

Winter 2023

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The magazine of Betterhomes.

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Make a bold statement in any room

RENOVATION

Minimalism meets Art Deco

INSPIRATION

Five-star style in the comfort of home

Dive right in

Expert advice for the perfect pool

The Heights of good taste

Travel to Victory Heights with Cinzia and Marco Tedeschi to view an Italian owned, English inspired home transformation



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40
A minimalist
motif meets Art
Deco accents

Welcome to the issue

Travel on your mind? Put the passport away and book a home makeover instead with hospitality interior designer insight on how to recreate the five-star vibe of your favourite hotel stay... at home (page 10). Plus, more exotic inspiration with a master class on trending Japanese wabi-sabi design (page 8). If your plans for 2024 include big ticket outdoor projects, get the lowdown on the whys and wherefores of putting in a pool (page 16), and with party season in full swing, check out our guide to celebratory décor for your next dinner, cocktail or holiday gathering (page 20). We also step inside a rather lovely English-inspired home in Victory Heights (page 24) and see how light-filled minimalist-meets-Art Deco in a Jumeirah Park villa (page 38). Take your copy of Better Living onto the terrace or out into the garden and settle in for a good read while soaking up some vitamin D.

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Seating for every occasion

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Ready to move? Our agents pick their top properties this season.

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YOUR
SPACE



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Stripes naturally draw the eye and give the impression of a taller or longer space



On our radar... EARN YOUR STRIPES

Not just for sailors, stripes instantly add a sense of space and make a bold visual impact in any room.

Products pictured:
1. Missoni Trevor duvet set, Dhs5,070, **BLOOMINGDALE'S** 2. Liberatzión malachite wallpaper, Dhs616, **THECURIOUSDEPARTMENT.COM** 3. Striped Christmas crackers, Dhs115, **IDYLLHOME.CO.UK** 4. Striped Glass Christmas tree ornaments, Dhs276, **CRATE & BARREL** 5. MÄVINN rug, Dhs89, **IKEA** 6. Barbie Dreamhouse pastel pink wallpaper, Dhs345, **BOBBIBECK.COM** 7. Aquazzura Casa champagne glass, Dhs700, **BLOOMINGDALE'S** 8. Ferm Living Milu snack set, Dhs190, **THE BOWERY COMPANY**

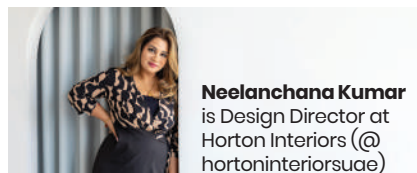


woodculture.ae



How to master...

Wabi-sabi



Neelanchana Kumar is Design Director at Horton Interiors (@hortoninteriorsuae)

WHAT IS IT?

Imagine wabi-sabi as the cool, laid-back friend who's all about embracing life's quirks and imperfections. 'Wabi' focuses on finding the beauty in the little things, like the charm of a slightly wonky handmade mug, while 'sabi' is all about appreciating the beauty that comes with age and wear. This style champions simplicity with organic shapes, asymmetry, natural textures and imperfection.

ABOUT THE STYLE

With its origins rooted in 16th-century legend and the story of a young monk who accidentally found beauty in imperfection, the wabi-sabi influence permeates diverse aspects of Japanese culture, from literature and Zen gardens to home décor. Its principles extend to ordinary objects

and moments, from appreciating a crack in a teapot to a weathered tapestry. Nature's rules anchor design practice through organic and sustainable materials, unglazed and unpolished finishes, as well as irregular, raw, flawed textures. A minimalist aesthetic and subdued colour palette add to its simplistic expression.

HOW TO NAIL IT

Home edit. At its core, wabi-sabi is centred on simplicity, so a good de-cluttering session is a great way to clear space and energy before diving into creating the aesthetic. This principle also extends to your new-look space, for example, hanging a solo piece of art on the wall or one green plant on a side table.

Natural palette. Muted, natural and neutral colours are the way to go as this style pays tribute to mother nature's palette, shapes and textures. Think bare natural walls (cracks included) and fabrics or pieces that have aged and discoloured for a new perspective on beauty.

Organic materials. Incorporate organic, sustainable and ethically-sourced materials and pieces, and try

to buy from reputable local designers or craftspeople where possible. Look for undyed, natural fabrics, rugs, textiles and ceramics, plus reclaimed wood items.

Vintage treasures. Repurposed furniture and upcycled pieces add uniqueness and tick sustainability boxes at the same time. Incorporate pre-owned vintage elements such as a well-worn leather sofa and timeless standing mirror or bring down your childhood wooden rocking chair from the attic. Kintsugi pottery is also a fabulous antique fair find.

Biophilia rules. Integrating greenery accentuates the principles of imperfection and impermanence. Try your hand at Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging, using as few stems as possible to underscore the intrinsic beauty of a single bloom.

Clockwise from top: Java teak root console, from Dhs 1,815, [woodculture.ae](#); Ficus potted plant, Dhs 85, [IKEA](#); Wool and cotton weave rug, Dhs 549, [H&M Home](#); Isis hanging lamp, Dhs 280, [takatomo.de](#); Palawan bamboo table lamp, Dhs 550, [limelace.co.uk](#); Benjamin Moore Regal Select interior paint in Pashmina, Dhs 305, [benjaminmoore.com](#); Clear glass carafe, Dhs 25, [IKEA](#); Hashi noodle bowl with chopsticks set, Dhs 253, [sweetpeanadwillow.com](#)

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Hotel chic

Five-star style in the comfort of home



The hotel aesthetic has always provided inspiration for residential spaces, conjuring up images of indulgent luxury and memory-making stays, from the exotic east to the cosmopolitan west. Today's five-star landscape encompasses chic urban boutique destinations, nature-inspired resort enclaves, and elegant legacy hotels; giving homeowners free rein to recreate their favourite experiences and incorporate their own personal style. Ronak Shah, Founder of Wonderwall Interiors (@wonderwall.ae) shares his hospitality design experience and thoughts on how to capture the high-end hotel experience in the comfort of your own home.

THINK ADAPTIVE SPACE. A guestroom with a well-thought through working area is a hotel design staple and the same applies for a bedroom. A cosy corner desk demands warm yet functional lighting or place your worktable in front of a window and make it a feature - with the view as added inspiration. If space is not an issue, consider hopping on the trend for bedrooms as self-sufficient spaces, with a hotel minibar for a cheeky nightcap.

