

# INTERIOR DESIGN<sup>®</sup>

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office talk

Chilewich, New York

## de-spec



**A devilishly compact** chocolate shop by De-Spec—a project that won an IIDA award in 2012—was what brought the firm to the attention of textile entrepreneur Sandy Chilewich. She needed a compact, flexible, modular display system suitable not only for trade fairs and department store shops-in-shop but also for the first stand-alone Chilewich boutique, in New York.

Before the display system could debut at the latter, De-Spec had to gut the space, 800 square feet unexpectedly long and narrow in plan. The concrete ceiling, luckily, was high. Now painted black, it's equipped with metal halide track lighting and LED pendant fixtures in the form of glowing disks—brightening their surroundings both literally and figuratively. "It's a *happy* black space, not a moody one," De-Spec founder Farnaz Mansuri remarks.

Right inside the entry, a sidewall's matte white plaster,

mixed with marble dust, is sculpted into folds reminiscent of origami. Almost all other stretches of wall, of course, are devoted to the display system. First comes a backing of thick fiberboard, integrally colored black and drilled with a grid of holes about 5 inches apart. Stout pegs of black-stained oak fill some holes. So do supports for shelves and for dining-height mini-tables that provide a landing surface for shoppers playing with place mats and napkins.

The monochromatic interior sets off the rainbow of products. "They are very colorful when they want to be," Mansuri says. Ever the New Yorker, however, she's obliged to admit that her own expanding Chilewich collection remains basically black. —Craig Kellogg

THOMAS SHEA: PROJECT MANAGER.

