

The lighter and darker sides of Bali, Asia's fashionable playground

the yak

VOLUME 42 MAR/APR/MAY 2014

SEBASTIANO
STARCK
SNAPARAZZI
NAME OF
THRONES
SUKMA SUKI
MISHKA
STEPHANE
CARLOS
HOLY

ISSN 2089-838X



9 772089 838102

IDR80,000 : S\$11 : HK\$50 : A\$10 : €5

INTO THE INTERIOR

POWER COUPLE ZOHRA BOUKHARI AND BLAISE SAMOY HAVE PUT THEIR STYLISH STAMP ON MANY OF BALI'S RESIDENCES, RESTAURANTS, SPAS AND HOTELS. THEY TALK TO ANDREW E. HALL ABOUT THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF DISTINCTIVE DESIGN. PHOTOS: LUCKY 8.



ALL THAT IS OLD IS NEW AGAIN.



BALQUISSÉ - LIVING INTERIORS.

ZOHRA is unimpressed by minimalism, Blaise doesn't like it either and as we speak I am struck by the analogy that they feel the ubiquity of minimalist design is rather akin to the rise of the DJ over the living pleasure of a fine string quartet.

"Personally I think (minimalism) is dead – if you go to New York or to Paris it's vintage style that you will see everywhere. Minimalism rose in Europe because everything is so expensive and people can only work with machines," Blaise says.

The minimalist movement is a result of the equation pertaining to mass-production and money.

"But in places like Indonesia," Blaise continues, "people can still work with their hands and have the flexibility to be much more creative."

Zohra says: "I'm sure people in Europe dream about having access to these kinds of handicrafts but they just cannot afford it any more. But if you go to Paris, for instance, it's like being in an open museum. Vintage style has never and will never become obsolete.

"I love the design style of the mid-1920s and '30s – the design was so beautiful . . . nothing was square, nothing was purely round, it is the curve that exists in between that gave the products and architecture of the time such distinction."

Blaise harks back even further to the Louis XVI period and says that reproduction furniture drawn from this time is all the rage in current high-end interior design.

Zohra and Blaise' new Balquissé Living space on Jalan Sunset, Seminyak, is a celebration of the coalescence between vintage and contemporary. It is an enterprise that brings together their once disparate businesses – Hishem Furniture, Shahinaz Collection, Aisha Timeless Collection and ZB Design – under one very large roof.

"We are all about making people feel comfortable . . . we have a bar here where our guests can have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee while we talk about what they want for whatever project they are imagining," Zohra says.

And the place is a treasure trove of curiosities and a multitude of interior concepts that one can browse for lengthy periods. There are typewriters and cash registers from the 1920s, vintage manual sewing machines, an old VW Beetle . . . all manner of what one might crudely call bric-a-brac but what is really human heritage.

"Amongst all our clients, we have a lot of success with Indonesian people because they come to our place and see things that, previously, they never would have thought would be able to be used in the interior design plan for their houses," Zohra says.

Blaise adds: "It is amazing, we put these items in a showroom, people realise that the kinds of things that they had 30 or 50 years ago had, and still have, value and a distinctive aesthetic."

Balquissé Living, however, is not only about artefacts from bygone eras. Zohra and Blaise have a factory that puts a contemporary face on repro' furniture using thoroughly modern materials like synthetic rattan. In fact the new space covers virtually all aspects of the design experience . . . but with the common thread of "vintage".

"It doesn't matter who you are," Zohra says, "in our place everyone can find something they like and we can work with them to tailor a design concept that will be different from anyone else's."

As far as this creative couple is concerned the future in design terms has been around for a long, long time. ❏

www.balquisseliving.com