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THE DESIGN VISIONARY

BRINGING VIBRANT AUSTRALIAN STYLE TO ARABIA



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# A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Emirati designer **Khalid Shafar** invites us into his stunning custom-made majlis, the perfect setting for his family's special Eid celebrations



Khalid wears casual polo shirt, Dh\$1,085; Leather Tab chino, Dh\$3,050; Andy Demasure pigna shoes, Dh\$6,750; all Bertuti

With the countless differing opinions that comes with a family project, a home renovation can be a difficult undertaking. However, when the interior designer and family member in charge is one of the most recognised names in Emirati design, Khalid Shafar, it's a different story.

"My family trusts me blindly when it comes to design, even when they ask me to work on their personal spaces," he confides. "Working on this project included making some big decisions and major changes, but I really enjoyed it because I was given the total freedom to renovate and I was able to take as much time as I needed." That timeframe spanned a whole year, and resulted in a contemporary cinematic-style majlis at the villa in Umm Suqeim, where he has lived for 35 years with his parents and three sisters.

The property has witnessed much of Dubai's evolution, from sleepy Emirate to bustling metropolis from its prime vantage point on Jumeirah Beach Road. In keeping with city's ever-changing, increasingly hip landscape, the Shafar's majlis was transformed into a modern, boutique interior, just in time for last year's Eid festivities. Here, Khalid blends 'behind the scenes' set details with residential elements. The exposed ceiling, with trusses and ellipsoidal reflector spotlights, frames the room with an unexpected stage-set theme, while the open arrangement of large olive-green sofas and low coffee tables is more in keeping with Arabian hospitality.

The reception area was formerly two separate rooms with structural columns embedded in the dividing wall that couldn't be removed. Rather than seeing this an an obstacle, he took advantage of this permanent fixture. Showing the scope of his imagination and contemporary flair, he covered the columns with mirror, creating a trompe de l'oeil effect, installed a sound system within, and fixed a projector screen at the top. This creates the coolest spot for







Top: The Palm, a prototype lamp made from ash, oak or walnut with marble, designed by Khalid. Left: A wooden gazelle sculpture from Global Village and collectible books on design and fashion. Right: The Shafar's custom-made dining room seats 24 for large family gatherings



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*Khalid Shafar, designer*



movie nights, and his younger sister often has friends over. The striking Italian Grigio marble, milk gray with white veins, runs throughout the living area providing a soothing neutral backdrop to the punches of olive green in the carpet runner and sofas. Khalid's furniture is known for telling stories and this space is no different, he explains: "It is a simple story: good design is timeless and, for me, this is a timeless space." The focal point is a marbled coffee bar that frames artwork of the Burj Khalifa made by his close friend and jewellery designer Nadine Kanso. The piece is sentimental; the rendering of the building, one of Khalid's favourite architectural designs and the muse for his own rugs and fabrics, includes a Polaroid photo of himself, plus pictures of many friends and nostalgic memories. He points out a wooden sculpture of a gazelle, sitting atop a side table, which he purchased from the Iranian pavilion at Global Village. "It is a handcrafted sculpture by a local artisan which, in my opinion, depicts great beauty and perfection," he says.

With a successful design career that sees him as a frequent guest speaker at regional design weeks in Istanbul, Saudi Arabia and Doha, an exhibitor at Milan Design Week and London Design Festival, and his selection as the regional face for skincare company Kiehl's, Khalid still counts the inauguration of his majlis as a major accomplishment. "I held a grand reception for friends and family, and everyone provided very positive feedback about the space, which made the time I spent on it even more fulfilling," he recalls. ■

Above: Khalid hosts lavish spreads for friends and family to celebrate Eid al-Fitr. Left: The marble coffee bar. Right: Puzzle Collection rug striped with the Burj Khalifa outline, designed by Khalid Shafar and in collaboration with FBMI

