

In the design world, a single product can often set in motion a project of a larger scale.

The reverse is also true: A project in the field of architecture or urban planning might spawn a series of products. The question then is: Did the invention of the elevator give rise to the skyscraper or did high-rise buildings dictate its existence?

In the case of the world's first apartment fully furnished by French fashion house Hermès, the former holds true. At the exclusive media launch of the apartment, located on the 20th floor of the The Marq's Signature Tower, Yves Taronal, creative director of La Table Hermès and a renowned decorator, revealed that he had just finished creating the Bleus d'Ailleurs porcelain tableware service when the creative process for furnishing the apartment started. Eventually, he designed and built the dining room around the tableware, inspired by its electric-blue colour scheme.

A massive 3m x 3m dining table and 2.7m-high cabinet set the tone for the dining room, which represents the focal point for the entire apartment. Both pieces are customised creations, with oak frames entirely upholstered in electric-blue Clémence bull calf leather, testament to the legendary skill of Hermès' leather craftsmen. The magnificent setting is completed by a crystal chandelier, custom-made at Hermès' Saint Louis crystalware manufacture in the shape of a fountain. "When the sunlight hits the chandelier, it's absolutely fabulous!" enthuses Taronal.

#### Ideal match

The bespoke apartment represents the fruition of an idea with a long gestation period. It was eight years ago when the idea was first mooted. SC Global chairman and CEO Simon Cheong and his wife Michelle have had a longstanding relationship — both personal and professional — with the 175-year-old maison and its owners, the Dumas family. The current collaboration is a match made in heaven. The two companies have much in common: They are governed by a philosophy of understated elegance and a relentless pursuit of perfection.

Hermès' vision of *art de vivre* or art of life is akin to SC Global's corporate credo of "The Ultimate Living". The two companies also share a common customer base: BLVD, The Ladyhill and The Lincoln Modern must surely house a fair number of Birkin-toting socialites and silk scarf-clad heiresses.

The 6,200 sq ft, five-bedroom apartment at The Marq, which boasts double-volume living spaces with 6.5m-high ceilings, floor-to-ceiling windows and a 15m cantilevered lap pool, took 18 months to be transformed into a fully appointed suite. Mrs Cheong, creative director of the SC Global design team and an interior de-



The living room is organised around the Comfortable collection of sofas and armchairs

## Epitome of luxury

After several years in the making, SC Global finally unveils its landmark apartment at The Marq, the first in the world to be fully kitted out with Hermès furnishings, writes **Aaron De Silva**

signer by training, worked closely with Taronal and a team of designers, decorators and craftsmen. The interiors feature a mix of ready-made furniture pieces, fabrics, wallpaper and tableware items that are available from Hermès boutiques, as well as made-to-measure leather upholstered items.

The sumptuous apartment is a veritable showcase for Hermès' furnishings and its unrivalled

*savoir faire*. It might be interesting to note that the maison's private interior design service was launched only shortly after the debut of its inaugural furniture collection in Milan last year and, as Helene Dubrule, general manager of Hermès Maison reiterates, the project at The Marq is the first of its kind and scale.

#### Tasteful furnishings

In typical fashion, the décor is

simple, understated, warm and inviting. With a view of the Orchard Road skyline as the backdrop, the living space is organised around the Comfortable collection of sofas and armchairs. These are re-editions of pieces by designer Jean-Michel Frank, who was active in the 1920s and 1930s. They are seen here in ecru-toned fabric finishes and ivory-hued calf leather. Inverted-U tables covered in smooth calfskin and Soleil round coffee tables in straw marquetry provide artisanal accents. Dubrule highlights that the ancient art of straw marquetry is currently being practised by only a handful of craftsmen in the world, underscoring their rarity and exclusivity.

In a corner of the living room, overlooking the lap pool, is a pair of daybeds from the Matières collection in a cheerful shade of buttercup yellow, almost as if they have trapped the sun's golden glow. With their elegant X-shaped legs in greyed oak, they offer a contemporary take on Frank's designs and are the work of acclaimed architect/designer Antonio Citterio, who was responsi-

ble for orchestrating the Bulgari hotels in Milan and Bali. A giant Samarcande chess board in leather and pallsander wood is placed between the daybeds.

To provide a strong focal point for the space and to give it character, the design team commissioned French artist Jean-Luc Favero, a friend of the maison whose works often serve as inspiration for its textile collections. Favero responded by creating an emotive chalk drawing of a horse on wooden panels that seem to merge seamlessly into the tinted brushed oak background.

The master bedroom is another standout space with its customised leather upholstered headboard, silk rug, straw marquetry folding screens and oversized crystal candelabra.

Cheong stresses that the apartment is not a showflat and that it is reserved for SC Global's private events, but it is likely that private viewings will be allowed if one happens to be a VVIP client. ■

*Aaron De Silva enjoys experiencing the world and relishes writing about it afterwards*



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