

MIDDLE TENNESSEE Business



Chandeliers hang throughout the four levels of the new RH Design Gallery in Green Hills. LACY ATKINS / THE TENNESSEAN

‘More home than store’

Restoration Hardware’s 70,000-square-foot design gallery in Green Hills includes a cafe, wine bar and barista bar led by an acclaimed Chicago restaurateur

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USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Restoration Hardware CEO Gary Friedman is all about bucking national retail trends.

While other retailers are downsizing and enticing shoppers with countless promotions, the company now known as RH is opening mega design galleries, opting for an annual membership program and diving headfirst into the business of hospitality.

So far, the risky strategy is paying off. RH shares soared more than 30 percent this week after the upscale home furnishings company reported first quarter earnings well above analysts’ estimates.

“We kind of believed if we try to be ‘the others,’ if we try to be inspiring and not necessarily follow traditional rules of retail, that maybe we would find a breakthrough and maybe we would be rewarded,” Friedman said in an interview with The Tennessean on Friday inside the gigantic new RH Design Gallery in Green Hills.

RH on Friday welcomed its first customers into the four-level, 70,000-square-foot gallery, an eye-catching



Virginia Phillips tells RH Design Gallery CEO Gary Friedman, “I couldn’t wait to see this store,” as the doors open to the public Friday, June 15, in Green Hills. LACY ATKINS / THE TENNESSEAN

building where Carrabba’s restaurant used to sit at 2101 Green Hills Village Drive outside the Mall at Green Hills. The new building, which was designed

in partnership with architect James Gilham, replaces RH’s much smaller store inside the mall.

Everything about the building and its

“We thought if we have people eating in our space, inspired by our space, wandering our space, maybe they’ll be inspired to redo their homes.”

Gary Friedman
Restoration Hardware CEO

design is over-the-top. Described as a “contemporary, yet classically-inspired structure,” customers walk through glass and steel French doors into an immersive retail showroom decked out with lush greenery, fountains and statement chandeliers.

Traveling from room to room in the light-filled building with dozens of French doors and open windows, people can browse installations dedicated to RH Interiors, RH Modern, RH Outdoor, RH Baby & Child and RH TEEN. An Interactive Design Atelier offers profes-

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Why one international investor followed many young families into Antioch area

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Investor Mark Gold thinks Antioch’s boom is here to stay.

His Skyline Investments Inc. paid \$12.6 million this month for the Shoppes at Hickory Hollow retail strip. It’s an aged brown-brick center anchored by Kroger near the Bell Road exit of Interstate 24.

The strip has seen hard times in recent years. It’s across the street from The Global Mall at The Crossings. The largely vacant retail Goliath took the community’s reputation down with it when it lost customers to newer, flashier malls nearby in the late 2000s.

But those hard times are firmly in the

rear-view mirror for Davidson County’s fastest-growing area.

The mall is enjoying a solid comeback – despite the fact that its interior remains mostly empty. Nashville State Community College’s southeast campus, Bridgestone Americas offices, a Metro community center, and the Nashville Predators’ Ford Ice Center have taken over buildings used by former anchor tenants like J.C. Penney.

The old Macy’s will likely soon be turned into dense offices, if a deal on the table is finalized, according to owner Crestview Funds.

Even the recently announced loss of global furniture retailer Ikea at a planned new major retail center, Century Farms, barely registered among developers in the area.

‘A lot of interest’

Gold’s Hickory Hollow deal closed just days after Ikea announced it wouldn’t build its long-anticipated first Nashville location in Antioch – a project once considered key to the community’s future expansion.

“It doesn’t bring customers. After Ikea, you just want to go home. You don’t have energy to go to other places,” said Gold, whose Canada-based company has investments in Las Vegas, North Carolina, Florida and Virginia.

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Mark Gold
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