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#61

Habitus Vintage Modern Issue Two of Six Collectables Designing a beautiful future

Vintage Modern Guest Editor David Flack
Winnings x Habitus House of the Year

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Cool bananas!

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Slamming some serious kapow into this Byron Bay home, YSG has coloured right outside the lines. The result is eclectic and authentically fabulous. Hardly a surprise with YSG director, Yasmine Ghoniem, in the lead.

Awesome, amazing, diverse and fearless, there is an aesthetic at play that speaks to the well-travelled adventurer with an eye for delicious design. This is arguably Ghoniem's hallmark: her ability to draw seemingly disparate elements together as a coherent and visually harmonious experience that is also totally wow.

She is also something of a collector, and when a planned trip to Paris to buy for one client was cancelled, she packed her bag and went alone. "It was going to be such a lost opportunity if I didn't go" she says. Taking up all her meetings and appointments, she worked her way through the aesthetes and arbiters of Paris sending pictures to clients. "I just took the chance, looking for anything good, but nothing in particular. I would come across it and go – I need this, and there's no way I can't share it with the client. I had three projects on the go where I was like, oh my god, this is perfect," she says. By the end of the trip, she had placed some great pieces into her projects, including two incredible green and brown harlequin vintage armchairs.

"I found those in Oda, a little gallery in Paris. They are a very sweet couple, and they interchange their installations probably every two weeks... And as soon as I saw [the chairs], I was immediately in love, and I knew the client would be as well. They just had this quirky seventies vibe about them, and I loved the colour, the pattern, the original fabric, they just fit," she says, before adding that they denoted a real step outside the Byron Bay model, and

embraced the nature of her client. "When he came to our studio, he just had the coolest outfit and glasses on. Literally, he looked like he stepped out of a seventies movie, and there was this air of footloose and fancy-free, but also really put together," says Ghoniem, who wanted that lackadaisical nature to inform the project.

This is beautifully done in the horizontal chrome balustrade that extends to an original support column, which also cozies the kitchen area and the sunken lounge without building a wall. Placed to lounge against, the chrome has been wrapped in tan leather with hot pink stitching. "I loved the idea of him bringing all of his mates over, having a beer and kind of casually leaning back on these chrome details that almost served as a balustrade at a skate park," says Ghoniem. The pink and brown combination, quintessential to seventies fashion and furnishing, runs deep through the project. And it's done well, with bespoke terracotta floors (Artedomus) lending its warmth to everything from the chocolate cushions of the sunken lounge to the ebullience of Zebrano cabinetry in the kitchen.

Paris has arguably the best array of collectables with all eras celebrated via markets, makers, galleries, and dealers, and the dining chairs from the Paris flea market are sensationally good. That said, Australia is increasingly honing its skills in this direction with suppliers such as Vampt (Surry Hills, Sydney) bringing an exceedingly good eye to their select offerings.

PREVIOUS

A pivoting round window sets just the right tone for the unusual and bespoke nature of this home.

OPPOSITE

Amazing dining chairs sourced in Paris are crowned by a bespoke floating orb of gigantic proportions.

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ABOVE

An unusual planter at the front door (note the bespoke door handle) announces the home as unique.

OPPOSITE

Those amazing chairs sourced from Oda in Paris were a prized find that Yasmine was thrilled to share with her client for this project.

OVER

The brilliant rocket stools were sourced locally from Lunantiques and spruced with tropical fabric from Sahco.











OPPOSITE

A floor of bespoke terracotta tiles (Artemdomus) gives the foundational layer, while also being practical for beachside living.

ABOVE

The introduction of a sunken lounge in all the pink, brown and blue shades of the seventies invites lackadaisical living and lounging with mates.

Take the brilliantly bright pale-blue planter at the entrance from Vampt, for example. This elegant sculptural piece is huge, colourful and not likely to look good in a white box facing the sea. “Ha!” says Ghoniem. “A white box with views is exactly what I didn’t want to do.” Instead, the planter is stuffed full of plants (her sister is Katy Svalbe after all) and paired with a low and wide planter featuring a rippling orange rim. Both are placed to the side of the large timber door with a YSG-designed squiggle door handle. It is a great entrance and immediately invites curiosity.

The inward view is an incredibly crafted and considered entity. From the entrance door, an open stair gives a grid to the immediate view. This is visually countered by a bespoke timber-framed and perfectly round glass oculus (window) that has a visual dialogue with the huge fibreglass orb that floats in the centre of the room. “It was quite a cosmic space. Funnily enough, when you are in there, it just feels otherworldly. And I think the glowing orb really cements that concept,” says Ghoniem.

The thing about her design mind is the rare ability to authentically enjoy the

unconventional. As such, the home is filled with small but breathtaking moments of fabulousness. The rocket chairs orbiting the circular kitchen island bench, for example, were picked up from Lunantiques in Alexandria in Sydney, as a lastminute and unexpected score. “We had very little time left so we headed off to Lunantiques, saw the stools. Amazing. It was like they were made for the project,” she says. With unusual chrome legs and an eccentric rocket type of shape, they work perfectly with the chrome rail base of the island. The tropical fabric from Sahco gives them genius.

The genius, however, really lies with Ghoniem’s ability to work a space to be buoyant and provocatively interesting, while completely liveable. Granted, she has a particular client who enjoys eclecticism. But it is her prodigious talent for making the gathered pieces seem so natural and seamlessly tuned to the client’s personality that sets her and her designs apart. Very cool bananas!

■ YSG | ysg.studio.com