

page BUZZ

# Shop girl

By ALLISON BAGLEY

To create her airy, otherworldly aesthetic under the tents in Round Top, year after year Houston textile designer Courtney Barton made her setup more elaborate — installing doors, resurrecting fabric walls and layering rugs on the grass.

This October, after Antiques Weeks took a spring pandemic hiatus, Barton was able to greet her shoppers for the first time in a way that was less labor intensive — by turning the key in her very own permanent retail shop.

With a wraparound porch framed in steel sheets, her 800-square-foot casita's interior is an entirely white, palate-cleansing backdrop for her dohar blankets, block-print pillows, embroidered napkins, stacks of intricately etched bowls, colorful camel tassels and other global wares that make up a texture-rich aesthetic.

Near a century-old wooden counter Barton found in India, her selection of furniture constantly rotates, perhaps including a rickshaw reupholstered in vintage saris, a pair of low-slung midcentury chairs or ottomans covered in nubby alpaca bouclé and “other textiles that make my heart sing.”

Louisiana-reared Barton, 39, launched her business 10 years ago as a roving trunk show inspired by time she spent living with her husband in Malaysia.

The brand eventually grew into a shared retail space in Upper Kirby, but Round Top is a fitting location for her first stand-alone location, she says.

“It’s a magical little town” where friends and business



owners she’s met over the years “have poured so much of their energy, time, financing and dreams into building it up,” she says. “I knew I wanted a slice of that.”

Not to mention, the twice-annual customer base is unmatched, she says, describing her returning shoppers as a mix of well-traveled designers, buyers

and creatives largely based on the coasts. It’s not unusual for them to recognize the mughal design on her soft, quilted blankets or to identify block printing from the specific region in southern India from which Barton sources.

An afternoon can slip away swapping travel stories, she says.

Last fall, when Barton was packing up a large order of the

candles she has poured into vintage lassi cups once used for sipping spiced yogurt in India, she discovered the purchaser was using them to outfit “a very, very well-known restaurant out of California.”

“It’s so kismet,” she says of Round Top encounters like that. “You’re treated to those little snippets you really wouldn’t have access to otherwise.”

Barton’s is one of six storefronts in the brand-new Round Top Village development that she says is intended to be a destination for a shopper to park and weave through every shop. One gallery is home to third-generation La Grange jeweler Richard Schmidt.

Her new space is a place to house her “more is more” mix of the old and the new, such as antique suzani wedding shawls she finds on the outskirts of Jaipur, vintage ikat fabrics she rips up to make into weekender bags and the types of treasures she sends on a shipping container to the Port of Houston after her annual buying trips.

Maybe she’ll find room for her bespoke Arabian Nights children’s tent that was featured in the Wall Street Journal this spring as a pandemic-era play structure to brighten weeks of lockdown — all things for the customer who, Barton says, “wants to be surrounded by beauty.”

“I never thought I’d have one store, let alone two — I truly could not be prouder of this.”

*Courtney Barton, 2912 Ferndale in Houston and 603 N. Washington in Round Top; [shopcourtneybarton.com](http://shopcourtneybarton.com)*

Hartow &amp; May Studios

COURTNEY BARTON HAS OPENED A NEW STORE IN ROUND TOP.