



SPATIAL ORDER

Barcelona's Nino Álvarez offers a warm design with bold geometric lines that serve as fixturing and art

By ROBIN ENRIGHT Photos by ©FERNANDO ALDA

Today's retail design is wise to do more than organize merchandise on fixtures or purely focus on making a sale. Retailers who understand the story behind their environment and are able to articulate that into a design concept provide an experience for their shoppers. Such is the case for Nino Álvarez, the owner of Nino Álvarez stores, who is passionate about connecting with his shoppers. His latest location in Barcelona, Spain, is brimming with artful and meaningful details—and it shows.

Nino Álvarez retail shops are more than stores that carry internationally known high-end merchandise from labels like Incotex, Herno and Lardini—the spaces are born from the soul of an artist, which is Álvarez himself. The new Barcelona store offers luxurious merchandise while immersing the shopper in the history of the building itself, remaining true to the lines and flow in the space from the former occupant, specialty food store Colmado Quilez Grocery (now located next door).



↑ Simple floor fixtures lend drama and display merchandise in a curated fashion.

There is no fear of
empty space.



Álvarez collaborated with Francesc Rife of Barcelona-based Francesc Rife Studio for the Barcelona store (the pair's fifth Nino Álvarez store together), because of his ability to adapt "what is" with "what can be." "Rife reconsiders projects with infinite analysis before transforming them and adapting them to what exists," Álvarez says.

With Rife's vision of letting the past inhabitant guide the current design, the new 2,400-sq.-ft. store reflects both its previous tenant and Catalan Modernism, a cultural movement to transform society around the turn of the 20th century through

architecture, painting, sculpture and literature.

Spacious windows artfully introduce visitors to the interior that displays merchandise in a curated style with fixtures that allow the eye to linger on one item at a time. Less-is-more hang bars sparsely display suit jackets and the signature design detail of eucalyptus wood elegantly houses one item. There is no fear of empty space in the store, which gives the space a sense of airiness. A round display table for accessories rolls out triangular drawers in dramatic fashion.

Shelving, which recalls the former tenant, is now

↑ The fluid lines
of the space
invite movement.



“A good design can reach the center of our feelings to produce a true emotional state.”

-NINO ÁLVAREZ

- Track lighting flows with the interior's geometric angles.
- [Opposite page] A mirrored wall serves to divide the triangular footprint.
- [Opposite page] Artful details and angles support the minimalist merchandising style.

enhanced with mesh that reaches to the ceiling and flows with the curved structure and interior already in place. In fact, what makes the retail environment so striking is the play between history, contemporary features and unique concepts. Some of the mirrors are decorated in yellow to represent the golden age of modernism in Barcelona, and other elements have been sulfurized as a tribute to Barcelona's modernist architecture. A unique and somewhat magical element is the mirror between the two divided areas of the store, which transforms the triangular form of the building into a square. There is a story being told in this space, a retail narrative that compels visitors to connect with the past and the present.

"I consider that every good interior design should reinterpret space and solve problems creatively," Rife says. "In this project, the problem was the triangular structure, which dictates the distribution and part of the design." The designer bases his work on spatial order and geometric proportion in order to, as he explains, "achieve the most with the least."

Eucalyptus wood, known for its warmth and guarantee of uniformity, is used throughout to provide warmth, and the comfort of the interior invites customers to linger and explore the environment and be pampered a bit. Creating harmony in the space, the wood has a minimal amount of character marks and as a soft wood is easy work with for the mesh "travel through time" design intent. Other subtle details pack a big punch, like blued iron that casts beautiful tones on the clothing and a circular counter that makes it easy for shoppers to navigate the space. The lines of the track lighting on the ceiling also flow with the space, with geometric angles aligning with the direction of the open cabinetry.

The end result is a space that is full of fluid movement and interesting lines that draw the shopper in. "A good design can reach the center of our feelings to produce a true emotional state," Álvarez says. der





PROJECT FILE

Nino Álvarez
Barcelona, Spain

RETAILER

Nino Álvarez

CONTRACT DESIGN FIRM/

ARCHITECT/GENERAL

CONTRACTOR/ SIGNAGE/

GRAPHICS/FURNITURE/

FIXTURES

Francesc Rifé Studio

CONSULTANTS/ENGINEERS/

PAINT/SPECIAL FINISHES

Coblonal

MANNEQUINS/FORMS

Nino Álvarez

LIGHTING

Trasluz

FLOORING/SURFACING/

CEILING SYSTEMS

Antonio Denia - Carpentry

METALS

Bonanova

GLASS

Bonanova Glassworks

Information in the project file is provided by the retailer and/or design firm.