

Through the Looking Glass

Despite its contemporary, light and strikingly minimal style, this Dubai penthouse exudes warmth, proving that pared-down design and homely appeal can work side by side

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Architectural Gerrit Rietveld armchairs contrast with the wavy texture of the travertine feature wall and the golden glow of the natural Swedish oak floor in the reception room

The entry hall's curved concrete table from Molteni is brought to life by heavily textured gold and mirrored consoles that reflect shadows on the walls above them. The Love sculpture on the table is by Lorenzo Quinn and the purple single brush stroke painting in the hallway is by James Nares

In this sleek penthouse in Dubai Marina, the mood is dictated as much by the ephemeral – the relationship between light and shadow and an atmosphere of calm created by rays of sun flooding through the windows – as the visual, with a subtle nod to luxury in the carefully sourced designer furniture. With views of Sheikh Zayed Road and the Emirates Golf Club to the east and Dubai Marina and the Arabian Gulf to the west, there are visual feasts to be enjoyed both inside and out.

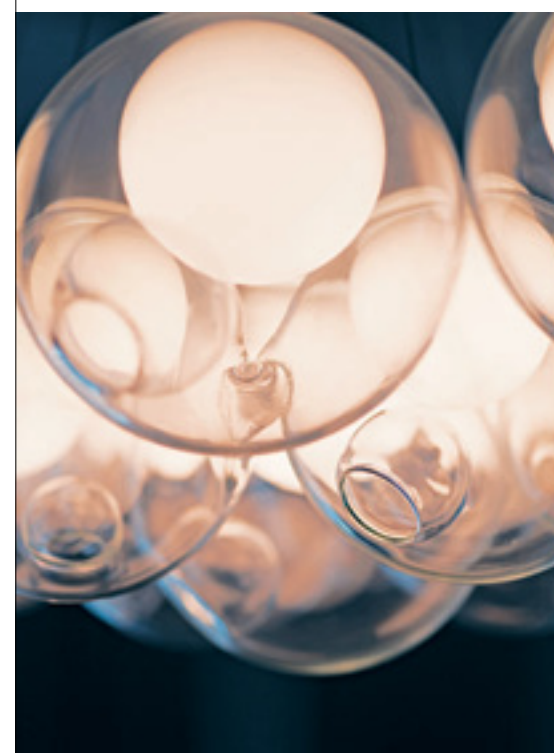
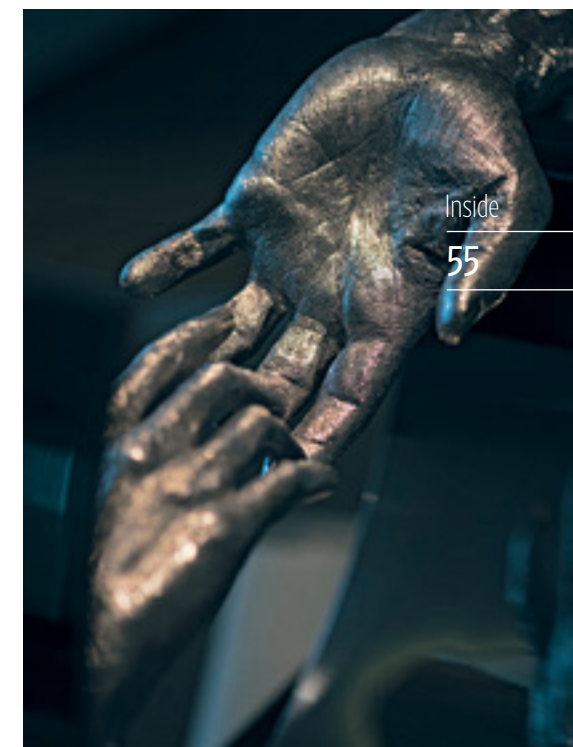
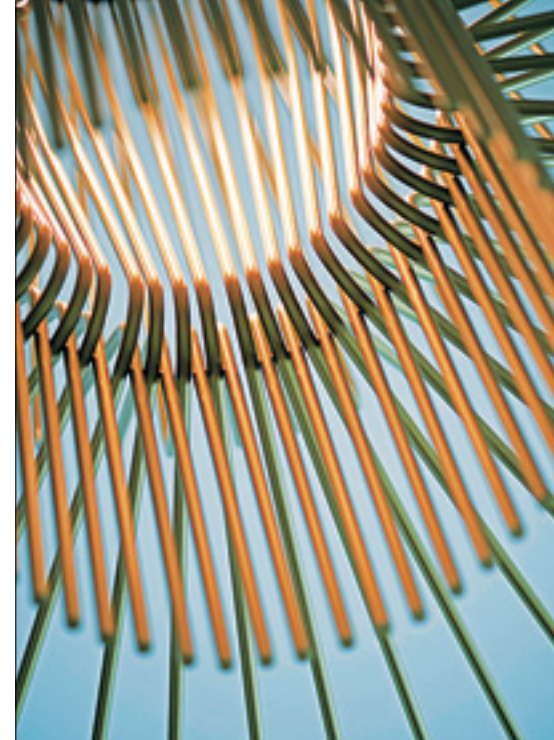
Purchased in June 2011 by its current owners, the penthouse underwent a minor structural facelift that saw walls knocked down and rooms

