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lookbook



The plethora of exotic motifs and textures in Anar turn dining into a rich, novel experience.



The restaurant's private dining room is an exercise in grandeur and symmetry.



Traditional artefacts, such as this vintage jar sourced from a warehouse in Dubai, amplify Anar's Middle Eastern vibe.

Blending Middle Eastern motifs with rich, eclectic furnishings, Anar transports diners into a dreamy, exotic world.
By Lin Weiwen

Arabian splendour

Adjusting his wide-angle lens to frame Anar's interior, our photographer nails the restaurant's design concept when he quips that he feels "like a tourist taking pictures inside a mosque". Anar, which seats 60 guests indoors, occupies a round building on Sentosa Gateway's waterfront, and has outlets in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Patrick Waring, designer of Singapore-based Silverfox Studios—the interior architecture design firm tasked to create Anar's look and feel—wants diners to feel like they have stepped into a palatial, Arabic world; a vibe that matches the restaurant's cuisine. "We did not want the restaurant's appearance to be linked to a specific exotic style," adds Waring, whose previous clients include the art gallery-style La Seine Restaurant in Seoul, and Intercontinental Hotel in Kuwait. "So we went for a mix of Middle Eastern aesthetics that complement each other."

The visual elements are a variety of blatant and



Fit for royalty: teatime at Anar is a showcase of traditional, exotic crockery.



Chairs with elaborate carvings lend the furnishings an artisanal edge.

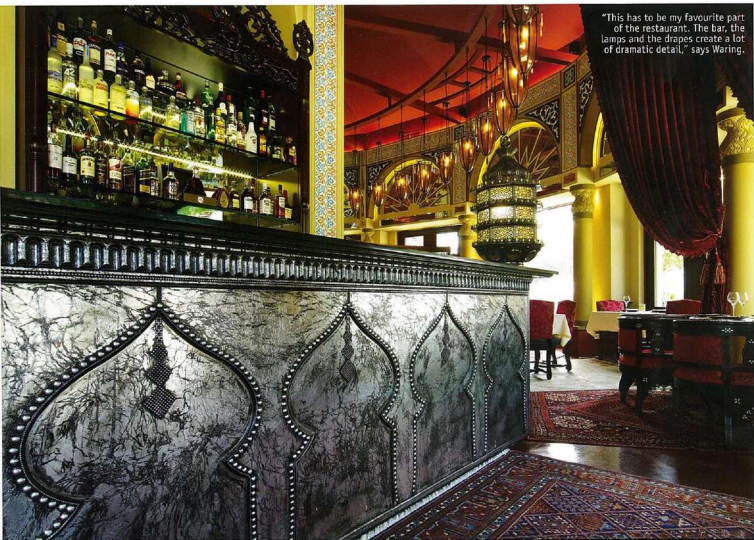


PATRICK WARING

subtle Middle Eastern symbols, creating an immediate, eclectic atmosphere that manages to stop short of overwhelming the senses. You'll first notice the many low-hanging, rustic brass lamps. They are inspired by the lamps in Istanbul's Blue Mosque, and serve as a nod to the beauty of the iconic mosque's décor.

The lamps would be more ornamental than functional during the day, as Anar benefits from an abundant amount of natural light, thanks to the tall windows surrounding the restaurant. The motif of the *mashrabiya*—an intricate Islamic pattern turned into wooden latticework in Arabic architecture—is printed on the glass obscures a little of what's happening inside the restaurant, so diners can enjoy a little privacy.

Perched above the windows are Moorish or horseshoe arches, whose patterns are also repeated on the bar's grey, wooden front. Thick, crimson-toned Dimashq drapes from Syria cling onto the walls, softening the interior's countenance. On the floor, intricate rugs from Iran and Turkmenistan >



"This has to be my favourite part of the restaurant. The bar, the lamps and the drapes create a lot of dramatic detail," says Waring.

welcome your footsteps, heightening the restaurant's atmosphere of an elaborately furnished abode.

For Waring, the "heart of Anar" is the private dining area in the centre of the restaurant. Bluish tiles, imported from Iran, frame the entrance of the tall chamber. Inside, a large, opulent chandelier hangs under a three metre-wide silver dome that bears a *mashrabiya* design, while wine cellars flank the round, wooden table that seats up to 14 guests. During dinnertime, Bakhoor, a scented incense from Dubai, is lit and placed on shelves in the main dining area. Its fragrance lingers dreamily here as you savour Middle Eastern delights like Tikke Masti, charcoal grilled beef fillet medallions marinated in yogurt and spices; and Joojeh Kebab, an Iranian dish of char-grilled chicken marinated in saffron, onions and lime juice.

"This is the first time I have worked with a round restaurant," reveals Waring. "And I think that was the most challenging aspect: getting everything to fit into the circular layout and transporting diners into this Aladdin's Cave." e

Diners view the world outside through windows patterned with *mashrabiya*—an Islamic pattern found in Arabic architecture.

