of Steel and Virginia streets. The seven-story, 32-unit boutique mid-rise is being developed by Atlanta-based Stolz Partners, in association with Sudhoff Companies and Mirador Group, with prices starting at \$1.4 million for a 3,000-square-foot unit to \$3 million for one of four penthouses. The first floor will be outfitted entirely in Giorgetti furnishings, including the classic Progetti armchair that began this affair, and Giorgetti-designed custom furnishings, lighting and sculptural walls crafted from exotic woods. Giorgetti's handcrafted kitchen and bathroom cabinets and custom closets will be in individual units, and a sculptural wood element (currently

Roberta Giorgetti, who is marketing manager for the company, says design inspiration for Giorgetti Houston was culled from decades of classic Giorgetti artistry, using fine woods, metals, marble, leather and fabrics. For the lobby, they've selected some of the most sculptural pieces, including the Mobius armchair, Erasmio round table, Studium writing desk and the aptly named Hug armchair, which is enveloped by a walnut canaletto bentwood frame, a hallmark of Giorgetti's craftsmanship. The façade of the building will be clad in porcelain tile, plaster and glass, and is a dead ringer for Giorgetti's Origami cabinet with its smoked eucalyptus finish, she says.

While the design collaboration with Giorgetti is the standout feature of the building, other wow factors include private garages for certain units, located within an ample main garage, some large enough to hold up to four cars. Ceiling heights range from 10 to 12 feet, with balconies from 500 to 2,000 square feet. Giorgetti has also designed both the covered outdoor kitchen and al fresco dining areas.

In a surprising move, maintenance costs have been kept in check by

expunging amenities many people don't want or use, such as a pool and valet, limiting amenities to those that people want, such as a dog park, a gym and concierge, explains Sudhoff. "The HOA fees are about a third the cost of other buildings in the area."

A temporary sales office for Giorgetti Houston has been set up inside Internum showroom, 3303 Kirby Drive, which carries the Giorgetti line of furnishings exclusively in Houston. Information.thegiorgettihouston.com.



Jacob Sudhoff and Jerry Hooker



Progetti armchairs by Centro Ricerche for Giorgetti