

TELE LIFE

January 2007

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VEATHIKA
JAIN profiles
the lady with
exquisite
tastes...
interior
designer
LEEN
VANDAELE.



Squisito - Italian for exquisite! As the name suggests, Leen Vandaele is an exquisite interior designer. An interior designer by profession for 25 years, Leen has worked in almost all the continents. Be it the hustle bustle of New York City, cold weather of London, beautiful Austria, France, Tunisia or the seven years that she spent in and out Saudi Arabia, Leen has, in her work a blend of all these cultures. An Australian born but Belgian Leen came to Dubai four and a half years ago after a personal tragedy. "My fiancé passed away just before we were going to get married. I didn't want to stay in Belgium. I needed a change, so I thought I'll come to a new place Dubai," says Leen who loves the Arabic world and its people. "I have always dreamt of 1001 nights, those long dresses, masks and everything. The dream that I used to have as a little girl, really influenced me and that's why I love this place. The multicultural people here and the openness gives



Leen Vandaele

has designs on everything!

me space to work and allows me to experiment." The reason was not just this but also the need for good products in this region compelled Leen to come to Dubai.

With a multicultural, multiracial clientele, she has done houses of Arab, Asian and European clients. She explains, "Arab customers earlier had a very classical and sometimes very heavy overloaded taste. They wanted it fancy with a lot of gold. But the younger generation now likes minimalist style with clean lines. Whereas Indians, love their homes to be colourful."

Leen loves to work with textures like velvet, linen, taffetas, damask and she uses a lot of Indian silk. She loves to use romantic themes such as water, fire, earth and wind as elements. The fabric and wall covering companies that she deals with are Backhausen from Austria which provides her with Trevira CS - a fire resistant fabric, which are used mainly for hotels and projects. From Belgium Squisito has Arte, wall coverings which have from very modern to a classic variety. 'The Design of Time' collection, which has more linen and cotton and also a line

of wall covering. And from Germany she gets an editors collection from Rasch and Kupferot. "My core business now is to supply fabrics, wall coverings to designers and consultants. I deal directly with the mills in Europe to get these fabrics and wall coverings. We are happy to offer a wide range so we can satisfy our clients and among them we are having international hotel chains such as Rotana, Sas Radison, Hyatt etc."

Leen more being into conceptual designs these days, has recently designed her own '0' de

SQUISITO houseboat which is a floating, motor propelled apartment. "I live in the Fairmont which has a lovely view over the ocean but no balcony. One day I was outside waiting for friends at the Creek while watching a wonderful sunset view and an idea was born. How about designing a house boat! So while waiting for my friends I started sketching the boat. The next day I called my young architect friends Ahmed and Farid from X architects who helped me realise the dream." The boat is very contemporary with glass walls, external wooden flooring and everything else is white. Be it the upholstery, the curtains or the bathroom fittings, everything in this boat is white. "This boat was a synergy between Arab architects and European interior designer. I use the boat sometimes during the weekends. It has also been used for special events like 'DE Beers, AL Tayer Co, Estee Lauder and now Chanel. I want to use the boat as a model to introduce a new kind of lifestyle." And this will soon take her to India now. She has been invited by a big group





there. "I have never been to India, it will be the first for me, but I have taken it up as a challenge. I had a little insight into the Indian culture when I hosted a Diwali party on the boat recently and was wearing the sari for the very first time. Basically I am going to get an overview of the market and I also want to take the boat concept there. I am looking forward to meet people there and getting back with some new ideas and maybe products." She will also be introduced to some stars from Bollywood to which she is looking forward to indeed.

Be it Dubai, Saudi, Belgium or any

other part of the world Leen as a design consultant finds it important to play the role of a translator of what she knows and what her clients want. Her signature style is exquisite which provides a cosy and a peaceful environment. "I am like a mother. I don't have children of my own but so many of them everywhere whom I love and also my relation with all my clients is very personal and I think I can say a caring one. I hope everybody feels relaxed and happy with Squisito and its team. We try to give a good service and I try to give a glimpse of exclusivity of exquisiteness."



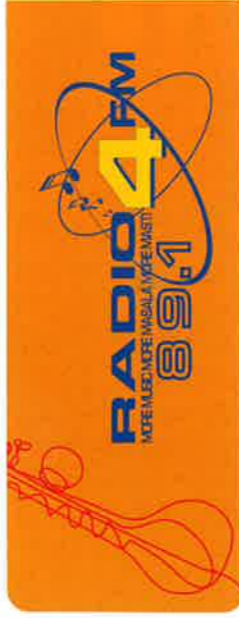
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