



Below (clockwise):
Locoma credenza by Apicalreform; chandelier by Baccarat; *Random* chandelier by Chia-Ying Lee for Studio Italia Design; *Sabinas* chair by Javier Mariscal for Vondom



Spotlight on DD

The fifth edition of **Downtown Design**, the region's leading design trade show, is bringing twice as many exhibitors to this year's events with 150 brands from 25 countries, including 70 new high-end international and regional brands. It will be held at d3 in partnership with Dubai Design District, the destination for leading trade professionals in the MENASA region. In addition to special Italian and Portuguese Pavilions, exhibitor categories include bathrooms, kitchens, textiles, rugs, flooring, office furniture, tableware, accessories, tiles, furniture indoor, furniture outdoor, lighting and storage. The event boasts an outstanding 90% retention of key brands, such as Kettal, Minotti, Moroso and Sancal. Newcomers to the exhibitor line-up include iconic furniture, textile and lighting brands such as B&B Italia, Designer's Guild, MDF Italia, Meridiani, Marset, Sans Souci, Santa & Cole and Vondom. 📍

Downtown Design : 14-17 November 2017



Zafferano tableware, glass and porcelain



Bedroom from OTQ

The beloved Italian Pavilion and the Italian Luxury Interiors (ITI) exhibition will also return to Downtown Design for the third year, showcasing the craft, art and timeless allure of Italy's most desirable products. Organised by the Italian Trade Agency (ITA), in cooperation with the Italian Associations of Artisans and Small-Medium Enterprises, CNA and Confindustria, they will host a finely curated mix of several artisanal companies, but also some larger brands, such as Fantini Mosaici.

"This year at Downtown Design Dubai, Italy will showcase magnificent examples of unique pieces in furniture, lighting, accessories, textiles and

basically all the objects that make our everyday life happier and fulfilling. As we all know, the Italian design experience has never ceased to be an aesthetic and pragmatic tradition which runs parallel patterns with those of art and architecture. Its special nature continues to provide people with an imaginary journey into the Italian lifestyle," explains Gianpaolo Bruno, Italian Trade Commissioner to the UAE, Oman and Pakistan.

Italian architects, Tiziana Burri and Attilio La Pietra have custom-designed the inviting 500 square meters exhibition space. This year's meticulously curated group of luxury brands and products represents



Frigerio 21 marble-design chair



Flooring by Listone Giordano



Tonucci furnishings and accessories collection 2017

key areas of design and lifestyle, including: indoor and outdoor furnishings; textiles; lighting; as well as a vast assortment of deluxe materials such as leather, marble, ceramic, glass and iron – even luxury exercise equipment.

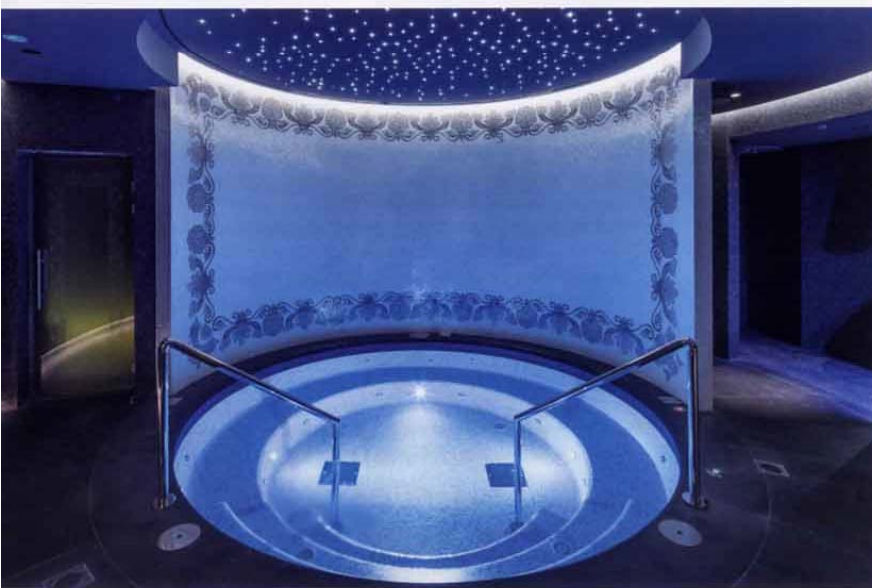
"Italian Luxury Interiors' at Dubai Downtown Design is nothing less than an emotional interaction with shapes and objects and, through them, with Italians, their taste for beauty, their effortless search for creativity and their particular way to interpret the world," Bruno continues.

