

# TOWN&COUNTRY

## Alan Faena Built the Ultimate Shopping Bazaar for Design Snobs

The hotelier thinks retail is dead, so he built a multi-brand, multi-experience, over the top emporium for design snobs like himself.



by **ERIK MAZA** MAR 26, 2019



KRIS TAMBURELLO

**A**lan Faena is strolling through a new shopping concept of his own creation, an appropriately over-the-top four-story menagerie, across from his [namesake hotel in Miami](#), where the air is scented with his own fragrance (a mix of rose and palo santo), when he spots the item that's right for him.

Without taking off any of the staples of his uniform—aviator sunglasses, panama hat, an all-white ensemble—he drapes the piece over his shoulders, a cuddly \$38,000 vintage coat by Jean-Charles de Castelbajac made out of stuffed animals.

“Attitude is everything,” he deadpans.

The Argentine hospitality impresario treats his **South Beach Shangri-La**, a hotel, a residential tower, and a theater, as his stage, “choreographed in a succession of dreams,” as he writes in *Alchemy & Creative Collaboration*, his new book from Rizzoli. But behind the showman’s bravado is a connoisseur of design’s leading lights.



**ALAN FAENA**  
LUIS BARTA

The palatial condo building where Citadel CEO Kenneth Griffin has a \$55 million penthouse for sale was designed by Norman Foster. The theater, where Madonna and Kendrick Lamar have performed? The work of Rem Koolhaas’s firm, OMA. The lush gardens at the **Faena** Hotel? Devised by Raymond Jungles. Faena Bazaar, the latest addition to his oceanfront empire, is a bricolage of galleries, pop-ups, and stand-alone shops that will rotate its makeup and merchandise twice a year. “Retail is in a strange moment,” Faena says. “With everything I do, I want to offer an experience. We give our guests art, we give them theater, we give them design. Here, we give them product—our way.”



**VOUTSA TRAVEL TRUNKS IN MISI FABRIC  
(FROM \$1,750.)**  
COURTESY VOUTSA

That means that inside this exuberant shop (also designed by OMA with interiors by the retail design specialists Maris Collective), with 50 brands in beauty, home, and ready-to-wear, including Brock outfits, La Double J prints, and travel trunks by the New York-based **Voutsa**, sensory overload is essential.

On the first floor, artists are commissioned seasonally to take over the courtyard and a gallery; Donald Robertson had just plastered the facade with vinyl kiss decals when I visited. "It's like a movie set," Faena says of the rotating cast of collaborators. As he enters the second floor, the bohemian Carolina K booth comes into view, revolving around a custom sofa accented with Binetti pillows (also for sale) and horse-hair stools by Konekt that segues into a footwear salon by Pedro Garcia where the

heels are displayed on a marble dining table by the designer Buket Hoscan Bazman.

In the third level, a tropical wallpaper by Cole and Son brightens the swimwear installation at Lellou's stand-alone shop, and custom jewelry cases by ICON and a seashell mirror and Apollo bust by the South Florida artist Christa Wilm add a touch of rococo decadence to the accessories lane.

Not unlike at his homes in **Argentina** and Miami, on vivid display in his coffee table memoir, visual excess is essential to the Faena secret sauce. To him, it's just as sensible as wearing a teddy bear coat in 80 degree weather.

"It doesn't matter what I'm creating—a t-shirt, a building, a district or a show. It's all about a point of view and a free mind," he says. "In the hotel business, in fashion, a lot of things have become pasteurized. What I bring here is the pre-pasteurized, where it's all fire."