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Textile infatuations: indelible Venetian designs
Ode to Lissoni: an architectural jewel in the mangroves
Sleeping zones for the ultimate in rest and relaxation
Pure and simple: Dubai's furniture gallery for connoisseurs

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Salomé tights, Marie Antoinette Santoni – Rubelli shoes



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The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah

Jewel of Ajman

Piero Lissoni's design for the new Oberoi hotel and resort pays homage to the magic and modern spirit of Emirati culture.

TEXT: JOANNE MOLINA







Outdoor lounge



Library



Piero Lissoni



Business Center



Aquario bar

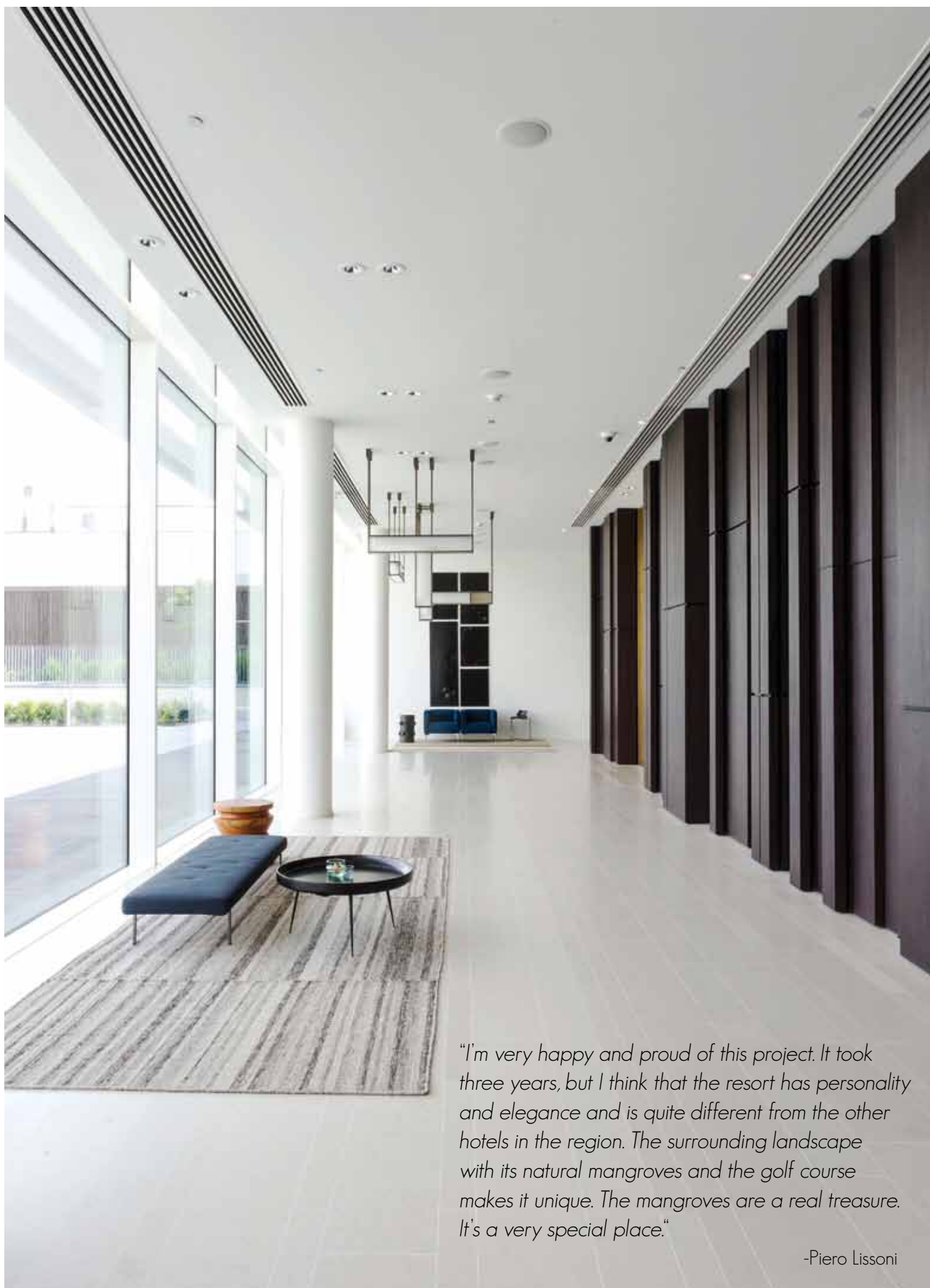
To be truly contemporary means immersing one's self in the past to dwell in the present – and the future. Piero Lissoni, internationally renowned Italian designer, has embraced this temporality with the stunning new Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah, which has been developed by Solidere International. Just 25 minutes from Dubai, it offers guests a hotel, private villas, restaurants, a spa, swimming pools and a private beach.

