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TUSCANY AT A SNIP

THE FINE ART OF OUTLET SHOPPING



ROME

DESIGN FORUM

Shopping

Gianni Pezzari

Italy is chock-full of fashion designers who are eager to promote new fads each season but Milan-based Massimo Alba isn't one of them.

"I like to think the pieces we offer today can be worn with a shirt, jacket or trousers we've presented in one of our past collections," he says. "My wish is to make people feel at ease in my clothes, not transform them into someone else."

The same thinking applies to Alba's shops. For his new boutique in Rome, he took over two floors of a baroque palazzo on a pedestri-

an street near Piazza Navona, set apart from the city's main shopping avenues.

"I wanted to be part of a neighborhood, not stuck next to the big clothing labels you see everywhere or in some luxury mall," he says. "We have fresh flowers everyday in the shop and get our water from an old fountain out in the street."

To give his shop a taste of the familiar, he decorated with furniture, paintings and photos taken from his home in Milan. There are even a few Persian rugs dyed blue using the same eco-friendly methods that go into

coloring his range of knitwear for men and women, much of it made with Italian cashmere.

The sumptuously soft clothes share shelf space with shirts, shorts and pants in washed cotton and other fabrics that all feature original patterns that Alba creates in-house.

IVAN CARVALHO

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