

# SOPHISTICATED SUBTRACTION

Italian interior architect Marianna Piccolo has designed a Dubai villa with the ambience of a luxury boutique hotel.

TEXT BY: JOANNE MOLINA

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The entrance includes furniture from Bulthaus, Grey Marquina marble flooring, French Boiserie, and art pieces from Saatchi&Saatchi.





The living room: sofas from Bulthaus, armchairs and furnishings from Minotti, Wall&Deco wallpaper, Viabizzuno & Pallucco flooring.

**Perfectly suited** to the most selective cosmopolitans, the young Italian principal of Mypickone Design Studio in Dubai, Marianna Piccolo, embraced the new luxury of boutique hotel style for her top-tier residential client while renovating the 450-square metre villa in Palm Jumeirah's Canal Cove.

Balancing the pleasures of bespoke style and a most urbane, refined taste level, her design philosophy is as succinct and as stylised as the designer herself: "Interior design by subtracting. Because beauty is hidden in simplicity."

After years of studying and working in Italy, which included a job with the legendary Marco Piva, she started pursuing international opportunities: "Piva taught me to fly high and not let anyone stop me. He made me more ambitious and motivated me to exceed my limits." So in 2009 she moved to Dubai to work at International Architectural, and in 2012 she founded Mypickone Design Studio.



The guest washroom features fixtures by Devon&Devon and a Viabizzuno and Van Egmond wall lamp.



The study features a desk and chair by Selva, custom bookcases and storage, and Viabizzuno and Karlbox desk lamp.

"I grew up working in fashion and studying design and that's why I embraced the philosophy of Coco Chanel who said: 'Less is more'; Piccolo explains. "Subtracting" means to harmonise the environment with the essential and functional elements. With simplicity you look for the beauty more deeply, sometimes in the smallest things."

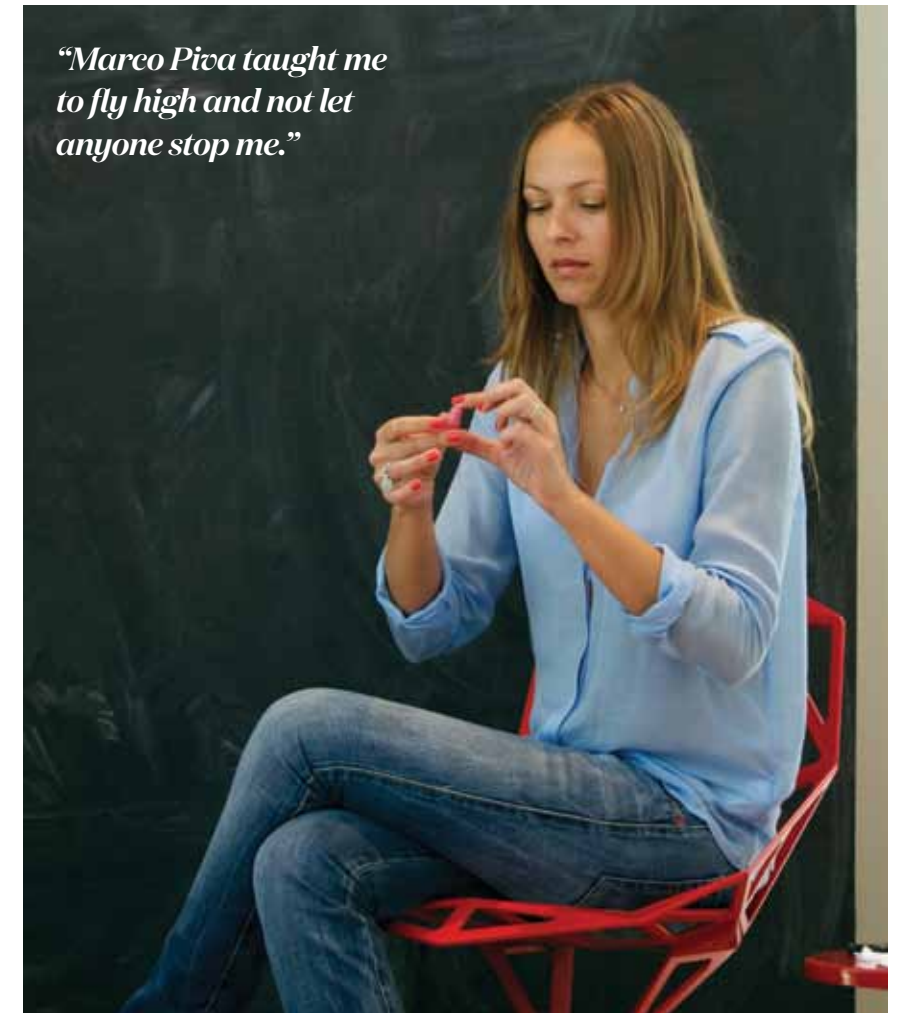
Her determined attitude landed her clients that trust her intuition. "The client asked me to design his villa to be very cosy and with a homely feeling. Then I realised that he might want something also very elegant and sophisticated – but simple. I worked very closely with them to understand their tastes and needs, and their way of thinking."

The client's need inspired the boutique hotel style: "I got inspiration from several boutique hotels around the world and I said to myself: What if I design a villa that looks like a boutique hotel? They immediately fell in love with the idea."

Palm Villa embodies her philosophy. "I looked at very classic residential projects, I chose the boiserie, and I started 'removing/ subtracting' many items I considered to be classic. These elements, specifically boiserie/moulding panels, recall classic European style. The future is shown in the furniture selection, with straight lines and natural material; plus all the lighting are energy-saving LEDs."

"My favourite elements include the entrance to the staircase and the open space area, which immediately gives you the feeling of the villa," she says. "All the objects are important but if I have to choose, it is the hanging sculpture on the wall, purchased from Saatchi&Saatchi in London."

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The kitchen features appliances by Miele, units by Hacker, grey marquina marble, and lighting by Viabizzuno.





A colourful and vibrant child's room.



The dining room: table, cabinets and buffets from Riva 1920, chairs by Bulthaas, Viabizzuno and Crystal Chandelier from Venice, Rubelli and Sacho; the designer, Marianna Piccolo.

Lighting highlights the materials and the furniture, accessories and artworks, but the colouration was more complex. "My friends always said in Italian: 'Marianna e i suoi colori'. It means 'Marianna and her own colours,'" she laughs. "My approach is 'simple.' I start using neutral colours and then I surprise the client after all is finished by adding accent colour in almost every room."

Like her design, Piccolo is fearless. "Fear? I have no fear. The best advice I ever received was from my professor: 'To be a good designer you have to think outside the box.' The worst advice: accept all kinds of projects. I have always refused to do that. You have to create your own identity, to let people recognise your touch, and so I said 'Yes, this is my pick, Mypickone.'"

**Her forthcoming** projects include a luxury residential project in Paris – and she has the honour of working with Piero Lissoni on a hospitality project in the emirate of Ajman.

But the UAE has a special place in her heart. "Working in the UAE is a great challenge. It is very exciting to combine the Arab tradition with a modern and contemporary style. Each time I have travelled and have told people Dubai is my home, there has been a lot of curiosity and the desire to come here to understand the Arabic culture."

Her upcoming move to Dubai Design District (d3) reflects her feelings: "It communicates to the world that Dubai has reserved an important place in [the spheres of] art, design and fashion." 