The profound and meticulously articulated architecture in Dubai was also placed in the hands of Marianna Piccolo – a former protégé and employee of another Italian legend: Milan-based architect and designer (and Head Juror of the **identity** Design Awards), Marco Piva.

An eco-system of refined luxury and personalised hospitality, the five-star resort is surrounded by a million square metres of protected forests, including lush mangroves, the lullaby of sea breezes, and a canvas of white sandy beaches and mesmerising azure lagoons.

Divided into three platforms that run parallel to the ocean, each building is carefully positioned in relation to its function. The platforms rise up from the oceanfront and the height of the buildings increases with each, guaranteeing superb ocean views from all areas of the resort.

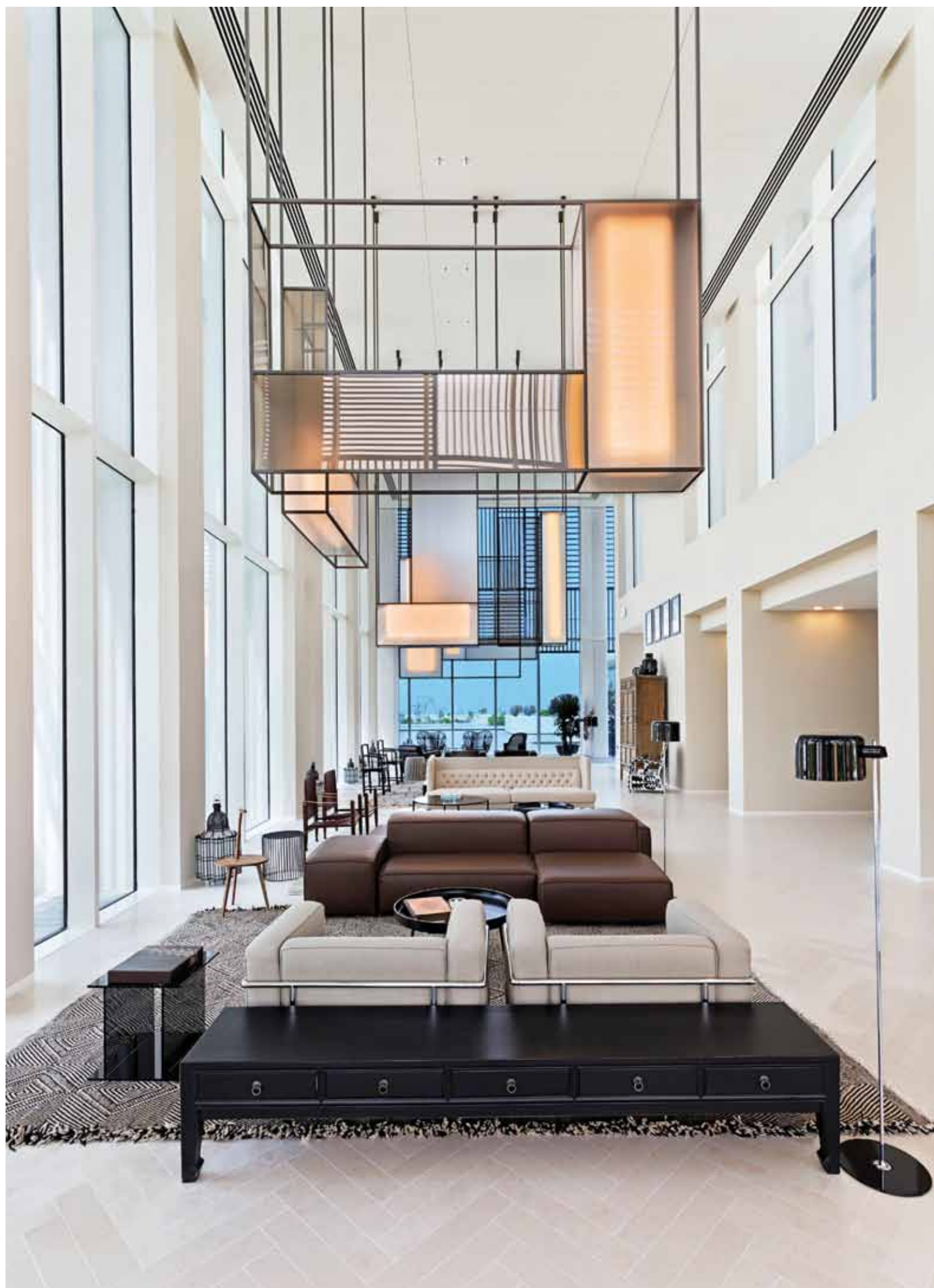
"My inspiration comes from the atmosphere of this magic place," says Lissoni. "I have designed all the buildings to try and emphasise the beauty of the natural environment and capture the perfumes of the water, which blend with the inimitable fragrances of the tropical mangroves."



