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The Talk

Powerboating is a popular sport because the UAE is renowned for water sports.

Ahmad Al Hameli race driver **132**



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Casting an antique eye

After more than 30 years in the business, a New York-based interior designer turns his focus to the UAE

DUBAI David Tusling

That the booming real estate scenario of the UAE, despite world property price slumps, is propelling the growth of related industries is common knowledge. And those in the interior design business will tell you they have never had it so good.

Yet, it is in this increasingly crowded arena that Patrick Gallagher has decided to stake a claim – and he thinks there are plenty of opportunities left.

"Where there is good architecture, there should always be good interior design," he says. "While there are a lot of high-end designs in a number of projects, it is not the case in the residential arena. And that is where I'd like to make a stake."

And high end is where Gallagher belongs. With a client portfolio that includes the *New York Times Magazine*, *Esquire*, Ralph Lauren and ST Dupont, this New York-based designer established his company Patrick Gallagher Decoratives and Designs about 15 years ago, and will soon make a formal entry into the Emirates.

"There is spectacular architecture here and a dedication to quality, which makes it very attractive for anyone in the design business," says Gallagher. "I read recently in a newspaper that the phrase 'Why Dubai?' is becoming a cliché. And when it popped on my radar and I came to visit, I decided I wanted to do something here."

Gallagher claims to wear many hats: "I'm an educator, diplomat, psychologist, salesman and designer," he says. And his brand of luxury, be-

spoke interior design is exactly what this place needs, he believes.

"This emirate has an irresistible verve and energy, one which often reminds me of New York City. It's progressive and interesting. Dubai differs from NYC in that it's a young city, it's developing at a very fast rate and that in itself is a very exciting and attractive proposition," he says.

But anyone who has lived long enough this side of the Arabian Peninsula will quickly remind Gallagher about the region's penchant for "bling" – often featuring the brash and overstated and definitely not the über-class design quality he is professing to bring.

"That is where the educator in me comes in," he says reassuringly. "I agree, there are a lot of those kinds of things here. It usually happens when someone wants to make a statement."

"So the best thing to do is guide them and tell them there are other ways to make a statement. With about the same amount of money, they could invest in a piece of an-



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Patrick Gallagher,

Designer



Patrick Gallagher's penchant for antiques influences his design philosophy

tique, something that has a patina or provenance."

Gallagher's penchant for relics from antiquity has a major influence in his overall design philosophy.

"Antiques are the ultimate recyclables. There is a certain panache factor associated with them. That is why they are inherent in every project," he explains. "I like to inject something old. Whether it is in one of the swankiest penthouses in Manhattan or a brand new apartment in a upmarket neighbourhood,

there has to be something in the room that is not from the last three months because it adds character to a room."

"I think what will make Dubai feel less like the brand new place it is, is to bring in antiques, things with age, with history."

The relish for heirloom pieces is exactly why Gallagher and his company would like to get Middle Eastern royalty accounts – something he hopes to do once the discussions with potential partners are finalised.



HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS A mix of the old and new lends character to a room



The Forecast

FRIDAY 20

PARTLY CLOUDY
HEAT INDEX: 03
SUNRISE: 0529
SUNSET: 1912



39/29

SATURDAY 21

DUSTY
HEAT INDEX: 03
SUNRISE: 0529
SUNSET: 1912



40/28

SUNDAY 22

SUNNY & HAZY
HEAT INDEX: 03
SUNRISE: 0530
SUNSET: 1912



39/30

MONDAY 23

SUNNY & HAZY
HEAT INDEX: 03
SUNRISE: 0530
SUNSET: 1912



39/29

TUESDAY 24

SUNNY & HAZY
HEAT INDEX: 04
SUNRISE: 0530
SUNSET: 1913



40/30

THE BUSINESS OF **Life**

over modern homes



"Just the fact that there is already history there interests me. The ideal client for me is someone who is committed to quality and excellence, who is well travelled and is comfortable with the lifestyles of London, Paris and New York and still maintains traditions," he says.

A co-founder of the Giotto Fund, an art investor fund, and as chairman of the Royal Oak Foundation, the American affiliate of the National Trust of England, Gallagher's

experience of art and antiques has allowed some of his clients access to some of the world's most prestigious and knowledgeable authorities in the industry.

As a graduate of a fashion institute in New York, Gallagher started out as an independent design consultant providing art direction and styling services more than 30 years ago.

From self-made millionaires, venture capitalists and Broadway producers, Gal-

agher's clients are a mix of what he calls people with "substantial means". Which is understandable, considering we are only talking million dollars.

"I come in for that client who wants individualised, bespoke service - that person who wants to make it as specialist as they come," he says. "This could include sourcing antique pieces from different parts of the world or bidding at auctions for a piece of art."

"I've heard that in the next two years, there are going to be more than 30,000 new residential complexes in the UAE. Out of that, a lot of residents are going to want something out of the box, something where the design concept is not driven by other developers."

So with all these new developments looking for design inspirations, which Dubai projects would he love to get his hands on?

"I'd love to do an apartment at the Burj Dubai, one at the Emirates Towers and a villa on Jumeirah Beach Road. But in all the projects that we take up, the overriding

essence is quality of design and construction."

It is all good that the real estate boom in the UAE is fuelling the home design industry, which in turn is pushing the art market. But this country has already seen an influx of talents from around the world with a number of big names from Armani to Versace and Missoni already signing up. Where will Patrick Gallagher Decoratives and Designs stand in that scheme of things?

"What sets me apart is the bespoke quality of my business and my experience in the arts and antiques world," he says. "Ralph Lauren is a very talented person and Calvin Klein and Missoni have brilliant fabrics. What I'll do is bring in a lot of those pieces in some of the designs but not lock, stock and barrel. I'm a great mixer. I work with these contemporary new architectures and designs and juxtapose them with a bit of history and class. I am also a service person and my clients are those who want to embark on a journey to make their home the most special sanctuary."