CURATED ART. Eye-catching artworks add distinct personality to a hotel interior and are a reflection of brand identity, often linked to a theme or particular style. Get creative and curate your own in-house art collection, from classic wall art and 3D installations. This will mirror the hotel experience by blending individual expression with thematic coherence.

A TOUCH OF LUXURY. An easy way to elevate a common living space is by choosing fabric cladding over traditional wallpaper or paint. Seen in the most opulent hotels worldwide, lush silks, warm felts and even wool-derived applications instantly speak to elegance and an elevated sense of style. Don't forget to lavish the same attention on your floors, with easy-to-maintain hardwood often used in resorts that embrace a natural aesthetic.

ENTRANCES TO IMPRESS. Turn a warm welcome into a wow factor and transform the entryway or hall with some five-star flair. In order to deliver



that awe-inspiring sensation of stepping into a paradisiacal resort, think about showcasing high ceilings, introducing skylights and opting for huge window panels. A few simple architectural tweaks can help craft open, airy spaces that nail the resort vibe.

SCENTS OF PLACE. One thing luxury hotels do particularly well is play with our senses, and many five-star hospitality brands have their own bespoke signature scent, which is liberally sprayed into public areas to trigger positive emotions. Design your own captivating olfactory signature fragrance and seamlessly integrate it into the a/c system.

SPA AT HOME. Echoing hotels that lavish just as much attention on bathroom design as in the bedroom, transform your bathroom into a luxury sanctuary. Simple upgrades such as elegant matt finish fixtures, a rain shower, and the use of premium materials like granite or marble, make a world of difference; while a steam room or sauna is a must if blessed with an abundance of space. Add clever storage for that sleek, uncluttered hotel feel.

GO RETRO. Hotel design is constantly reinventing itself and retrofit furniture is redefining home spaces with its sleek, Scandinavian-inspired design. Envision headboards that smoothly transition into side tables and modular units that adapt effortlessly to your needs. This smart, space-efficient, approach takes its cues from hotel room design and brings a touch of minimalistic elegance to any home.



TIP

Upgrade bedtime with five-star hotel standard high-quality, 300 to 500-thread count cotton linen

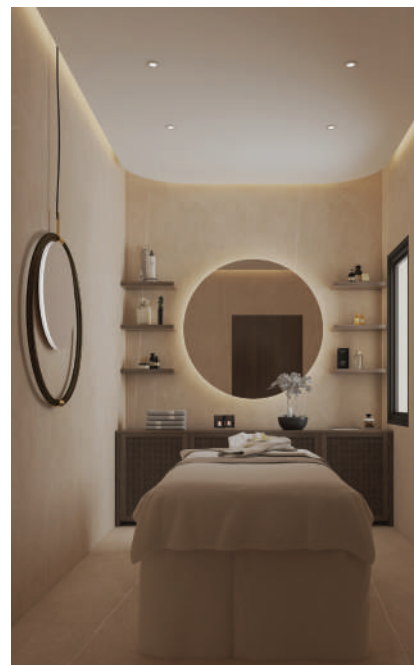


Image credits: Wonderwall hotel-inspired residential projects





Fashion has a new home at Danube Home

Discover a catwalk-worthy collection of chic furniture pieces designed to add instant glamour and sophistication to your living spaces

As Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of *Vogue* famously said: “You either know fashion or you don’t,” and the latest design collaboration from Danube Home pays homage to the world of sought-after style paired with the furniture retailer’s reputation for exceptional quality.

On show at Danube Home’s Al Barsha, Dubai location, the FashionTV collection combines elegance with comfort and is embodied across an eye-catching and exciting range that features chic sofas, stylish armchairs, on-trend consoles, tasteful side tables, and more.

Sculpted forms and luxurious accents elevate everyday furnishings to

magazine front cover standard, while the use of bold textures adds sensory sophistication to each piece. A neutral-hued colour palette is complemented by vibrant pops of colour and anchored by flawless attention to detail in the craftsmanship and final touches.

Fashion-forward homeowners with a keen eye for design will love the uniqueness of the collection, with pieces designed to make a strong individual style statement yet reflecting the personal taste of every Danube Home customer - infusing fashion and style into every corner of the home.

Looking for more on-trend inspiration? Go to danubehome.com or visit your nearest Danube Home showroom.



6am

My day kickstarts early. Fuelled by the boost of my morning coffee, I jump right into the day’s agenda with a head full of thoughts and a fairly long to-do list. Early morning is prime time to think about task delegation, with a quick round of emails and messages that set the tone and direction for the day ahead.

6.30am

At least four times a week I get to play a few rounds of padel tennis, which is, incidentally, the world’s fastest-growing racquet sport. By 8 am, the game wraps up, and it’s time to head to the studio.

8.30am

Armed with my second coffee of the day (breakfast is a protein shake that I’ll enjoy later this morning) I navigate the morning rush to get to the office before 9am. Getting in earlier than the team gives me some welcome space – and quiet – to organise my thoughts.

9-11am

A casual stroll around the studio is an integral part of my routine. This is when I connect with the team, check in, and ensure that everyone is on the same page. I’m a firm believer in the importance of simple yet effective actions that build team spirit.

11am

Now it’s my turn to focus on my own work tasks. Lunch is an erratic concept that is dependent on the day’s demands and could involve a client meeting or be a quick 15-minute home-cooked affair. Post-lunch, the pace quickens, with client meetings, site visits, and pitches dominating the agenda.



A day in the life: OF A CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Co-founder and creative director at Designsmith (@designsmith_studio), Mihir Sanganeer is passionate about delivering collaborative, life-enhancing design solutions

4-6pm

Late afternoons are more studio-focused and is when I spend valuable time with the design team. These hours are dedicated to ideation and creative flow, ensuring our projects move forward seamlessly.

7pm

I wrap up the workday and head home. Unless there’s a partner event, a networking gathering, or a dinner engagement, evenings are all about chilling at home, which means time spent hanging out with my wife and our brood of rescued dogs and cats.



10pm

The day ends with a routine I try to keep consistent, and I try to hit the hay at 10 pm. I have a nightly ritual of reading at least 10 pages on different topics; this is a small yet cherished practice that helps me slip into a peaceful night’s rest.