"I'm very happy and proud of this project. It took three years, but I think that the resort has personality and elegance and is quite different from the other hotels in the region. The surrounding landscape with its natural mangroves and the golf course makes it unique. The mangroves are a real treasure. It's a very special place."

-Piero Lissoni

Business Pre Function Area



Lobby - The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah



"My inspiration comes from the atmosphere of this magic place"

-Piero Lissoni

Kohinoor suite bedroom and bathroom





Kohinoor suite living room

The renowned Lissoni Associati firm was selected because of the founder's unparalleled ability to speak to every design detail, as well as his experience creating world-class hospitality experiences – including his contemporary Conservatorium Hotel in Amsterdam's museum district, the MarePineta resort in Milano Marittima, the Roomers hotel in Baden-Baden, the Bellariva hotel at Lake Garda, the Mamilla hotel in Jerusalem, the Swire hotel in Shanghai and the Monaco & Grand Canal hotel in Venice.

For the Oberoi, Lissoni not only channelled these surroundings into his design, but also integrated elements of these inspiring environs into a plan which sought to honour Emirati culture, with details inspired by traditionally crafted old Arabic doors, boats and clay pots. Even in the corridors, he sought to recreate the textures and style of traditional woven rugs, but in neutral beiges and cream tones to give them a contemporary spin. His dedication to harnessing the powers of traditional, natural textures also continues in his use of wood and tiles.

"The interior design is sophisticated; rooted in simplicity," he explains. "The use of large transparent openings and geometrical wood partitions allows the eye to travel freely to the distant horizon. The modern architecture blends with the sensory experience of the local Orient, flavours of India and spicy elements that emerge from the Occident, Africa and China – [yet] in true Italian style."

The main hotel was designed to feature separate buildings connected by light walkways, with shallow water pools that extend over the inner courtyard where the main restaurant and amenities are situated. An outer cladding of wood panels creates a play of light and shadow as day changes to night,

while simple and pure concrete volumes project out from the façade in one continuous movement.

But the key element is the way the hotel and the resort gather their energy and vivacity from their seamlessly integrated flow. The villas merge harmoniously into the overall design. The three-bedroom villas are composed of pure, interconnected volumes covered in smooth white stucco and contain a combination of protected terraces and large openings that face the ocean. The two-bedroom villas are formed by deep cantilevering slabs, which float over the ground floor to create a series of shaded internal and external living areas. Sliding wood panels form a gentle barrier between the inside and the exterior gardens.

The design of the resort's Sensio Spa and beach restaurant also reflect the same attention to architectural detail. Inspired by the layout of an ancient Medina, the spa is composed of several small buildings placed closely together. Each construction contains a specific amenity and is designed as a pure volume covered in smooth stucco. Slender, open-air walkways provide guests with an intense experience that is further enhanced by the surrounding double-height volumes. The restaurant continues the dimensionality, as its different pavilions are connected by walkways and arranged around a shallow pond.

Lissoni is already receiving accolades from his peers and design-lovers around the world, and the Oberoi speaks to his other current and future sea-inspired projects. His magnificent SX88 yacht for San Lorenzo, scheduled to be officially presented this month at the 2017 Cannes Yachting Festival, features his signature touches and is destined to raise eyebrows. We can't wait to get aboard his next project. 