

## INSIDE



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### SHOPPING

Flexible furnishings  
for outdoor spaces.

By Rima Suqi



# SHOPPING WITH

BENJAMIN NORIEGA-ORTIZ

## Settling In, Outside

Notes on the Art of Exterior Decorating



SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

**ROCKIN' AWAY** Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz checks out Cheick Diallo's Segou Rocker, made of steel and woven nylon; \$1,450 at Amaridian, (917) 463-3719, amaridianusa.com.

**T**HE architect and interior designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz has a few basic principles when it comes to designing for the outdoors. For starters, he said, "the key to an interesting and fun outdoor space is to never buy matching sets of anything."

He's had plenty of experience, from private backyards in the Hamptons and Miami to rooftops and terraces at hotels like the Mondrian in West Hollywood, Calif., and Scottsdale, Ariz. His latest project, the Mondrian in SoHo, will have what he calls a "very whimsical garden" featuring 52 trees with canvas-awning-covered sofas and cast-stone dining tables with teak chairs that he designed, and fiberglass chairs by Ross Lovegrove.

Mr. Noriega-Ortiz, a native of Puerto Rico, also believes that outdoor spaces should have a bed (his Chelsea terrace has a queen-size one), so the garden will have beds, inspired by an Egyptian piece he saw in a museum.

He is fond of ceramic garden stools as well, which can double as tables; chairs that stack ("important for small spaces"); and pieces designed to allow water to run off easily. And white is all-important: "When you put white furniture on a teak deck or on grass or on tile, it looks more sculptural. Not just the seat or the frame — they have to be entirely white."

On a recent shopping excursion in Manhattan and on the Web, Mr. Noriega-Ortiz chose mostly white but bent his rules a bit for the sake of those who prefer color.

The trip began on the Upper East Side. In the window at Rainbow Ace Hardware in Yorkville, he found the aptly named Cool Bar, a table with a basin for ice and bottles that can also be used to store things like flip-flops and garden supplies, he said. It costs about \$80, but "you can easily pair it with more expensive pieces."

Like the Conran Shop's Frou Frou, an umbrella with an underbelly of tassels that costs nearly \$4,000. "This isn't furniture, it's architecture, and it's easy to clean: you can just hose it down." He also liked the Luxembourg aluminum bar cart. "All our clients are asking for places to put drinks," he said. "You can remove the tray and take it to the kitchen for refills."

In a cab headed downtown, he used his iPhone to shop at dwr.com, the Design Within Reach Web site. Not surprisingly, his favorite piece was the bedlike Veneto Alcove. "Even if you have a small terrace," he said, "if you fill the space with a bed, you'll find it is multifunctional — it can be a bed, a chair or a table."

At Amaridian in SoHo, featuring African artists, he liked the Segou Rocker, a sculptural chair by Cheick Diallo. "A lot of my clients are collecting furniture as art right now," he said.

At Property, he found his favorite pieces of the day: Him and Her polyethylene chairs by Fabio Novembre. The front resembles the classic Panton Chair, but the molded backside looks like, well, a male or female backside. "This is fabulous," he said, taking a picture of the Him. Asked if he'd buy the set, for \$900, he said coyly: "Well, I have a client: my partner. I have to consult with him first."

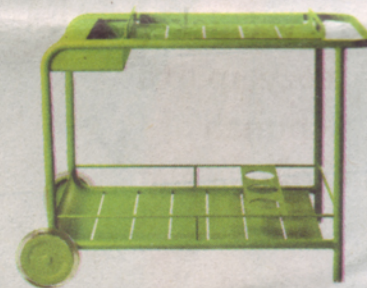
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Hara lacquered fiberglass chair by Giorgio Gurioli; \$4,145 at Property, (917) 237-0123, propertyfurniture.com.



Thonon Metal Mesh Chair; \$450 at Treillage, (212) 535-2288, treillageonline.com.



Luxembourg powder-coated aluminum bar cart by Frédéric Sofia; \$650 at the Conran Shop, (866) 755-9079, conranusa.com.



Super Elastica lacquer-coated rattan chair by Marco Zanuso Jr.; \$4,850 at Property.



Frou Frou umbrella with tassel fringe and base, by Davy Grosemans; \$3,995 at the Conran Shop.



Veneto Alcove; \$4,800 for teak frame, \$700 for cushion set and \$500 for canopy at Design Within Reach, (800) 944-2233, dwr.com.



Sol y Luna powder-coated aluminum chair from Brown Jordan; \$1,190 (cushion, \$230 to \$350) at Gracious Home, (212) 517-6300, gracioushome.com.



Painted Adirondack Curved Bench, made of maple; \$171.50 each at Lands' End, (800) 963-4816, landsend.com.



Garden Views Cool Bar by Keter; \$79.99 at Ace Hardware, (866) 290-5334, acehardware.com.