



| My Favourite Room |

Bright Beginnings

Designer Isabelle Miaja invites us into her private sanctuary—her bedroom—a refuge inspired by art and nature *By Kissa Castañeda*



Clockwise from far left: Isabelle Miaja, founder of Miaja Design Group; this unique dresser is made with parchment from Cebu, the Philippines; nature was the key inspiration for Miaja's calming bedroom; this balcony is the designer's favourite part of the bedroom; the garage is now a charming patio where her pets can roam freely



"Of all the rooms in the house, your bedroom is yours," said American interior decorator Dorothy Draper. These words resonate with Singapore-based French designer Isabelle Miaja, founder of Miaja Design Group. Known for crafting interiors for luxury hotels such as Sofitel So in Singapore and Lux North Male Atoll in the Maldives, Miaja sought to create her own hotel-inspired suite at home—albeit one with a lived-in and welcoming character, so much so that her cat, Missy, holds court in the bedroom.

"I like my bedroom because of the view it offers. I feel very lucky to wake up in the morning and see nature right outside my window," she says. This green vista was the starting point for the bedroom renovation she embarked on after the circuit breaker was lifted last year. "Choosing the (right) colours is very important in a room. I selected the colours of nature—the blues, the greens and the aqua tones—because I feel that the room can bring me peace and relaxation."

ART DIRECTION: CHARLENE LEE PHOTOGRAPHY: JASPER YU / JYU STUDIO HAIR AND MAKEUP: LYDIA THONG / THE MAKEUP ENTOURAGE, USING YSL BEAUTY AND KEUNE HAIRCOSMETICS



The renovation also focused on making the most of the bijou balcony, which now has colourful tiles and a striped awning that gives it a "holiday at home" feel. The awning also allows her to enjoy this outdoor space regardless of the weather. "We all now know the importance of being able to open our rooms to a balcony, because of

the pandemic. I love sitting there in the morning, or leaving the doors open at night and listening to the crickets and just letting the breeze come in the bedroom," she says. Besides the balcony, Miaja also renovated her garage, transforming it into a charming patio that signals her desire to reclaim the outdoor areas of her home.

Miaja often features contrasting design eras and influences in a single space, and her bedroom is no different. Her penchant for mixing the old and the new, and a host of materials is evident in this space, which is filled with unique furniture sourced from around the world. These include a bedframe clad in shagreen imported from the US and a dresser made with parchment from Cebu, the Philippines.

These eclectic touches showcase her love of art, and she takes a democratic approach to collecting—from blue-chip art to interesting objets d'art, such as the quirky teddy bear named Sagartha that sits atop her bed. "It's a very special bear because it's one of a kind. I love little touches of art; it doesn't have to be a piece hanging on the wall, it can be an object as well."

As the pandemic continues to disrupt our lives, Miaja has chosen to embrace this paradigm shift, including working remotely. To adapt, she has carved out spaces in which she can practice self-care daily; these include her newly renovated bedroom and patio. "My bedroom is a bastion of solitude and peace, even from the busyness of the rest of the house," she says.