ASK THE EXPERT

Planning a pool

Isobel Rees, Architect-Design Manager at Secret Gardens Landscaping(@secretgardenslandscaping) dives right in

Be inspired. The Mediterranean lifestyle is trending, with clients looking for turquoise pool waters and cascading water features or olive trees. Balinese design is also popular, with the use of green tiles and tropical planting, while infinity-edge and overflow-pools remain in demand for that luxury resort hotel feel.

Get your ducks in a row. If a pool is a priority in your new home, expedite the process by making sure you have all the relevant documentation, including the as-built drawings, to hand. It's also worth getting a mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) check or full survey on an existing pool to help understand potential issues.

Do your research. It's important to understand the types of pools available in the market and what is best suited to your project. When commissioning a pool project, do the research and speak to the experts who can best assist you. Two major factors to consider are budget and timescale. This is a big-ticket item, so getting it right will pay off for you in the long run.

Permissions are everything. The UAE, and Dubai in particular, is very heavily regulated. Rules and regulations are ever-changing and dependent on both community and location. For the most up-to-date information on the rules, regulations and costing, it's important to go with a company with expertise in not just pool design and construction but also

one that is knowledgeable with up-to-date municipality and community guidelines.

Energy efficiency is possible. More and more clients are keen to introduce sustainability and energy efficiency into their landscape and pool design, and renewable energy sources that can handle large loads are being explored. New technologies can improve pool efficiency through a fully automated system with real-time system analysis capability. There are also simpler solutions, such as micro-dosing during back washing, that can support energy efficiency.

Safety first and foremost. A perennial hot topic, particularly for families with children and pets, there are many different options to increase pool safety. For example, community guidelines recommend railings around the pool, no steep drops, and a one metre clear distance around the pool.

Warranty and liability period must-haves. A reputable company will come with a warranty and liability period and this should be part of the discussion at the design and pricing stage.

Factor in operational cost. These will vary depending on pool size. Contributing factors include time of year, MEP equipment quality, and pool heater and chiller usage. Once your pool is handed over, it's worth signing up for an annual maintenance contract, ideally with the company that built it.

A pool is a big-ticket item, so getting it right at the beginning will pay off in the long run

Sitting pretty

Curl up in a comfy chair, dine in style, or lounge around with seating for every occasion



1

BRINGING THE 70S FIRMLY BACK IN FASHION, THIS KOOKY SWIVEL CHAIR WILL ADD FLORAL GLAMOUR TO A DRESSING ROOM. SIT PRETTY BY A PICTURE WINDOW OR PAIR WELL WITH OTHER VINTAGE INSPIRED PIECES. ANYONE FOR A BLUE HAWAIIAN?

Swivel chair in peony, Dhs 5,102, kareuae.ae



2

Long, leisurely dinner parties are all the more enjoyable when you have a comfortable seat at the table. Dark green plush velvet screams tradition, while the sleek steel frame lends 21st century substance. A timeless choice.

Collings dining chair, Dhs1,550, marinahomeinteriors.com



4

Find the Joey to your Chandler and hit the button for some serious reclining while watching your favourite US sitcom. The choice of dove grey adds a touch of welcome softness. Could it be any comfier?

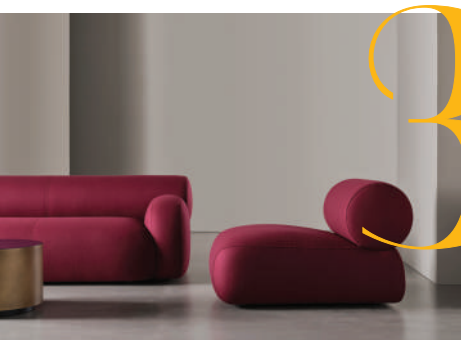
Kingdove single seater recliner, Dhs 4,280, panhomestores.com



5

Perch on a piece of art and admire the softly rounded fluidity of the stunning Oscar armchair. An iconic piece that will definitely command attention, the choice of vivid plum-pink makes a bold statement but also delivers on comfort.

Oscar armchair by Andrea Parisio, price upon request, caspaio.com



3



NATURE MEETS NURTURE WITH THIS BOTANICAL PRINT TEAK DAYBED. DESIGNED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO LOUNGE; SEND THE KIDS OUT ON A PLAY DATE, SWITCH OFF YOUR MOBILE, AND JUST DO YOU. THE QUINTESSENTIAL ADDITION TO ANY TERRACE OR GARDEN-FACING ROOM.

HKliving outdoor teak daybed, Dhs 9,465, urbannest.ae

9



6

Custom-made from reclaimed wood with a whitewashed finish, introduce sustainable rustic charm to your outdoor tiki bar or kitchen breakfast bar. With no two pieces exactly alike, showcase your unique sense of style.

Benji bar stool, Dhs 1,095, tribedubai.com

8

AVAILABLE IN GREEN OR RED, GET INTO THE SWING OF THINGS AND FIND SOME ZEN OUT IN THE GARDEN THIS WINTER. THE CRADLE-STYLE DESIGN AND EXTRA PLUMP CUSHION ARE DESIGNED TO LULL YOU INTO A STATE OF COMPLETE SERENITY. THE PERFECT STRESS-BUSTING SEAT.

Casa Loma hanging chair, Dhs 1,999, danubehome.com



7



Hello sunshine! You can't go wrong with a classic wing chair. Add a footstool and you're all set for an afternoon with a good book or in front of the game. Canary yellow isn't for everyone, but it's guaranteed to pop in an otherwise neutral room.

Strandmon armchair and footstool, Dhs 1,290, ikea.com/ae

10



A warm fluffy seated hug on demand? This Ross Cassidy-designed wing chair also ticks ethical boxes with its FSC-certified wood frame wrapped in humanely-sourced Mongolian sheepskin. The best seat in the house, in our opinion.

