

ROSSANA ORLANDI

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A tastemaker's vibrant concept shop is at home in Cape Town's creative quarter.

BY SARAH KHAN

Is retail kismet a thing? Barbara Lenhard certainly thinks so.

"I walked in and had the feeling—the moment when you know something is right," she says of the once dilapidated house that now functions as her fashionable boutique. Since arriving in Cape Town from Germany in 2009 with her partner, their brand, Opulent Living—part luxury lifestyle magazine, part high-end travel agency, part charity—has blossomed. As it grew, Lenhard began to realize her burgeoning empire wouldn't be complete without a shop and gallery. So when the ideal location presented itself on lively Kloof Street, where animation studios border art-house cinemas and design stores, she didn't hesitate.

The retail component may have always been in the cards, but serendipity played its part, too. Lenhard dialed up Sarah Ord, an acquaintance and celebrated Cape Town interior designer, and insisted on meeting at the space that afternoon. "We didn't know each other—we're not girlfriends," she says. "But I said I must meet you today—do this for me."

Walking into Opulent Living Concept Store & Gallery, shoppers can't miss Ord's signature style. She's known for her splashy palettes and bold patterns, and, together with Lenhard, she conceived a jewel box awash in vivid emerald from the walls to the ceiling to the spiral staircase. The floor is a black-and-white marble

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chessboard. Offbeat accents include a bright purple door, a bathroom adorned with hot pink Christian Lacroix wallpaper, and a once-derelict counter now revived with green velvet upholstery. The setting is the backdrop for Lenhard's carefully edited collection of art and fashion sourced predominantly from the region: colorful crocodile-skin bags from Zambezi Grace, whimsical hand-stitched shoes by Coast & Koi, and artwork by Marieke Prinsloo and Richard Scott. "Nothing is made in China. Every supplier has a story," she says. If there's one thing Lenhard has proven she has an eye for, it's a compelling narrative.

(THIS SPREAD) Scenes at the Opulent Living Concept Store & Gallery in Cape Town.

