

BY DESIGN

Home team

Alpaca silver box
with horn handle,
\$325, Urban Flower
Grange Hall



ESTILO ARGENTO BRINGS A TASTE
OF BUENOS AIRES TO DALLAS

BY BRITTANY EDWARDS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAM GRANADO



Argentines Sofi Sugasti and Damian Furmanski had never met when they first touched down in Dallas around seven years ago. But both newcomers had the same impression of the local retail scene: There was a bounty of European luxury brands, but close to nil from South America.

Six years later, the Buenos Aires natives are doing their part to change that. The striking young couple, now married, runs Estilo Argentio, a year-old import company that's putting South American tabletop and home wares on the shelves of some of the city's chicest stores.

The label's success is as fortuitous as the couples' history.

Sugasti, 30, moved here in 2001 to accept a personal assistant job with a prominent family she'd met while ski-bumming in Aspen. Furmanski, an internationally ranked tennis pro, arrived the following year to teach and to launch his own academy. When the ex-pats were introduced (on the tennis court) by a friend in 2002, the connection was instant; they tied the knot a year later.

"I always knew I wanted to marry somebody from home, even if I lived in the States," says Sugasti, a bubbly brunette. "I knew it would be hard to find, but marriage is so difficult already. I wanted us to at least share the same culture to make things a bit easier."

With Estilo's success, Furmanski has closed the academy and is instructing just a handful of longtime clients. He and Sugasti plan eventually to return to Buenos Aires, settle and



Estilo Argentio housewares, hand-crafted in Argentina

have children. But for now, the business is their baby.

The Estilo concept first took shape during the couple's visits home. Seeking wares they thought would be unique and desirable to American shoppers, the pair struck gold — actually, something closer to silver — while strolling through an outdoor market in the northern Argentine city of Salta. A craftsman was offering hand-made home wares made of alpaca metal, an alloy of nickel, zinc and copper that's unique to Argentina.

Within months, the first shipment of Estilo Argentio was en route to Texas.

The rustic-modern line encompasses all things tabletop, from platters and trays to champagne buckets, water pitchers, even picture frames. Each piece is unique, crafted entirely by hand and accented with cast-off horns or fragments of bone from indigenous goats or cows. Prices range from \$70 for small trays and frames to \$800 for oversized platters

Several top Dallas stores have picked up the collection, including the Dallas Museum of Art gift shop, and Highland Park Village's Beretta Gallery and St. Michael's Woman's

Exchange. Sugasti was especially thrilled to land an order from Urban Flower Grange Hall co-owner Rajan Patel.

"He was one of our first big believers," she gushes. "I've always loved his store. To me, he's a genius. What he says goes, so we couldn't be more excited."

ESTILO ARGENTO
214-335-0459
estiloargentio.com



Import experts Damian Furmanski and Sofi Sugasti

Hip home boutique Haven is another supporter. "What really drew us to Estilo Argentio was the original craftsmanship you just don't see today," says co-owner Jon Tutolo. "And the fact that the owners really respond to customer needs. Anything we suggest, they deliver."

Since the launch last November, Furmanski and Sugasti have grown the business to a point that they can be more hands-on, from designing new products to suggesting hardware options (expect onyx in upcoming collections).

Sugasti says the next goal is to introduce the line to markets outside Texas.

Says Furmanski: "The whole goal with Estilo Argentio was to start something that we could grow over time." And never lose touch with home.



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