Bozzi Mongolian sheepskin chair, Dhs 12,375, cb2.ae



Let us entertain you

Whether you're planning a festive family dinner, upscale New Year's Eve soirée or already thinking about Eid, get the inside design scoop from our trio of design experts

Dinner parties by design

Hanne Langmead, Collection Conceptualiser at THE ONE, recommends that the host focuses on three key elements: ample seating and space, a decluttered ambience, and creating the right mood. "Warm lighting, a comfortable temperature and soft background music are essential," she notes. When it comes to dinner party styling, Hanne highlights the current trend for nature-based themes, which can be personalised to individual tastes or seasonal themes. "Think fresh flowers or greenery, which can be either showcased as a singular, striking centerpiece or arranged in a more understated fashion along the length of the table to create a naturally elegant low centerpiece. To add depth and texture to the setting, consider mixing and matching dinnerware." She suggests elevating the aesthetic appeal by pairing this with textured linens and patterned napkins, with personalised place cards or unique details at each setting a thoughtful on-trend addition.

Party like a rockstar

When planning a party, the host needs to first of all map out the space. Says Hanne: "Arrange your furniture to promote easy mingling and do include comfortable seating for your guests. Consider introducing versatile pieces like ottomans or modular sofas that can be moved or adjusted to accommodate the flow of people." If you anticipate the festivities getting a little raucous, safeguarding your space is critical. Relocate valuables and breakables to a secure area and also think about functionality. A great idea for Hanne is to strategically site stylish side tables or retro bar carts to provide convenient spots for guests to place their drinks glasses. "Finally, don't underestimate the power of a well-curated playlist as this will set the tone and energy of your party," she notes. Theme parties are also making a comeback, according to Hanne. "Be bold and fully embrace your chosen theme and with the trend



Tip

THINK TRENDING WHITES AND NEUTRALS FOR EID CELEBRATIONS FROM LINENS AND TABLEWARE TO SOFT WARM NATURAL LIGHTING OR WHITE ILLUMINATED LANTERNS



LOOK TO LAYER

"I love to use a large textured linen tablecloth as the perfect staging point on which to build a theme. For a touch of formality, you can opt for a crisp white tablecloth. Layering is key, so I always include a placemat and/or charger plate beneath the dinner plate to add depth and interest. And fresh flowers are, for me, a non-negotiable addition."

for 2024 leaning towards vibrant colour schemes, the party scene looks set to be joyful and vibrant."

Add a twist

"I love adding a quirky twist, be it a signature cocktail created for the occasion, a special treat reflective of my heritage, or personalised gifts for each guest. Unusual and unexpected décor elements not only add charm but also serve as excellent conversation starter."





Tip
GARDENS AS WELLNESS SPACES IS TRENDING INTO 2024. GET YOUR ZEN ON WITH OUTDOOR YOGA OR DESIGN YOUR OWN MINDFULNESS SPACE



SYED'S DESIGN GUIDE

1. A Sunday lunch gathering is great fun, but make sure you have an outdoor umbrella or roofed gazebo that offers shade from the sun.
2. Do check the weather forecast; if it's a cool UAE winter evening then invest in space heaters to keep your guests warm and cosy and food warmers so burgers and kebabs stay hot straight from the barbecue.
3. The right lighting is critical. Install pathway lighting to guide guests and overhead lighting in dining areas so they can see what they're eating!
4. Seating is often overlooked, so make sure you have adequate space for everyone to sit and relax in comfort.
5. Create distinct areas or separate private areas using artificial grass fences (that way your guests won't accidentally tread on your prized petunias).

Al fresco entertaining

Sayed Habib, Director at Danube Home, reports a growing trend for elevated outdoor spaces. "People are more inclined than ever to create outdoor havens that are an extension of their living space but bring them closer to nature."

He recommends introducing a similar colour scheme and aesthetic to seamlessly connect indoors and outdoors. "In terms of style, there is strong demand for a contemporary as well as boho aesthetic with pistachio green, shades of blue and neutral hues the trending colours. Prints, patterns and pops of colour add the finishing touch through the use of cushions and throws."

Sustainability-led design is also a popular focus with natural, organic and eco-conscious materials featuring, including rope and aluminium, increasingly sought after. "Meanwhile, functionality is just as important, whether it's choosing the right barbecue setup, dining layout, or the leisure elements like a bar counter or garden swing."



Head to the kitchen

Sarah Aji, Brand Manager for Al Meera Kitchens, shines a spotlight on entertaining opportunities in the heart of the house. "Creating an inviting kitchen setting for festive gatherings is an art that extends beyond functionality; it's about crafting an inviting space that complements the occasion," she explains.

This begins with kitchen design, with an "inviting island" with built-in hob the visual hook for a lively New Year's Eve cocktail and canapés gathering, for example. Says Sarah: "This is not only practical but the live cooking aspect adds an interactive element to the celebration, with the island becoming a social hub."

For a dinner, she suggests incorporating an island peninsula with seating, to foster a sense of togetherness while still maximising on function. "If space permits, integrating a separate dining table offers a dedicated space for communal, celebratory dining, but make sure to harmonise the aesthetic. Matching materials, colours and other elements will help bridge the gap between kitchen and dining area."



SPOTLIGHT ON STYLE

- A seasonal or occasion-relevant colour palette will instantly elevate the atmosphere with co-ordinating tableware and decorative elements creating festive cohesion
- When crafting a festive tablescape, incorporate themed linens, elegant dinnerware and playful decorations that align with the celebration and visually enrich the holiday spirit
- Infuse the kitchen with evocative aromas by strategically placing scented candles on windowsills or other safe areas for an immersive sensory experience
- Merge functionality with aesthetics in your choice of serving dishes and utensils to fit the decorative theme



Anglophile aesthetic

Designers **Cinzia** and **Marco Tedeschi** take us on a tour through an Italian-owned, English-inspired home in Victory Heights



Cristina (left), with Cinzia and Marco Tedeschi



With Dubai's reputation as a multicultural city, it comes as no surprise to open the door on this Italian-owned and designed Victory Heights villa to find a genteel nod to English country living.

Homeowner Cristina, who lives here with her husband and three sons, explains: "We wanted the interiors to be warm but also to draw on influences from English country houses, which is a style I love and also complements the golf course view."

The six-month top-to-toe renovation was executed by fellow Italians Cinzia and Marco Tedeschi from award-winning boutique firm Smart Renovation, and has transformed the villa into a cohesive, light-filled family home with its own distinctive personality.

While the footprint is largely the same, the introduction of a ground floor extension connected to the main living area by a statement 'jumbo window' has completely changed the way that light accesses the space.

To ensure a seamless flow throughout the open-concept ground floor, as well as add the desired element of warmth, premium laminated wooden flooring from Germany was used throughout (bar the bathrooms).

