



ONE TO WATCH

ERICA VOLKMER, EVENSEN DESIGN



Erica Volkmer, principal and founder of Evensen Design, is a mover and shaker on the Austin design scene. With experience both in hospitality

design and at a design-build firm, she ventured out on her own in 2015. Now, she says, "We specialize in high-end residential and hospitality projects, working closely with clients and investors throughout the process, from programming to design to implementation." Here, Volkmer shares more with *Luxe*. evensendesign.com

How would you describe your style?

We love interiors that are collected and not contrived. Our work is layered with texture and interest, fusing high and low. We embrace fun moments and juxtapositions and aim to bring out our clients' inner styles.

Tell us about your charming new office space. Culture is important to our boutique firm, so the main goal was for it to be inviting, warm and a bit idiosyncratic. We always have music on and collaborate over coffee. This is our happy place and a creative vortex to flesh out ideas and pull projects together. So the space is bright, engaging and a clean backdrop for our creativity. Our storage solutions are simple, versatile and useful. We also love the downtown location. It's nice to escape midday and enjoy the energy of the city.

What sparked your vision for the space? There is a rotating inventory of antiques and art we love. I wanted a blend of styles. I was inspired by the idea of old bungalows receiving a bright refresh. It is curated and layered, yet edited and clean.

What's on the horizon for your firm?

We look forward to several hospitality projects and working with new-to-us architects and builders. Travel is also on the docket, and we are excited to work on projects across the country.

ONE TO WATCH PHOTOS: AARON DOUGHERTY; IN GOOD TASTE PHOTO: LEONID FURMANSKY.

IN GOOD TASTE

MALA SICHUAN BISTRO

For their new Mala Sichuan Bistro in Houston Heights, restaurateurs Cori Xiong and Heng Chen tasked designer Gin Braverman of gin design group with creating an environment that reflects their home province of Sichuan, China. "Having lived in Asia, I was eager to introduce the more subtle, organic side of Chinese design rather than what I felt has been the stereotype of a Chinese restaurant for so long," Braverman explains. With that in mind, the designer—with Course Construction, LH2 Architecture, LLC and KPK Lighting Design—aimed to celebrate the countryside's natural beauty through various art installations and finish applications. A handmade, scaled-down replica of a traditional Chinese pagoda roof crowns the central seating area. In the rear, dozens of linen wish lanterns float against an illuminated deep-blue background as if just released into the night sky. Guests will also find wall plaster and decorative details by Republic Finishes, a custom screen depicting moon phases fabricated by Objektfab, and oversize architectural elements including the backdrop behind the bar made by Gunnells Concrete Inc. malasichuan.com

