

Interior design

The essential guide for Middle East interior design professionals

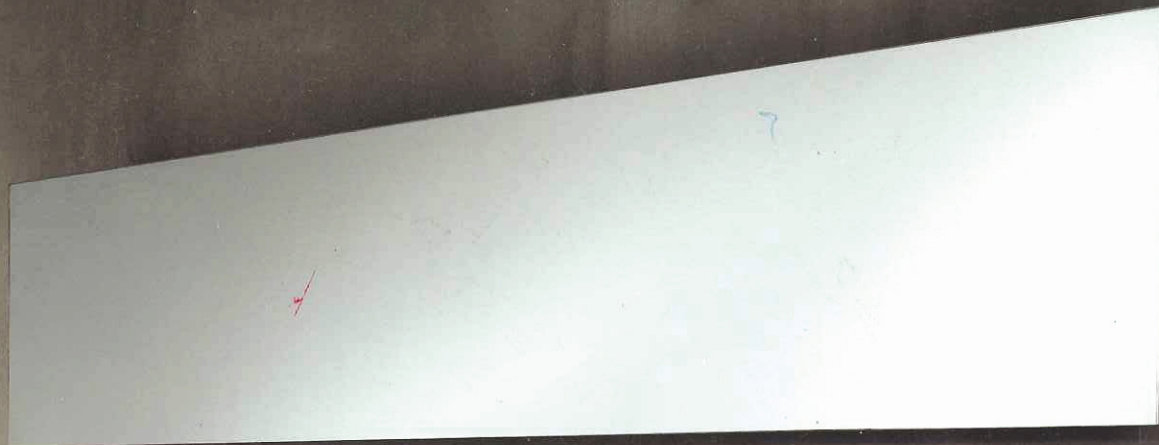
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FINISHING TOUCHES

Industry insiders bring hospitality spaces alive with attractive artworks

GRAPE & GRAIN

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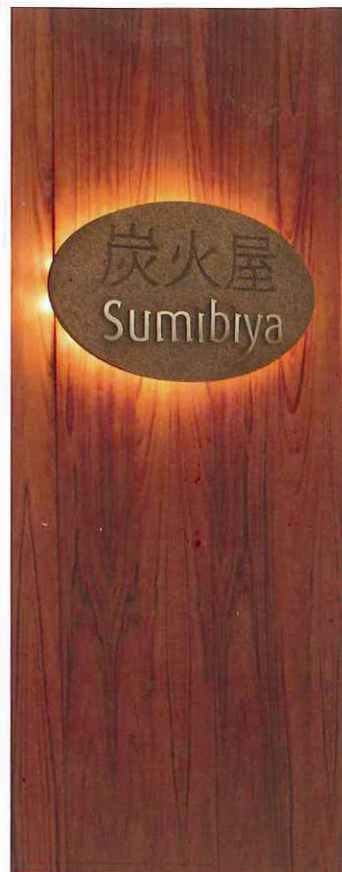
ROMAN STYLE

Italian chic is starting to influence the region's commercial interior designs



Interactive dining Japanese style

Diners turn chefs as a new interactive Asian-style dining concept comes to Dubai



A dynamic dining concept has arrived in Dubai in the form of Sumibiya, newly opened at the InterContinental Hotel. This is the region's first Japanese 'yakiniiku' style restaurant. The Asian dining concept centres around the grilling (yaki) of meat (niku) which at Sumibiya takes place at the table itself providing a design challenge.

Singapore-based interior designer David Tokiwa has brought the idea to life in a design that fuses traditional Japanese architecture with a contemporary style. All the tables in the restaurant are built around a central grill custom-designed by Shinpo products, Tokyo. "It's the interactive element that excited us most," says Scott Murray, food and beverage director at the InterContinental. "When people get together

around the grill there is always a lot of energy. Yakiniiku diners like to get involved. It's just the way it is, from the streets of Tokyo to the avenues of New York." This idea forms the central aspect of the restaurant's interior design.

The emphasis of the interior decor is on cosy simplicity, using warm lighting, clean lines and neutral tones. The flooring and walls are made of 'Platinum White' granite with different finishes (honed and bush hammered) to soften the overall appearance.

Tokiwa concentrated on the lighting to bestow a real sense of atmosphere to complement the Japanese style. "It was designed so that our custom made 'bamboo boxes', bar light and table lamps would be the key element.

The general house lighting was designed to be extremely soft and generally indirect, such as the cove lighting at ceiling and wall intersections and in the illumination of the pebble floor. The bar area is highlighted by one of our custom-designed light fixtures utilising bamboo glass with a stainless steel frame which reflects a 'contemporary' element. This was manufactured for us in Singapore."

In keeping with the interactive element, the kitchen is very much a focal point in Sumibiya with a team of chefs performing cooking displays. However, Tokiwa was keen to maintain an atmosphere of intimacy. His purposeful use of drapes allows diners small private spaces away from the buzz of the main restaurant, "Due to the larger

tables and seating configurations, I chose to introduce a sheer 'curtain detail' to act as a visual divider between spaces while also softening the overall effect of the long and narrow space."

The exterior of the restaurant is also unique. Created to seem as if one was "walking through a cleared patch of forest," gravel and pebbles have been inlaid below the windows in a pattern which continues inside where a pebble pathway leads to the bar.

"Our design concept was based upon taking elements of traditional Japanese style and adapting and modernising it for the Middle Eastern market," says Tokiwa. With the rise of Teppanyaki restaurants globally, this kind of interactive dining is set to soar in popularity.