At the same time, another primary goal was to install a sliding door between the kitchen and formal dining area. "This is the perfect solution for when Cristina is hosting a dinner party and doesn't want the kitchen in view of her guests; but it has also been designed to be an attractive feature to enhance the elegance of the dining space," notes Cinzia.

In terms of colour palette, grey, burgundy, green shades and detailing anchor the downstairs interiors with the addition of blue hues upstairs. Says Cinzia: "The inspiration actually started from the powder room, which features stunning Gucci floral wallpaper in burgundy that contrasts beautifully with the white moulded panelling around the vanity.

"From there we chose to continue with burgundy for the kitchen, but also paired with matt grey across the cabinetry for a more contemporary edge." An entire wall of storage inset into the wall is an added bonus, with a foldout cabinet that opens to reveal an air fryer, an inventive - and practical - solution.

This continuity spills over into the adjacent dining area, with grey giving



LED BACKLIT MIRRORS ENHANCE TEXTURAL DETAILING



An entire wall of storage inset into the wall is an added bonus, with a foldout cabinet that opens to reveal an air fryer

way to greens, seen in both the wallpaper and seating upholstery, with burgundy accents cleverly added through piping as a subtle detail on both the dining chairs and ceiling pendant.

Cinzia elaborates: “Even the bespoke marble table has hints of rose, which softens the overall visual. The standout feature, however, has to be the spectacular wallpaper mural. This was hand-selected by the client, who chose to feature wallpaper throughout the home to add personality as well as texture.”

Sourced from Dubai-based Archiade Atelier, the Misha wallpaper design holds special resonance for homeowner Cristina: “It is a visual recreation of the historic Silk Road, starting from Venice and featuring Istanbul, Jakarta and hints of Arabia. It has great depth of field and the finer details such as the mosque, hot air balloon and camel come together to make a truly wow statement.”

The burgundy thread is also prominent in the sitting room area, where grey is reintroduced in the sofa, and the familiar contrast piping neatly tying everything together. Overlooking the garden, the idea to recess the curved floor-to-ceiling picture windows to better frame the exterior view connects the green of the lawn and golf course with the overarching colour scheme.

Exterior landscaping has been afforded equal consideration and uses clean lines and contemporary design to ensure the surrounding view is the focal point.

A modern pergola sits adjacent to the pool with an outdoor kitchen area clad in textural tiles that add character but tick the box when it comes to durability and being easy-to-maintain - an important consideration.

“Of course, being Italian, we had to include two olive trees to dress the patio doors,” adds a smiling Cinzia.



The exterior view connects the green of the lawn and golf course with the overarching colour scheme

Back inside, she points out the English-style moulded skirting boards that add movement to an otherwise flat surface, and which she laughingly refers to as “the belt to hold the dress.”

It doesn't get more quintessentially English than in the entrance hall, where modern grandeur in the form of a half-panelled staircase is reminiscent of traditional manor house décor but is firmly in the 21st century thanks to the burgundy palette. Cristina's heirloom furniture adds personality and another layer of warmth with the eye-catching pendant chandelier by LampShades Dubai adding the requisite cohesive note.

Upstairs, the open landing has been transformed into an intimate family den, with Cinzia highlighting the window treatment. “To add an English accent, we framed the curtains with a fabric-covered pelmet, which hides the unsightly curtain rails.”

Golf fairway green and deep teal were the chosen colour themes, respectively, for the two boys' bedrooms, which gives each space its own personality while espousing the home's overarching colour palette - and featuring more of Cristina's signature piping detail. “When choosing the colour pairings, we played with warm blends of red, green and beige stone versus cool colours as seen in the grey tiling and blue tones,” remarks Cinzia.

Bathrooms are also similarly differentiated, this time with the use of textural stone tiling that evokes images of waves or sand dunes and used as a vanity backsplash as well as for the walk-in showers. Says Cinzia: “An important element in the bathroom design was the addition of a substantial niche, that is both a practical element as well as a design statement. We chose marble as a contrast to the 'rustic' tiling to elevate the luxury

feel. We also incorporated LED lighting for the vanity mirror and niche to enhance the textural detailing.”

Even the nursery follows suit with whimsical animal wallpaper and accents of grey, green and red, plus a reupholstered daybed from a local big box store, that mirrors the rest of the soft furnishings.

It's the master suite, however, that steals the show. The exquisitely elevated bathroom showcases a deep free-standing bath above which an extended backlit niche is juxtaposed against striking matte gold fixtures. Sourced in Dubai, the marble used for the vanity came from a single slab with the backsplash tiles glimmering with hints of Tiffany-esque blue.

In contrast to the rugged textural tiles used in the other bathrooms, here Cinzia went with a semi-polished finish to bring home a sense of holistic elegance. “In all the bathrooms we also made sure that the tiles were edged to the highest standards to ensure a perfect profile,” she adds.

The adjoining burgundy - and grey - styled bedroom has a secret all of its own, as Cristina explains: “We decided to close in the original balcony, which served no real purpose, and create a walk-in closet. People are so surprised to open what looks like a regular closet door to find an entire room. It was a genius idea and is such a luxury add-on.”

While Cristina finds it impossible to pick one favourite space in her newly renovated home, for Cinzia it is the powder room. “It may be a 'chocolate box' of a room but it has such a strong aesthetic impact. It was also where the concept and creativity flowed from and our starting point for this project.”

The last word goes to Cristina.

“This really is our dream home, and everything turned out exactly the way we envisioned.”



A COMPACT, CONTEMPORARY HAVEN

Function meets flora in this harmoniously landscaped Dubai Hills garden

An eviction notice on their Dubai Hills rental home was the catalyst for Elisa Radeva and her husband, prompting their decision to invest in a home of their own. “We love the area, plus we wanted long-term security as we were planning to start a family,” she shares. After viewing newly handed-over units in the Golf Grove district, the couple made an offer in just a matter of days.

Garden landscaping was not even under discussion initially, as Elisa explains: “We wanted to do the bare minimum in order to make it liveable, then revisit the blank sand pit that was the garden when we had more time and headspace.” Once settled, and with time to breathe, attention finally turned to the outdoor space, beginning with a wander through the neighbourhood for inspiration. “One of the gardens, in particular, stood out, so we approached our neighbour and that’s how we brought Nabil from NGS Architects on board.”

