

ATLANTA STYLE

BY ELIZABETH RALLS
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Aida at home in Buckhead amid her global treasures.

CAUTION: FLAMM-ABLE!

International globetrotter Aida Flamm heats up the boutique hotel world—from The Palms, Las Vegas, to The Montage Beverly Hills—with her custom designs

She's a glamorous design doyenne and a fixture on Atlanta's social circuit, championing causes from the humane (last year she co-chaired the New Leash on Life event) to the human (the Latin Fever Ball named her honorary chair last September). She's also a Puerto Rico native, who spent 22 years with Eastern Airlines in its heyday before becoming design director of Flambro Imports, a home decor company her husband, Allan, inherited from his father and owned and operated for more than 20 years before shuttering in 2006. But today, in between circumnavigating the globe for work and pleasure—the couple supplies custom furniture and accessories such as made-to-order Parsons chairs and glitzy ceramic lounge stools in a matte gold finish to hoteliers, interior designers and retail chains—from Vietnam and India to Fishers Island, New York, and Cashiers, North Carolina, it's solving *Top Design*-esque quandaries that keeps Aida Flamm inspired. "When a designer or hotelier says, 'I'm looking for 'X' but can't find anything suitable,' that's the challenge we love," she explains.

It's only appropriate, then, that the well-heeled, discriminating traveler—whose Clear card allows her expedited access through Hartsfield-Jackson and beyond—is equally discerning when it comes to service and accommodations. "A hotel can have the most exquisite edifice, sheets with the highest thread count, and the best mattresses, but if the staff has a bad or indifferent attitude toward the guest, that is what you'll always remember," she says.

Among her most favorite places in the world: The Sukhothai in Bangkok (she and Allan prefer the hotel's junior suite); the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai and The Recoleta in Buenos Aires ("Great for people-watching—I loved the handsome, well-dressed men and Allan, the stunning women. You could do it at 4am if you were so inclined!"). Yet, it was an experience Stateside, at The Muse Hotel, a Kimpton-operated boutique property in New York's Time Square, when "everyone from the front desk staff to the bellman and doormen" called the couple by name, that she says they won't soon forget.

Currently jockeying for a project in Dubai, the Flamms are also supplying more than 25 custom designs for Beverly Hills' The Montage, opening this fall, one of their most adventurous jobs to date due to the number of products they were commissioned to develop for the client. "We were able to work in leathers, wood and metal, as well as 'invent' some items to solve storage issues," Flamm says. Other high-profile projects: The Palms, Las Vegas; Miami's Philippe Starck- and Kelly Wearstler-designed Icon Brickell and The Arrabelle at Vail Square in Colorado.

This design diva's flair for international style also extends to her exotic wardrobe, where favorites from Indian designers Ranna Gill, Arjun Khanna and Rina Dhaka are her staples. And it comes as no surprise that the Flamms have filled their Buckhead home with treasured artifacts from their travels—think a mantel covered with carved antique Buddahs, silk draperies straight from a factory in Thailand, and a dining table crafted from 200-year-old recycled barn wood from Brazil that took the couple "15 years to find."

Though she's lived in Atlanta more than 35 years (long enough to be called a native by Atlanta standards), Flamm maintains close cultural ties with her heritage through involvement in Atlanta's Latin American Association, and she allows that her quickest culture fix in Atlanta involves cutting loose and "dancing the night away" at the Cuban Club—perhaps with one of her favorite top-shelf cocktails: Tanqueray Rangpur and tonic. **A**