

## Caroline Rafferty Brings the Treasures of a European Grand Tour to Palm Beach

The designer and her business partner and mother looked to the 17th- and 18th-century travel custom as a model for their shop at the Royal Poinciana Plaza

TEXT BY [HADLEY KELLER](#) · PHOTOGRAPHY BY [KEN HAYDEN](#) · Posted January 31, 2019



The Grand Tour, Caroline Rafferty's shop at the Royal Poinciana Plaza in Palm Beach.



Utter the words “Palm Beach” and a certain kind of decor comes to mind: vintage wicker furniture, fabrics in preppy prints, etc. But at the city’s newest home decor source, there’s nary a Lilly Pulitzer pillow or chintz chaise in sight. And that’s on purpose. “In Florida, there are a lot of stores that skew traditional and coastal, but recently in Palm Beach, there have been young families moving here who want something different,” says designer Caroline Rafferty as she walks me around The Grand Tour, the shop she’s opened with her mother, Julie Fisher Cummings, in the Royal Poinciana Plaza, a week before opening.

Rafferty should know: She relocated to Florida in 2013 and was immediately disappointed in her options there. “I realized I couldn’t find the textiles and the inspiration I find in New York,” says the designer as she weaves through the open boxes on the graphic linoleum floor of the shop. “We were doing so much online, but as a designer you want to go and see things and touch them.”

---

For more from the International Design Authority, subscribe to *Architectural Digest* now. →

---



Rafferty and her team re-covered much of the vintage furniture in fabrics they carry in the store.

Looking to her art history background, Rafferty took matters into her own hands. “My focus in grad school was the 18th-century British and the Grand Tour, so I was really inspired by the concept of traveling the world and bringing back antiques,” she explains. Like the travelers some centuries before her, Rafferty has amassed a slew of new and vintage finds from across the globe and installed them in a store with a design that seems downright avant-garde for Palm Beach.

“We were inspired by these floors Dimore Studio did in concrete, and I’ve always wanted to play around with this material,” says Rafferty of the VCT-tile floors, which have a kind of retro terrazzo vibe. The walls of the store are lined with modern, modular shelves that are both a stylistic statement and a clever storage solution.





Candles, vintage ceramics, and sculpture by Chad Wentzel on shelves at the front of the store. The non-vintage furniture is De Muro Das.

“I knew that we were restricted on square footage, so we designed these pieces that can hold furniture all the way up the walls,” Rafferty says. Even at my visit a week before opening, the shelves are already piled high with goods, from vintage Franco Albini chairs to cushions made with the textiles on offer at the back of the store.

Visitors will find some items familiar to a New York shopper—table linens by Kim Seybert, ceramics by Nicolas Newcomb—as well as funky, off-the-beaten-path finds: plates commissioned from a Parisian atelier, Japanese glass totems, and vintage accessories to complement the furniture. “I do a lot of shopping at auctions,” Rafferty says.



A Francesco Clemente portrait of Rafferty's grandmother, an inspiration for the store, hangs above glassware by Joe Cariati.

Ceramics by B. Zippy and crystal sculptures by Detroit designer Chad Wentzel are peppered throughout to help outfit the type of collected home one taking a Grand Tour today might have. "A huge part of the inspiration for the store was my grandmother," says Rafferty. "She was a voracious collector of everything: books, jewelry, amazing art. She had a really quirky eye. She's been kind of our guiding muse the whole time."



The store sells pillows made from the fabric it offers by the yard.

Of course, the store has a more literal family tie, too: Rafferty's business partner in the venture is her mother, who, like Rafferty herself, is a passionate philanthropist. As a result, the two have decided to designate a share of the store's profits to a new charity each month. The debut recipient is the Promise Fund, a venture by the founder of the Susan G. Komen Fund that provides services for people with cancer.





Wallpaper and fabric is on display at the back of the space.

The store's grand opening is Friday, and the celebration will continue on Saturday with book signings by Doug Meyer (who has a few of his cameos at the store), Wendy Goodman, and Dean Rhys Morgan.

It's a fitting kickoff. "We see ourselves as storytellers—everything in here has a story," Rafferty says. After all, she points out: "We really want to take people on a journey."