Their first meeting resulted in an immediate alignment of vision and work ethic, and the dream garden project was green lighted.

Elisa elaborates: “The space itself isn’t very big, but we wanted to divide it into different functional areas. We also wanted to have plants that were easy to maintain and in keeping with the desert flora.” Unusually, their design brief also specified the creation of additional storage due to a lack of available space within the villa.

A keen eye for detail meant that Elisa and Nabil went through an exhaustive briefing process in order to establish the foundations for a clear-cut, polished plan of action, ending up with a realistic 3D render.

While functionality was key, the couple wanted a sleek, modern feel and Nabil’s insightful interpretation of the

brief created a space “that feels bigger than it actually is, thanks to the multi-layered design.” To bring the renders to life, NGS Architects also designed a series of mood boards to illustrate how different colour combinations, textures and materials could work together.

A major challenge to the project was the fact that it was executed during summer, which meant reduced working hours – extending the original timeline. The end result, however, was well worth the wait, as Elisa shares: “What is really amazing is that the garden looks exactly like the original renders. We especially love the lighting, which brings the space to life at night and adds an extra-special wow factor.

“What is really amazing is that the garden looks exactly like the original renders.”





GIRL POWER

Interior design elements can evoke a wide range of emotions within us. Design is an expression of who we are, and our living environment can be a real source of inspiration. The study of colour psychology provides clues to our emotional state, with bright colours leaving us energised and neutral colours leaving us calm and relaxed. Visually engaging art and bright objects provide a source of creativity when we need it the most and, when work is out of the way, a cosy space gives us the comfort that we need to unwind.

Mona Abdallah, Interior Design Group Leader, IKEA, says: "This room is designed specifically for a young girl who likes to blog, experiment with makeup and have space to study. The amount of clothes she has makes a modular design-to-your-needs wardrobe system, with clever storage, the perfect choice to grow with you.

"When choosing a dressing table, get creative and opt for a top that comes with a drawer unit underneath for multifunctional use as a workstation. A full-length mirror and customisable picture frames add personalisation."

sleep, which is a gift for a new family! Our brains are naturally predisposed to favour organisation over chaos and an uncluttered environment gives your baby freedom to start exploring their new world, first visually, and then within a safe physical space.

Mona says: "A blackout curtain blocks outside light, helps keep the room calm and cosy, and promotes sleep for both baby and parents. The most important thing for parents to function better is sleep, so choosing a bed with a soft, sloping headboard can really help. Extra storage for all your baby things is another challenge, so under-bed drawers and labelled baskets are a great idea. We also recommend replacing quilt covers with a baby sleeping bag for extra nighttime safety."

de-cluttered minimum with the help of compartmentalised storage. Play and study go hand-in-hand, so a desk with ample storage space to keep books, paints and other hobby items neat and tidy is a great solution. Hanging out with friends is part and parcel of the growing-up experience, and convenient foldable mattresses make sleepovers easy."

COUPLES' SANCTUARY

Versatile spaces allow us to shift our emotional state from one place to another, while music can change our biochemistry in just a matter of minutes. Having a cosy place to sit in and chat after a busy day promotes human connection. A place to cook together is a must-do to encourage healthy eating and research shows that this also promotes mental and emotional wellbeing. At the same time, being productive generates an innate sense of wellbeing, so having a space where you can do this is very important.

Salma says: "For couples who love to socialise and also work from home, Sonos speakers are great for playing soothing and relaxing sounds. A sleek, cleverly designed kitchen that seamlessly integrates with the living room means you'll always be part of the conversation. Complement this with an organised workspace for maximum efficiency, and when work is done, a comfy sofa allows you to create a multi-purpose space where you can connect with family and friends."



Mindful design for optimal wellbeing

The right interior design can positively impact our mental health. **IKEA** has teamed up with leading psychologist Devika Mankani (cheerful.com) to transform four rooms with mental wellbeing in mind



BABY ON BOARD

For those of us who have experienced parenthood, having an organised environment can significantly reduce the source of stress. Lighting, in particular, can easily shift our mood with subdued lighting proven to lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormones. Good lighting makes it easier to relax and induces

BOY ZONE

When children feel confined by their physical environment, they can experience psychological frustration. Children need open spaces as this encourages movement, which is an essential physical and mental requirement for growing bodies and minds. Creating neat workplaces encourages thinking and creativity, as well as getting them to do their homework before it's time for play. Young people also need spaces for socialising, which is where they develop the building blocks of human connection to be able to flourish.

Salma Abdurahman, Interior Designer, IKEA, says: "A playground-inspired room for a young boy can be efficiently designed to keep space to a



Belsino

Cool for kids

Cookie-inspired cots, wardrobes that double as puzzles and custom-made beds perfect for Goldilocks and the three bears

Inspired by Italy's iconic design legacy, Belsino (@belsinouae) is bringing exemplary craftsmanship and luxury to the UAE, according to owner, Mohammad Hossein Zomorodian. "Our focus is on using natural wood sourced from Canada and Finland and handcrafted to produce high-quality furniture pieces that families will love," he explains.

A quick peek at the website reveals a treasure trove of cool kids' bedroom pieces that range from the colourful and contemporary to the classic and timeless, as Mohammad explains: "Our team is constantly thinking about new and unique designs, using different colours, to create high-quality bedroom and playroom collections that are visually appealing, hardwearing and unlike anything else in the market. After all, kids deserve to have spaces that match their own emerging sense of style and personality."

From wardrobes, nightstands and vanity sets to desks, shelving, toy boxes, and more, each collection is designed down to the smallest detail to deliver on Belsino's quality and safety commitment.

"The Lord Collection is proving extremely popular and follows a classic aesthetic featuring handmade carpentry, while the Puzzle Collection is a new concept that is sensory as well as stylish. One of my current favourites is the Biscuit Collection, which was the brainchild of our lead designer; it's definitely fun," elaborates Mohammad.

Teens also get to design their space and all the family is catered for with Belsino's specialist bed service offering custom-made solutions for babies through to adults. "We want customers to sleep well at any age," he adds, with a smile.

Not content with crafting dream bedrooms, the Belsino team also undertakes carpentry projects for living and dining spaces, and into the kitchen domain.