Coveted designs will be on display from more than 15 top makers, such as Alberta Pacific Furniture, Teckell, Borzalino, Fantini Mosaici, Frigerio 21,

Sartori rugs, Mabele by Mabo, Made a Mano - Rosario Parrinello, Tonucci Manifesto Design, Listone Giordano, Matteo Brioni, Cicolette, l'Opificio, Vetrogiardini, OTQ, Vetrart Glass in Light, and Zafferano. All boast not only aesthetic prowess, but rigorous standards of quality craftsmanship.

Representatives from each company will be available to answer questions about each product and tell the special stories behind each brand that make them modern investments in fine living. <#>

Italian Luxury Interiors: 14-17 November 2017



Fantini Mosaici, the iconic mosaico company renowned for their work for global luxury brands



Cicolotte, 'the design exercise bike'



Rue Kothari



Coolesse



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Fair lady

As she prepared for the amazing new additions and surprises at this year's show, Rue Kothari, Director of Downtown Design 2017, was kind enough to share with us her secrets of success, and how to succeed in the region and beyond.

TEXT: JOANNE MOLINA

What are the lessons you learned from last year's show?

No matter how well you plan, you can't anticipate every eventuality – especially when you're planning a large and complex event.

What were your inspirations for designing this year's programme?

There are always socio-economic factors that influence the direction you take with a trade fair. We respond to what the market needs, and last year our buyers were asking to see more furniture, lighting and textile brands. This year we've delivered 70 new brands, many of which fall into those sectors. With neighbouring markets such as India growing rapidly in the residential sector, we attract buyers from the subcontinent to source products at the fair.

What do you think will be the biggest new attractions this year?

This year our footprint has doubled. We will occupy a new aspect overlooking the new d3 Waterfront, and have worked with some of the region's leading architects and interior designers on a whole new look and feel for the fair. LSD designed our new masterplan, and for the first time we will have a giant garden installation at the entrance to the fair, designed by Desert Ink. Visitors will pass through our beautiful new reception area created by Pallavi Dean Interiors, and



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Bene



Umbrosa

we have a pop-up F&B concept – The Lighthouse – designed by AAC Interiors. Our strong setting is the ideal context in which to present the 150 high-end brands that will showcase this year. We are particularly excited to welcome ten regional designers who display great design integrity and commercial potential. I'm really looking forward to being able to introduce them to our buyers.

What advice do you have for fair newcomers?

Come during the day and spend time engaging both with the products and the brand representatives. It's often the one time in the year that architects and interior designers can meet the people behind the brands, engage with the products and materials, and discuss project and collaboration opportunities. It's also the perfect time to liaise with peers and absorb industry knowledge.

If one had to pick three events to see, which would you suggest?

Downtown Design, the Global Grad Show and Abwab.

Why is an interdisciplinary approach important in the 21st century?

Design is a way of thinking, an approach. It's less about the rigour of an individual discipline and more about having an ability to collaborate across a variety of

design disciplines to arrive at something unique. Today's designers need just as much understanding of new technology as they do of materials. And today, 'design thinking' is even taught to business graduates and medical students – the benefits of the design approach are universal.

Why do you think Dubai is such a top incubator for design?

As an emerging city, we have a genuine need for credible talent that will help design sustainable infrastructure and connected, liveable communities. Dubai's image as a place of progress, ambition and innovation will naturally attract international designers who are looking for opportunities beyond their traditional markets, many of which are stagnating.

What advice do you have for young designers in the region?

Learn your craft. Having a creative mind and generating lots of incredible ideas is one thing; having the technical knowledge to create a beautiful, functional and relevant object is quite another. Be open-minded, ask for help, keep abreast of new technologies, work with manufacturers and experiment with materials. Above all, push boundaries and be original. This market is so open to the work of regional designers that you will get out in results what you invest in effort. ■