



## Brilliant Decorators



**B**enjamin Noriega-Ortiz has been named by House Beautiful magazine as one of America's "Most Brilliant Decorators" for ten consecutive years. He is recognized as one of the most stylish and influential of today's interior designers.

Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz, LLC The designer and architect grew up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the son of a businessman and a nutritionist. His mother encouraged his talent, buying him graph paper when he was eight years old. He enrolled in architecture programs in San Juan, and later, at Columbia University. "I'd never been to New York before, and wanted to see all the buildings I'd studied," he said. "I came for a week, then decided the best way to stay was as a student financed by my father."

Establishing his own firm in 1992, Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz has traveled the country to produce projects for such clients as rock star Lenny Kravitz, author Laura Esquivel, and photographer Mark Seliger.

### Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz and the Mondrian Scottsdale

Unveiling his latest design project in Scottsdale, Arizona: The Mondrian with a theme based on the "Garden of Eden", takes the Mondrian chain to a whole new level:

At the entry, Mr. Noriega-Ortiz uses a wicker version of the Jacobsen Egg chair design. The chair, wood and aluminum stools, and lounging bed are all reflected in a pink mirror.

In the lobby, the Garden of Eden theme shows itself with what some have interpreted as the "tree of life", "lambs of God" and the figures of "Eve" lamps. All are in the color of white (perhaps representing purity?).



In the restaurant, Mr. Noriega-Ortiz uses Murano glass chandeliers at a communal table.

The beautiful work that Mr. Noriega-Ortiz has concocted here has won him the commission to renovate the LA Mondrian.

The Mondrian Scottsdale Resort hotel is situated in the middle of the old town of Scottsdale in Arizona, USA. The 194 room hotel is an urban resort offering the finest service and facilities for tourists and business people alike. Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz has created a unique sybaritic retreat – a sheltered oasis – offering rest, rejuvenation, fun and entertainment. It is a vision of modern glamour for a new generation of sophisticated travelers. The hotel, which was formerly the James Hotel, is owned and operated by the Morgan Hotel Group and opened its doors after the major refurbishment and rebranding in January 2007.

### About Me

"Since I learned the word 'architect,' I wanted to be one," says Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz, who went on to win two masters degrees, in architecture and urban design. He credits John Saladino with "ruining" him into an interior designer. "I guess you could say I went from macro to mini. I noticed something was lacking in architecture. I wanted to work on the actual space that people lived in. Working for Saladino taught me to design like that."

Growing up in the tropical climate of San Juan "really shaped me," says Noriega-Ortiz. "In the summer, we were given a towel and a pair of shorts and sent outside for the day." No surprise, then, that wherever he designs he captures an unusual sense of openness and light through the use of color, materials, architecture, and the integration of fashion in a rather timeless style. He is constantly opening up spaces, using indoor/outdoor materials such as terrazzo and glass, and creating architecture around a courtyard.

Noriega-Ortiz who lives in New York City has clients as far-flung as Palm Beach and his native Puerto Rico. New York, long his favorite city for design inspiration, has lost out to Barcelona these days. Although he loves to travel, Noriega-Ortiz claims he hates to shop, and avoids it by shopping online, especially at 1stdibs.com. "They have everything!"

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His latest book "Emotional Rooms" can be found at Barnes and Noble. It is also available at Amazon.com.

