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**GOLD LIST EDITION**



"I gravitate toward what I think all homes should have: character, personality and soul," says Maria Elena Uzcátegui, shown here in her Miami shop. "That's exactly what Uzca is to me." *Opposite:* When in Florence, Italy, Uzcátegui likes to visit the majestic Flair home store.

PORTRAIT: JUSTIN NAMON.

Any serious treasure hunter would approve of Maria Elena Uzcátegui's fearless sourcing for the furnishings and décor that fill Uzca, her 4-year-old Design District shop. In one corner, lambswool elegantly drapes over the top of a Lucite bench, while on the other, Mongolian fox fur covers a large pouf. Well-known for her exotic yet ultra-refined taste, Uzcátegui is notorious for filling her showroom with such wares as shagreen- and python-covered chairs, tables and picture frames. The globe-trotter discovered her love of python in Indonesia and recently acquired a new line of home accessories in the Netherlands—not to mention her regular buying trips to France, Italy and Germany. "I love Europe," says Uzcátegui, who splits time between homes in Miami and Florence. "I get very inspired there, and I always try to go to a new city each time I visit." The drama of Uzca is also a product of Uzcátegui's background in jewelry design. Like gems in myriad settings, her interiors collection, she says, "is exclusive, different, eclectic, and completely handmade with only the best exotic materials." *uzca.com; 305.571.8200*

The NIDO chair by Il Laboratorio dell'Imperfetto is one of the unique pieces that Uzcátegui found along her travels and now carries in her shop.



WORLD TRAVELER

# MARIA ELENA UZCÁTEGUI



**MY WORK IS...**

All about the details. I like to use neutral colors as a base and then add accessories with colorful accents. To create a sense of balance, I'll add a few rare or unique pieces like snakeskin or fur.

**COVETED ITEM:**

Three drawings by Diego Rivera that I purchased almost two decades ago at an art gallery in Mexico.

**FAVORITE DECORATING SOURCES:**

The always impressive collection at Flair in Florence and the wares at Chahan in Paris.

**I LOVE WHAT I DO BECAUSE...**

I get to travel to new places to find pieces for the store or my own personal use.

**GREATEST INDULGENCE:**

On rare occasion, I love to eat gorgonzola dolce with miele tartufata from Italy.

**GEHRY OR WRIGHT?**

Gehry had a unique concept of space. His ability to go beyond current patterns of structural definition is unparalleled.