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chic Dubai retreat

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Urban Retreat

An interior designer's cosy family home, where the emphasis is on comfort and style

BY **SHALAKA PARADKAR**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **NISRINE EL LABABIDI MOGHRABY**

The horses print by photographer Katie Mendi, sourced from Tribe Dubai, is a focal point of the master bedroom



Versatile pieces that are easily moved, such as the Crate & Barrel bench, are essential for this party-ready living room

T

he copious sunlight flooding in was the first thing that attracted Nisrine El Lababidi Moghraby to her home. The big garden was next. In her day job, Nisrine helms Harf Noon Design Studio, a rising star on Dubai's interior design scene. She instantly saw the potential of the property as a family home for her busy family, comprising of her film director husband and two children, Naya (9) and Keyan (5).

Located in the quiet, but well-connected, JVT residential community, this is the closest one can come to a bucolic retreat while still in the city. "We hardly leave the house on weekends," Nisrine shares. "My husband and I drive long distances daily, so a stay-at-home weekend in

our house is truly the best treat!"

The luxe yet liveable home took three months to do up from start to finish, with the garden taking longer since there is a limited season to plant trees in Dubai. Nisrine's greatest challenge was creating a family-friendly home, which retained its style and individuality.

Life with kids can be an unending trail of smudges, spills and stains. With easy-to-clean carpets and leather and velvet sofas that can be wiped down, no part of the home is restricted to grown ups only. "The greatest joy for me [as a designer] is to see my family interact within this space, without any unnecessary fuss," says Nisrine.



“ The greatest joy for me, as a designer, is to see my family interact within this space, without any unnecessary fuss.”

Nisrine El Lababidi Moghraby,
interior designer



Ikat cushions from Tribe
and a throw from THE ONE
make this a cosy corner



An abstract painting by
Nisrine takes pride of
place in the living room



حليف القمر

حليف القمر يمين وفلكك
يا حلوه سمانه ما شافك
يا روجي كملت اوصافك
يا الحسن لا بدعوك ولا فلكك

حليف القمر بلون الورود
بلون الزهر فوق الحدود
زاد الحلى جدالي سسود
وطني الكرز فوق شرفك
يا روجي كملت اوصافك
يا الحسن لا بدعوك ولا فلكك

حليف القمر بأحلى عيون
وقلبي الدوا بين الجفون
السمر نائم باللب لون
بالشعر الطافي على كتفك
يا روجي كملت اوصافك
يا الحسن لا بدعوك ولا فلكك

