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HOMES

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FEATURES: ANDREA BOCELLI'S HOME • MAISON&OBJET ASIA SPECIAL • 2014 COLOUR TRENDS

Style Watch

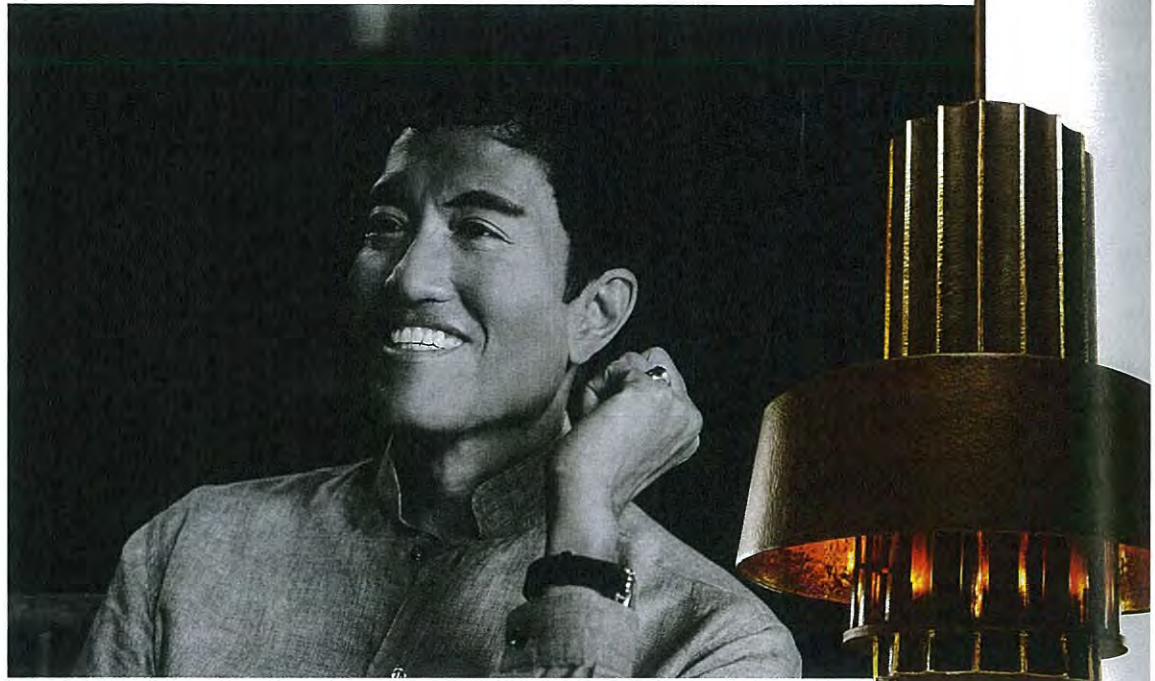
SPOT ON

Q You actually began your career not as a designer but an accountant in London?

A I guess I have been an aesthete since young. I didn't like clutter though I didn't think too much of it then as I thought I was influenced by my grandmother who was always well dressed and coordinated. My diplomat-banker father didn't actively discourage me from an artistic career but he steered me into making academic choices that would prepare me for a professional one. I realised after a year of being an accountant that I hated the rigidity of a nine to five job. I quit and worked at a hotel where I did every scrap job including dishwashing as I wanted to see life from a different perspective. I also felt the manual work would give my mind a break to think about what I wanted to do with my life. I met world-renowned designer Anouska Hempel at the hotel who discovered my talent and mentored me.

Your work can be seen in places as diverse as Hacienda Uayamon in Mexico and Aman at Summer Palace in Beijing, China. Which is the most challenging project you have done to date?

All my projects have been challenging, because I have to study the history and native materials of the place in order to preserve its heritage. A particularly difficult project is a hotel I am currently working on in Yangon, Myanmar, a country at the crossroads of old and new. I asked myself if I should incorporate modern styles to signal the future, or pay homage to age-old Burmese traditions? I decided on the latter as they should stay relevant for the next 10 years.



Design Giant

Son of a diplomat and a Javanese princess, prolific Indonesian designer Jaya Ibrahim whose Asian-influenced interiors can be seen in resorts across the globe from Milan to Oman talks about how he sees the future for Asian design



You recently launched Jaya Classics at Space Furniture. What sets it apart from the furniture in the resorts you designed?

We were getting a lot of requests from people who have stayed at the resorts and wished they could bring a piece of furniture home. We have used mostly the same designs but

tweaked the sizes and added more detailing and better quality materials. For example, I used a lot of Makassar Ebony, a tree indigenous to Sulawesi in Indonesia. The timber is very compact with a beautiful grain. It takes about 40 to 50 years to mature, therefore it is rare and costs five times more than teak.

Do you think Asian style is a design trend that will last like Scandinavian design?

People have been talking about Asian inspired style as a fad for the last 20 years but it is still popular today. If you were to visit some Park Avenue homes in New York, you would see that many of them have a piece of Asian furniture, as they are seen as style and status symbols. Except for a period at the turn of the 20th century, the West has always been enamoured of Asian history and culture. Asian furniture is versatile. For example, my pieces will look good even in an all-white loft apartment, if you know how to mix your furniture well. **H**

Visit Space Furniture to view more of Ibrahim's designs