



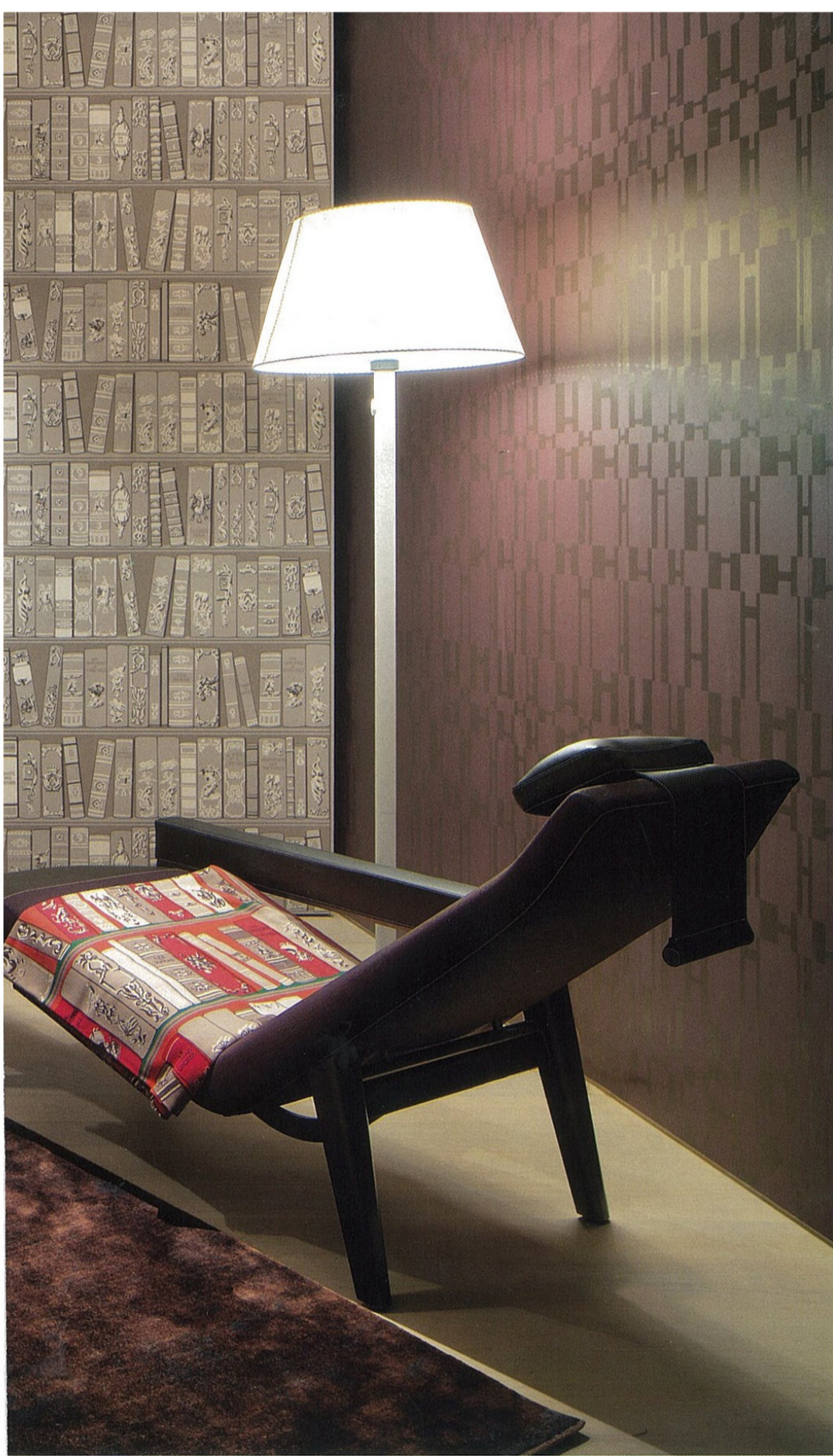
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TAIWAN ON TOP

THE ISLAND STATE LINES UP AS A FUTURE DESIGN CAPITAL

PLUS: ASIAN DESIGNERS DOMINATE IN MILAN, ART HK SELLS OUT AND HERMÈS AND SC GLOBAL MARRY AT THE MARQ IN SINGAPORE

FOCUS | Hermès SC Global



PERFECT MATCH

HIGH-END DESIGN COLLABORATIONS ARE VERY *AU COURANT* FOR LUXURY BRANDS, AND THEY DON'T COME MUCH HIGHER THAN THE NEW 20TH STOREY HERMÈS APARTMENT AT THE MARQ IN SINGAPORE.

WORDS ALICE DAVIS

Something of the *je ne sais quoi* of the French can be found in their knack for equilibrium, for striking the exact balance and never tipping too far. When the French talk about *savoir-faire*, they don't just mean knowing how to do something, but knowing instinctively how to do it well. There is another vital ingredient for success, though, one that La Maison Hermès General Manager Hélène Dubrule and SC Global CEO Simon Cheong have been waiting for: perfect timing.