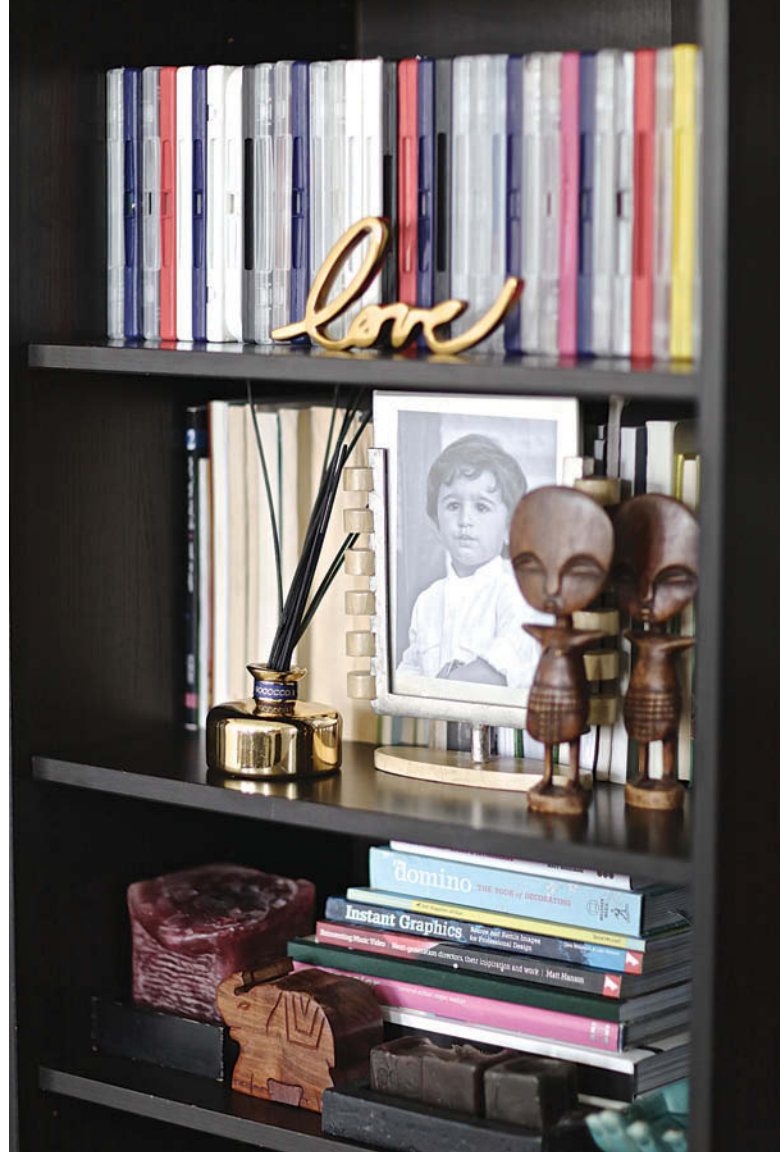
كلمات: مصطفى العزبي



Nisrine designed this removable wallpaper with lyrics written by Chafic El Moghraby, her father in law



Malachite Art
Deco trinket boxes
from the 40's on
the side table



A welcoming console
vignette, with faux lemons
and scented candles

Involving her family in decorating decisions, though, was tricky. "From the beginning, my husband and I agreed that I would take care of the indoors while he took care of the outdoors (he's the one with the green thumb). Keyan loves sharing his room with his sister from time to time, hence the bunk bed, while Naya wanted a more grown-up looking room. They were also the ones to request the tree house."

The couple's extended families also live in the UAE and as they love entertaining at home, the living room and outdoors have to always be party ready. Nisrine's solution was plenty of seating indoors and outdoors: a 12-seater dining table from Al Huzaifa matched with chairs from THE One, an oversized sectional (also from THE One) and nailhead detail club chairs from Marina Home.

The home also reflects Nisrine's Lebanese heritage and her family's love of travel, art, music and film. From a projector light and 8mm camera that references her husband's work, to flea market finds and



A palette of white, pink, gold and black, with DIY artwork, H&M bedding and a dreamcatcher from Typo for Naya's bedroom



precious family treasures such as her grandmother's wedding clogs inlaid with mother of pearl, the living room is dotted with one-of-a-kind pieces. What brings them all together is the graphic black-and-white palette Nisrine used throughout the house, introducing colour subtly through accessories or single walls.

Nisrine says she knew she had to stay true to the Mediterranean-inspired architecture of the property ("we are Lebanese after all") but they did modify the internal layout: clos-

ing off the kitchen and extending the floorplan with an extra room, office and bathroom. "The kitchen entry is now a modified wall where I've applied our removable wallpaper with lyrics by Chafic El Moghraby, also my father in law. This was the song for our first dance and close to our hearts. It had to be in the foreground of our home."

A swimming pool is next on the agenda, as is a makeover for the powder room and the kitchen. "The garden is our favourite part of the

Keyan's room was transformed with this DIY washi tape wall makeover



The tree house made by Dubai-based dad Andy of Tree Houses Dubai

house, even though Dubai's searing summers limit our time outdoors. But I try to spend as much time outdoors as I can, so you'll either find me lying in our hammock while the children play in the tree house, working on the outdoor table or entertaining guests over a Lebanese breakfast or barbecue."

Nisrine's go-to furnishings suppliers are Bloomingdale's Home, THE One Fusion, Blanc D'ivoire, Indigo Living, Marina Homes and Crate & Barrel. "I prefer buying quality items. I see them as investments, so although the price point might be higher, it is always worth it. Having said that, I love mixing and matching items together so it doesn't look like a showroom; everything needs to be personalised," Nisrine tells us.

"Nothing is completely finalised at any one point. There is always something extra to do or to change - I believe change is a good thing and am always ready to embrace it." ◀



About Harf Noon Design Studio

Nisrine is known for creating inspiring spaces for discerning clients. She has a unique approach of blending classical with contemporary, and combines this with a keen sense of humour and love for understated modern luxury. Her refined, eclectic aesthetic has earned her several commissions for residential projects in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Lebanon.

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