

Tropical Decadence

An elegant blend of art deco influences and botanical elements meets in this Singapore home by Miaja Design Group

By Hong Xinying. Photography Jasper Yu / Jyu Studio



PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY DARREN GABRIEL LEOW HAIR AND MAKEUP KELLY RICHARDSON USING URBAN DECAY AND DIOR





Art deco and tropical touches may seem strange bedfellows at first glance, but as this family home in Singapore would show, it is an exuberant combination that certainly works. This chic four-storey abode is home to a family of three: Sai Khun, senior director of global customer support at Zebra Technologies, his wife Jacinta Quah, who works as a senior leader in the tech industry, and their bubbly daughter Moone. Miaja Design Group worked closely with the dynamic mother-daughter duo to realise the home of their dreams.

“They say ‘like mother like daughter’ and how rightly so; our client’s daughter is definitely her ‘mini me’, with a strong opinion of her likes and dislikes,” says Isabelle Miaja, founder of the design firm. “Jacinta is by taste and profession drawn to orderly design, loves symmetry and has a quiet sense of luxury; and her daughter understood the importance of blending her room with the rest of the home while designing a space of her own.”

BRIDGING THE STYLES

The owners had set several broad requirements: a stylish home office with optimum acoustics and an elegant backdrop for video conferences, as well as rooms that were personalised for each member of the family, whether for work or play. “Family life was as important to them as giving their daughter space to grow as a person, with adequate areas for her hobbies,” says the designer.

The clients were also specific about their aesthetic preferences. “They wanted their home to be sophisticated without being ostentatious, incorporating jewel tones without being loud, sleek geometric lines instead of busy patterns, as well as soft materials and a sense of luxury;

Clockwise from far left: The living room features custom furnishings, a rug from Rugged Hospitality Solutions and lamps from E.Inc; Isabelle Miaja, founder of Miaja Design Group; a resin wall behind the TV from Avenir Maison and a shimmering mosaic feature wall behind the bookshelf add textural interest to the living area

Previous spread: The green turf and wall from Advance Sports Technologies create a tropical atmosphere in the entryway; the glass divider and the striking chandelier delineate the dining zone on the open-plan first storey

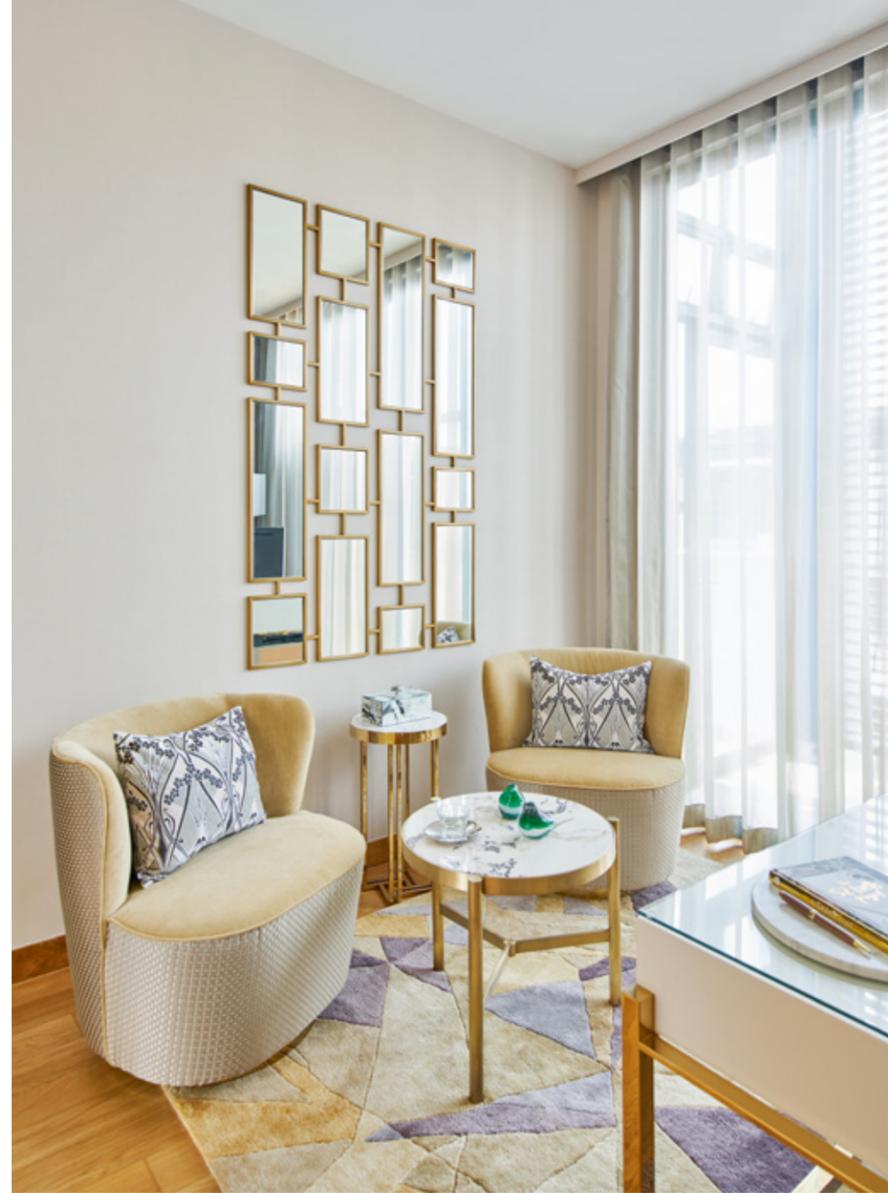
all of these preferences were definitely pointing towards art deco, a style that can be applied to an interior in a discreet yet elegant way.”