WINDOW DRESSING

Choosing the right window treatment can be child's play says Nahel Selo, Creative Director at Sedar Global (@sedarglobal)

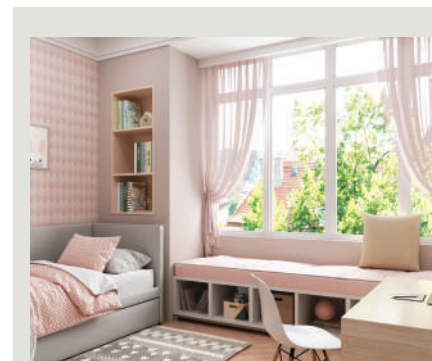
"Lighting is essential to help kids concentrate, not only for homework but also for hobbies, like drawing or crafts. Position desk spaces near the window and not facing a wall, if this can be avoided. An influx of sunlight supports a positive

mood and the changing view outside the window can help your kid's brain take a break between tasks.

"For darker spaces use sheer fabrics for windows and invest in a desk lamp to encourage concentration. If you are creating a homework space within the bedroom make sure to install blackout curtains or blinds, so a good night's sleep is guaranteed. Combining this with a

second layer of Roman blinds, in one of our themed prints, or slatted blinds, is perfect to manage lighting during the day.

"When it comes to colour choices, yellow is known to increase creativity and attention; orange can improve alertness; greens and purples are peaceful and calm; whilst browns and warm neutral tones can reduce feelings of fatigue and promote a sense of security."



Sedar Global

A long-awaited personal passion project for homeowner Sawsan Al Nabolsi, owner of Reesha Interior Design, renovation plans for the entire ground floor of her villa had previously been put on hold due to the pandemic.

Dated, dark and the opposite of her contemporary, light and minimalist-inspired vision, there was clear “room for improvement” to create a spacious family home with a luxury aesthetic that would also be a welcoming environment for gatherings with friends.

The first major change was structural, with Sawsan removing numerous interior arches to open up the floorspace allowing light to flood in. At the same time, the original low ceilings in the entry hall and staircase were raised to three metres, creating an immediate wow factor, with the rear loggia enclosed by floor-to-ceiling windows to connect with the outdoor space.

A minimalistic motif informs the holistic design vision, but Art Deco touches are also evident in the entryway and formal living area. “You wouldn’t think that this could work as they are opposing styles, but I took subtle Art Deco elements and married them to contemporary materials and finishes,” she says with a smile.



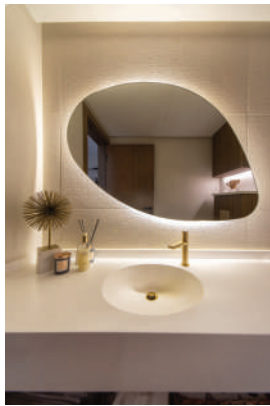
Before



After

Ahead of the curve

Minimalism meets Art Deco in Jumeirah Park



Beginning with the statement midnight-black front door and stunning black and brass hallway chandelier, the effect is cleverly framed by gently curving walls and corners that continue into the adjacent living space, with linear detailing and trim delivering added personality. Brass accent touches reinforce the retro aesthetic with a duo of exquisitely curvy cream sofas pulling it all together and sitting on a deep pile rug with an eye-catching abstract coral design.

It is also evident in the bespoke cabinetry that lines one side of the lounge area, where Sawsan has designed a hotel-style countertop

that houses a top-of-the-range coffee machine, with wraparound space to serve daytime snacks through to cocktail canapés. “We wanted guests to be able to serve themselves and feel at home. We are big coffee drinkers and this area is so unique. Everyone loves it,” she remarks.

Her colour palette is firmly in the neutral camp, anchored by an abundant use of white plus off-white, grey tones and beige, enlivened by a range of sea-reminiscent blues in accent pieces and artworks. Materials are texturally engaging and include a mix of wallpaper,

wood, leather and fabric.

Custom-made appears to be the mantra with numerous pieces and finishes commissioned by Sawsan, as well as produced in-house with Reesha Interior Design recently expanding its services to fit-out and customisation.

Moving through to the more relaxed sitting area, which is where the family loves to hang out, the clean, contemporary aesthetic seamlessly follows through but is imbued with warmth, thanks to the staging of various personal pieces such as the vintage-style turntable.

The adjacent open kitchen is a minimalistic functionality-meets-

family togetherness tour de force that revolves around a huge central island used for everything from cookie-making moments and art and craft sessions to chatty get-togethers and dinner prep. Ample concealed storage keeps clutter to a minimum and ensures the space feels open and inviting.

THE VERDICT

“The vision – and now the reality – was a family-friendly space that reflects our lifestyle; where the kids would feel comfortable, my husband could watch the football; a practical yet stylish kitchen; and somewhere guests would feel completely at home, with a touch of luxury and lots of personality.”



Insider insight

When planning a renovation, first consider your **lifestyle** and how this impacts the flow of the different spaces within your home. **Functionality** and **comfort** are paramount.

Be aware of **structural** possibilities and hurdles. Not all walls can be removed, and some big changes require **planning permission**, as well as fees.

Lighting is everything and access to natural light should be the priority. The way we light our homes influences our **mood** and can even affect our health.

Invest more in the **important pieces**, like a sofa, and you'll save in the long term. Opt for **neutral colours**, so when you next renovate you won't need to replace big ticket items.

To find the right **contractor** for your renovation, do your research: ask friends for recommendations; check out **testimonials**; and ask to visit completed client projects.

HOT PROPERTIES

Three leading agents at Betterhomes give us an exclusive look at a selection of the best homes for sale in the neighbourhoods they know and love

Meet the agents

Maureen Downtown Dubai

"A great listener and a straightforward talker, I take time to understand my clients' needs in order to find them the perfect property. My extensive knowledge of the market is equally invaluable."



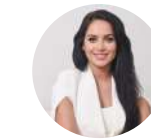
Aaron Jacob Al Barari

"Always on time and quick to respond, I'm also unfailingly honest, which is a quality my clients appreciate. With a proactive approach to client relationships and decisive by nature, I'm in this for the client win."



Muhammad Waqas Khan Dubai Marina

"Professional, direct and ethical in every aspect of my professional encounters. My customer-centric approach coupled with insightful local area experience is a positive for every client I have the pleasure to connect with."