Eight years ago, Cheong envisioned a luxury residence furnished exclusively by Hermès. "I have always admired their passion for craftsmanship," he explains. But it wasn't until 18 months ago, with the reissue of the French house's Jean-Michel Frank furniture and the completion of SC Global's ambitious flagship development, The Marq on Paterson Hill, that the stars aligned. In this elegant 20th storey apartment of the Signature Tower – where every unit sports its own cantilevered infinity pool – Cheong saw "a great canvas for the artist to paint on."

The two brands have much in common – not least their dedication to quality and the restrained sophistication of their aesthetic – so the collaboration, when the occasion finally arose, seemed natural. "It was Simon's dream. And it was the right timing. The ingredients were all there for the dream to come true," Dubrule says. "It's the fruit of a unique relationship." It certainly feels more labour-of-love than PR-stunt, a sort of uncontrived, romantic venture, especially as Cheong has no plans to sell the apartment, which will be used for private hospitality.

74 Surface Asia

Surface Asia 75

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As a place for entertaining, it's only fitting La Table Hermès Creative Director Yves Taronon was appointed artistic director for the project, with the SC Global design team led by Michelle Cheong. "It's the first time I have designed something at this height, with the sky and the view," Taronon says. He wanted the interior to feel calm and natural against the backdrop of The Marq's state-of-the-art architecture and Singapore's speedy pace of life. To create this tranquility, everything is where it should be, a sense of balance created through recurring squares and symmetry. "As soon as something's in the right place, you have peace."

In the living room, its floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall windows giving way to a panoramic city scene, this regard for precision is evident. The focal point is a huge chalk drawing of a horse, sketched by Jean-Luc Favero at the request of Hermès, which commands the only darkness in the room: the looming brushed oak wall. Around a smudge-effect silk Appaloosa rug, Frank's ever-modern sofas and chairs are upholstered in rope, ecru natté and ivory bull calf. His inverted U tables, in calfskin, stand unassumingly in the centre of the room. Meanwhile, a pair of yolk-yellow *méridiennes* by Antonio Citterio proudly mirror one another over a jumbo Samarcande chess board.

The voluminous dining room boasts not one *pièce de résistance*, but two: a dresser and a table, both custom-made in Hermès leather workshops. The square motif that ripples through the apartment finds its epicentre here in the 3sqm parchment-covered oak table, bordered with hand-stitched electric blue Clémence leather. The table is expectantly laid with Taronon's Bleus d'Ailleurs porcelain, Saint-Louis crystal glasses and Puiforcat silverware. "I wanted to infuse the apartment with Hermès ideals: comfort, intimacy, the pleasure of sharing moments," she says, adding that he had enjoyed the unusual opportunity to allow his tableware collection to inspire the interior design of the room. "But the most important furniture for me is the *dressoir*. Every piece, every fork, has its own place." The blue doors of the 2.7m-tall cabinet, in the same materials as the table, swing open like the doors to a ballroom. Inside, every item of glassware, tableware and cutlery has a perfectly proportioned place to belong. A Saint-Louis chandelier, custom-made under the direction of Michelle Cheong, is suspended from the high ceiling; a lone blue bell-shaped pendant stands out amongst the forest of crystal.

Marquetry, an artform with few remaining craftsmen, features strongly in the master bedroom. Twenty squares of Clémence leather unite to form the bedhead, flanked by panels of made-to-measure natural rye straw marquetry. Marquetry continues in



(PREVIOUS PAGE) Hugo Gyglar's Bibliothèque wallpaper provides an apt backdrop to the study.

(CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT) A majestic chandelier is suspended above the custom-made table in the dining room; Cheerful yellows breathe warmth into the master bedroom; Re-editions of Jean-Michel Frank's designs are given pride of place in the living room.

the cupboard of secrets, and a Frank dressing table and chair stand away from the pure silk Patine rug. Fil d'Argent wallpaper and porcelain act in unison, while a wall of Philippe Dumas' *Pèle-Mêle* – each horseback character representing a member of the Hermès clan, so the story goes – beckons toward the study. The study is furnished with a desk and chairs, in gold leather and Canaletto walnut, from the Métiers collection designed by Enzo Mari. "It adds a note of seriousness to the residence," Taronon says.

Hermès will consider future proposals on an individual basis. Dubrule says, to tailor their services to the desires of the client. At The Marq, though, bringing the Maison designs together, assembling a complete picture, was a creative endeavour. Thanks to the shared ideals of functionality, comfort and understated elegance – and a dash of *savoir-faire* – this particular apartment is not just a work of art. It also feels like a home. hermes.com.sg/global.com.sg.themarq.com.sg

76 Surface Asia

Surface Asia 77