opened up to create a wider space "in which the light could settle," says Viktor Udzenija, owner and principle designer at Viktor Udzenija Architecture and Design and the man behind this home's metamorphosis. "The owners and I wanted to maximise the views from each room, allowing free-flowing light into the space," he says. "This building was one of the first to be finished in the Dubai Marina area and, to some extent, the interior layout and finishes were very classical, which didn't suit the minimalist, modern but opulent feel that the owners wanted. The aim was to strip it down and create a perfectly coordinated, architecturally clean space that we could enhance with furniture ▶

The Zaha Hadid sofa and green rug are striking, but don't detract from the beauty of the geometric ceiling



"The aim was to create a perfectly coordinated, architecturally clean space that we could enhance with furniture and accessories"



Python-printed pony-skin dining chairs from Colombostile surround a glass table in the dining room. The chandelier is from Bocci

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and accessories." It appears that Viktor has achieved this; the 5,500-square-foot space's synergy of architecture and interior design is immediately evident and impressive. Heavier textures found in the reception and living rooms' carved 3D Italian travertine feature walls are offset by streamlined, architectural furniture, creating balance and poise, while the other white-walled, wooden-floored rooms feature organic, neutral furniture. "I wanted to create harmony between the design pieces and the rooms," Viktor says. "A large sectional leather sofa and iconic Gerrit Rietveld armchairs in the main reception room work well against the wavy wall, while the sitting room's organic Zaha Hadid sofa and minimal bespoke green rug enhance the crisp, clean lines found in the geometric ceiling feature. I've tried to create a space full of life and playfulness without losing the sense of relaxation and harmony."

The home's colour palette is rich and warm, with golden honey shades featuring prominently in natural wood floors, textiles and leather. ♦

"I've tried to create a space full of life and playfulness without losing the sense of relaxation and harmony"

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These are accented by bolder hues and patterns found on accessories scattered throughout the residence. "I have created many strong visual elements using texture," Viktor says. "One of the home's most beautiful features is its natural Swedish oak floor. It gives the penthouse an uplifting feeling, providing the ideal base for furniture. The main living room's dominant feature wall – while being a heavy, solid material – has been carved to create the illusion of softness." To balance the masculinity of the travertine, a translucent dark grey curtain has been overlaid with a second, shimmering gold curtain at a nearby window. The result is magical; cascading fabric catches the light, forming subtly shimmering pools on the wooden floors. Viktor says of all the home's features, his

favourites are "the chandelier and pyramid-like mirrored structure in the living area's double-height space". Crafted from stainless-steel bars suspended from the ceiling, during the day it reflects the sea, boats and buildings outside, bringing life into the room and creating the illusion that there is a ceiling window. "At night, the chandelier's suspended crystal balls, in the shape of candle flames, are reflected, bringing a whimsical feel to the area," Viktor says. "We didn't want to create a cold space where people just experience a so-called Kodak moment. This was always going to be a space that was as beautiful as it was liveable." ■

Steal the Style



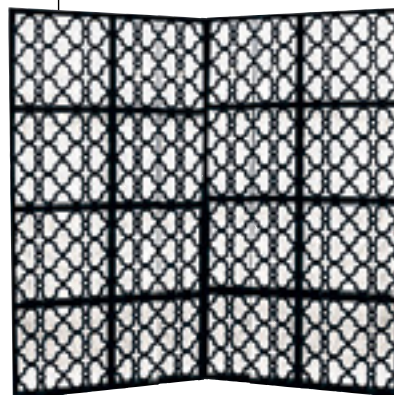
Aerine Switch floor lamp, Home Centre, Dh399



Soane side table, Andrew Martin, Dh4,650



Ciar armchair, Home Centre, Dh995



Naturally Autumn Back Parisian partition, Indigo Living, Dh19,550