My top picks in Downtown Dubai

To view one of these gorgeous apartments, call me on 052 530 0479

AED3.98 million

Zanzebeel 1, Downtown Dubai

In the desirable heart of the Old Town community, this renovated Scandi interiors-styled property includes a brand-new kitchen with Siemens appliances, oodles of space, and iconic Burj Khalifa views. **To find out more, call me quoting the reference code AP511809 RERA Permit No. 7122016500**
Bed: 2 Bath: 3 Parking: 1 Size: 1,288 sqft

AED3.2 million

Burj Khalifa, Downtown Dubai

This smart-home apartment in the iconic Burj Khalifa offers the wow factor from the moment you enter. It features Italian marble, exotic timber flooring, spectacular high floor views out over the city and exclusive Burj Club membership. **To find out more, call me quoting the reference AP569062 Permit No. 7121874000**

Bed: 1 Bath: 2 Parking: 1 Size: 968 sqft

“Perfect for shopping, dining and entertainment”



AED5.75 million

Act One, Downtown Dubai

Located in the exclusive Opera District, this recently handed-over apartment comes with mesmerising Burj Khalifa views and an expansive layout made for family living and elevated with luxury finishings throughout. **To find out more, call me quoting the reference AP538717 RERA Permit No. 71315582047**

Bed: 3 Bath: 3 Parking: 2 Size: 1,857 sqft



AED26.5 million

The Nest, Al Barari

Privacy and luxury are the bywords for an upmarket lifestyle in this exquisitely extended contemporary home that includes a private pool, elevator and staff quarters, in one of Dubai's most sought-after and exclusive communities.. *To find out more, call me quoting the reference V1723315 RERA Permit No. 6547846940*
Bed: 5 Bath: 6 Parking: 2 Size: 7,400 sqft



My top picks in Al Barari

If you'd like to view any of these apartments, call on 058 578 0174

AED13.2 million

Chorisia 1 Villas, Al Barari

Open plan living adorned with high-end finishes, a gourmet kitchen and top-of-the-line appliances characterises this sophisticated residence but it's the master suite that is the star with a private balcony, walk-in closet, and exceptional bathroom, *To find out more, call me quoting the reference code V1572037 RERA Permit No. 65503546394*
Bed: 5 Bath: 6 Parking: 2 Size: 6,634 sqft



AED7.5 million

Ashjar, Al Barari

An abundance of natural light sets the tone for a sophisticated all-white perspective on modern living where seamlessly connected spaces create opportunities for effortless entertaining and relaxation, complemented by high-quality finishes, premium fixtures and an extensive balcony. *To find out more, call me quoting the reference AP722738 RERA Permit No. 7117994252*
Bed: 3 Bath: 4 Parking: 3 Size: 4,113 sqft

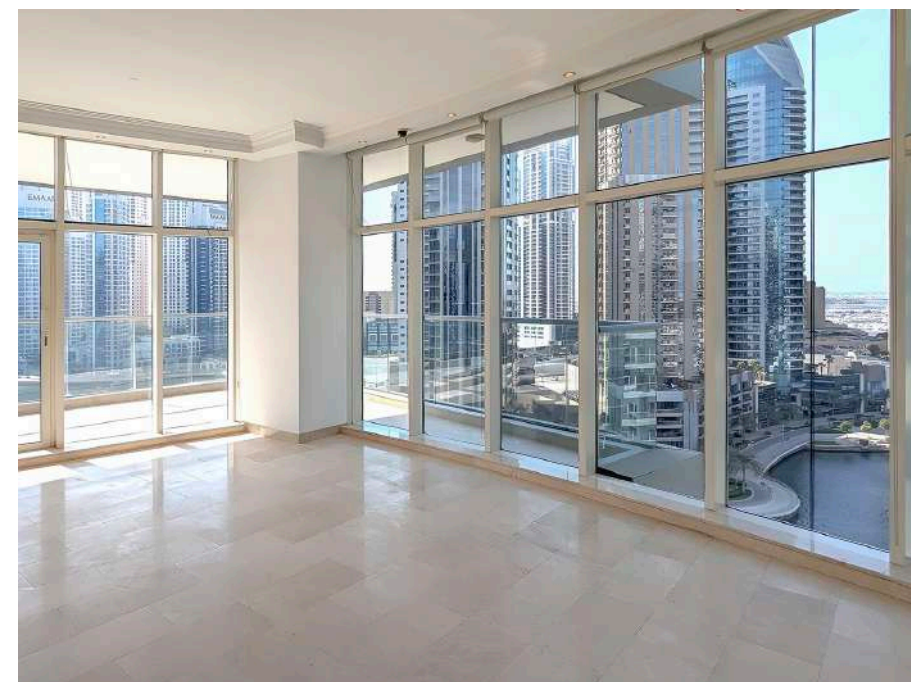


AED4 million

Trident Oceanic, Dubai Marina

A rare find, this ultra-luxurious apartment (vacant for a limited time only) is situated directly on the water's edge with panoramic views. Don't miss out on the opportunity, with a study, huge external storage room, high-spec kitchen, lounge-diner, and ample leisure facilities included. *To find out more, call me quoting the reference AP722456 RERA Permit No. 7123458100*
Bed: 3 Bath: 4 Parking: 2 Size: 2,490 sqft

This apartment has panoramic views of the prestigious Dubai Marina



View more listings at bhomes.com



My top picks in Dubai Marina

Interested to meet me and see these places? Call me on 058 567 5426 to discuss

AED2.15 million

Ocean Heights, Dubai Marina

Non-tenanted, fully furnished and with a premium location, the spacious apartment comes with underground parking, a huge balcony that's perfect for entertaining, and a host of world-class leisure facilities including a designated community barbecue area, infinity pool, and the marina lifestyle directly on the doorstep. *To find out more, call me quoting the reference AP551056 RERA Permit No. 7127449000*
Bed: 2 Bath: 3 Parking: 1 Size: 1,296 sqft



AED35 million

Sector H, Emirates Hills

A sports lover's dream home with external billiards and entertainment room and the Montgomerie Golf Course a short putt away, expect nothing but the best-in-class in terms of fixtures and fittings, plus a large pool and spa bath; enveloped in the most private of settings. *To find out more, call me quoting the reference V1525500S Permit No. 6564080000*
Bed: 5 Bath: 8 Parking: 4 Size: 12,500 sqft

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