

Thursday, 6 May 2021

Tatler House Malaysia: Designer Susan Abraham On The VIP Venue's Showcase Of Design & Art



Abraham putting the final touches to the Tatler House dining table (Photo: Khairul Imran)

Juxtaposing edgy local art against artisanal craftsmanship, interior designer Susan Abraham talks about the unique design identity she's created for Tatler House in Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur

The Tatler House initiative began as a VIP space for its community to gather and share the passions found within its pages. Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore and Beijing all boast Tatler Houses of their own and now, so does Malaysia at the Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur.

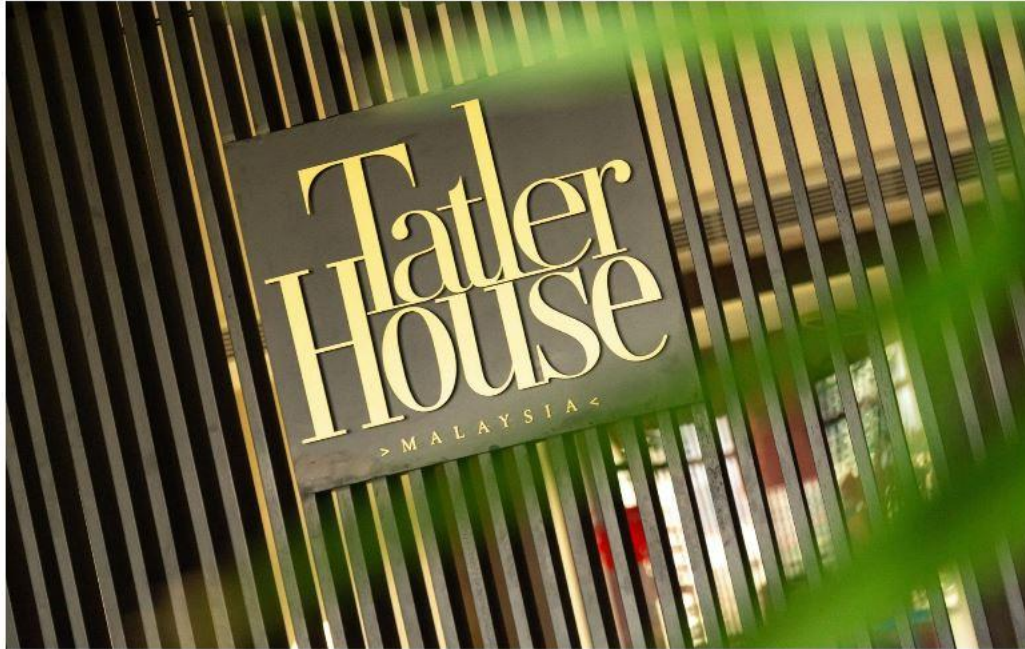
In each instance, the space (whether in the Upper House, Hong Kong, or a heritage shophouse in Bukit Pasoh Road, Singapore), a designer working with local partners, comes in to Tatler-ise the space, transforming it into physical representation of the Tatler brand. For Malaysia, Susan Abraham of Studio S Collective was tasked to create a unique identity combining fine design and local artwork in the presidential suite of the five-star hotel.



Susan Abraham of Studio S Collective (Photo: Khairul Imran)

Abraham, who specialises in concept-driven boutique hotels and F&B interiors, grew up in Toronto, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur and has worked with leading global hospitality firms where a number of her projects have won awards and nominations.

This international perspective was an ideal fit for Tatler House, particularly when coupled with the young designer's guiding principles of creating a harmonious balance of form and proportion in her work.



The Tatler House logo on a custom screen in the arrival hall (Photo: Khairul Imran)



The arrival area features the Tatler House logo for guests to capture their Instagram moment

UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

Abraham's goal was to create a progressive and evocative space that translates the Tatler DNA of power, influence and style. "I wanted to evoke the luxurious nature of the Tatler lifestyle and infuse that with a sense of locality," she explains. "As such the space is a marriage of modern luxury meets young and playful brought through a balanced blend of raw and refined, high and low, muted and bold."

Indeed the result echoes Malaysian culture in a new and innovative way, where local talents are celebrated while the interplay of influences, materiality, and colours lends an unexpected edge for a space that is refreshing and unique in Kuala Lumpur.