VERDANT TOUCHES

As Miaja explains, the abode’s tropical elements have historical significance—they reference the cross-cultural influences of the art and design period. In the 1930s, when the art deco style took over the glamorous South Beach stretch in Miami, architects imparted vibrant hues and a sun-kissed flavour to these buildings.

In this Singapore home, the tropical influences of its art deco look begin at the verdant entrance. In the open-plan first storey, the nature-inspired colour palette is conveyed via an earthy scheme punctuated by green and blue accents. Mirrored walls and a custom-made glass screen mark out the dining zone, which is the social centre of the home.

“The tone-on-tone green hues are used to give a punch to the more subtle cream and soft gold shades,” explains Miaja. “Mirrors were added to bring sparkle to the open-plan space and visually expand its dimensions. A bespoke screen in the dining room also uses colours that play well together with the chandelier.”



The stairway is another striking space; clad in an emerald wallpaper with a striking gold pattern, it was an instant hit with the family. Its gilded elements also connect to the hexagonal gold mosaic wall tiles by the bookshelf in the entryway, and echo the metallic trimmings in the living and dining areas.

CLEAN GEOMETRY

In the bedrooms, the art deco elements are represented by the use of geometric forms on the wallpaper and furnishings, and peppered with tropical touches on accent pieces. In the study, flora and fauna motifs feature on the sideboard and artwork; the designer’s eponymous Miaja Gallery provided art recommendations for the home.

“I like to guide the client on the choices for their walls and help them choose art that suits their taste and budget,” shares Miaja. “We work hand in hand to select the artworks, as (the clients) will be the ones to look at the pieces every day.”



This page: Botanical motifs on the artwork and sideboard liven up the study, which also features wallcoverings from Pepperwall

Opposite page: Geometric forms on the statement mirror and rug create visual interest at this cosy nook in the study; emerald wallcoverings from Tat Ming Wallpaper turn the staircase into a glamorous space





Clockwise from top left: The custom swing chair is among the daughter's favourite things in her bedroom; gold trimmings on the furnishings and a geometric rug from Rugged Hospitality Solutions contribute to the sophisticated look of the master bedroom; this headboard was specially designed for the master suite and paired with lighting from E.Inc

In the daughter's bedroom, a flamingo artwork celebrates the botanical inspiration while echoing the pink and purple hues in the space. Personalised elements include the diamond wallpaper from Pepperwall, as well as the playful swing chair specially designed for her. "If my room was a city, my bubble chair would be the tourist attraction," she declares. "The room radiates joy; it's my playground and my happy place."

In the master bedroom, the tropical touches are conveyed through emerald hues on the custom-made headboard and armchair. Polished gold trimmings on the shelves, vanity table and feature wall continue the art deco theme and enhance the sophisticated look.

Altogether, these customised elements contribute to the distinctive look of the home.

"The essence of style is to live the art of being unique, and it's what I live by: a passion for the unique and distinctive," declares the designer. "Ultimately, your project becomes a home that must belong to its owners, and the designer must know when to disappear and hopefully one day become a guest."

Taking just over a year to complete, the family are thrilled with the end result. "Isabelle astutely captured our needs and wants, and intelligently incorporated style with functionality. The end result is greater than the sum of its parts," says Quah. "To us, our home is the place to find unconditional love, peace and acceptance. We are so grateful for a home where we have various zones for quiet self-reflection and to create, learn, play and connect."