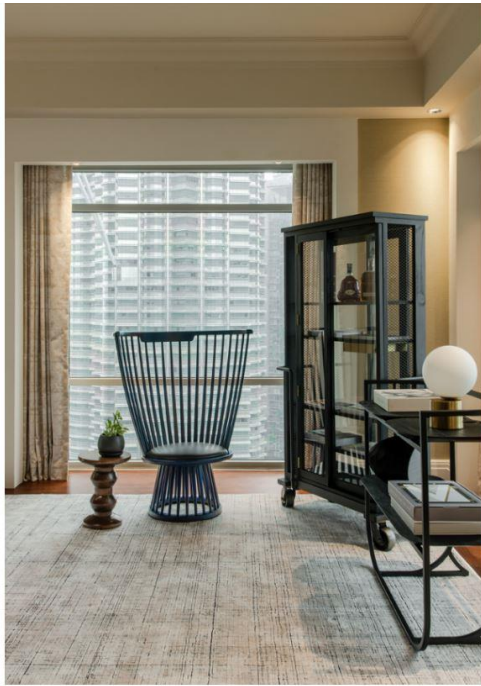


Tatler House Malaysia is an oasis of fine design and art (Photo: David Yeow Photography)

Mandarin Oriental's design philosophy of providing a luxury residential aesthetic with comfort was the perfect starting point for the designer. "I ensured my design strategy featured an appropriate balance between the sophisticated residential feel of Mandarin Oriental and the coveted luxury lifestyle of Tatler for this exclusive experience," she notes.

The overall structure of the presidential suite had to remain untouched; in order to pivot around this, Abraham created beautiful walnut stained timber boxes to mask selected areas, and they became the perfect backdrop and focal point to display artwork.

The designer also introduced a custom screen centred in the arrival area to showcase the Tatler House logo. Above that, a sleek linear pendant casts a soft shadow to ensure guests' Instagram moment is perfectly lit.



Tom Dixon's fan chair and Stellar Works Cabinet of Curiosity (Photo: David Yeow Photography)



The dining room features the interactive work of Nor Tijan Firdaus and the Petronas Twin Towers just beyond its windows (Photo: David Yeow Photography)

Being a progressive space, each room offers a different emotion and tone. "We start with a vibrant, bold and playful energy by using a striking orange and black palette. As we move into the living room, I wanted to shift the energy and create a sense of calm and relaxation. To this end, I went with a warm palette of soft neutrals against earthy tones to capture a bit of a California chic, LA lifestyle vibe," Abraham elaborates.

"The dining room transforms into a fresh, clean and sophisticated palette of silvery grey and blue contrasted with rich warm timber and black accents. Coupled with the phenomenal unobstructed backdrop of the twin towers, this space is the perfect pairing to any dining experience."

A HAVEN OF FINE DESIGN

Home to both high-end global and locally designed pieces, Abraham was extremely delighted to meet and showcase many talented Malaysian craftspeople, artisans and artists.

"The gorgeous custom consoles in the entryway, the velvet orange bench in the arrival, and the elegantly carved solid ash wood armchair in the living room were designed and crafted by Nic Chris. Both chairs show a high level of craftsmanship, constructed with one of the oldest traditional joinery techniques, mortise and tenon," she says.

"Then there are the super sleek and luxurious Olta sofa and forest green Arketipo armchair, which were brought in by Tekni; they add pure sophistication to the living area.

"In the dining hall, we feature the stylish Cabinet of Curiosity by Stellarworks (Linds Furniture) and a pop of indigo with the Tom Dixon Fan Chair by Gudang," she continues. "We even have a funky limited edition denim Smeg fridge from Kitch, which will be stocked full of mini bottles of Moet and more for Tatler events. Not to mention engaging the sense of smell with Diptyque's Baies from Ken's Apothecary and sound with AV Expert, Bowers & Wilkins."



Just Scan It by Nor Tijan Firdaus (Photo: David Yeow Photography)



Berasok by Anniketyni Madian. Note the denim-clad Smeg refrigerator in the background. (Photo: Khairul Imron)

ART OF THE MATTER

Art is an essential component in the overall design and Abraham worked closely with The AFK Collection who loaned the stunning contemporary art found throughout the space.

"Leila, Zena and the rest of the Khan family of The AFK Collection were instrumental in conceptualising and curating the artwork so that it would align holistically with the design direction," she says. "We knew we wanted to keep the artwork relevant, evocative and contemporary. Our goal was to create an interactive journey for guests to learn more about our homegrown talents."

Abraham was particularly drawn to the works of Anniketyni Madian, Mohd Fairuz Paisan, Nor Tijan Firdaus and Justin Lim, their bold style juxtaposing beautifully against the refined designer pieces. She kept in mind to engage viewers not just visually, revealing that some pieces like *Just Scan It* by Nor Tijan found on the entryway is a great example of an interactive piece that incites guests to use their phones to scan the art (which is in the form of a barcode) to see what may appear.

From engaging artwork to exceptional designer pieces, Abraham has ensured that every corner of Tatler House is home to something fun and interactive, keeping guests immersed and engaged.



After Pago Pago 1966 by Nor Tijan Firdaus (Photo: Khairul Imran)



Variety of Unity by Mohd Fairuz Paison takes pride of place in the living room (Photo: Khairul Imran)

(Source: <https://my.asiatatler.com/life/interior-designer-susan-abraham-showcases-fine-craftsmanship-and-local-art-tatler-house-malaysia>)