

DECORATION

the ultimate in luxurious living ideas

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technical tips

The Green Eyed Beauty



Marie-Noëlle Swiderski, a design professional since 1993, set up Blanchard in Dubai in September 2006. Her aim "to comfort her soul with beauty". Blanchard FZ LLC, Tel: 04 3694532, www.blanchard.ae



Surrounded by sand, dust and stone as we are so often here, it is all the more admirable to envisage that green is to become a permanent fixture in our environment. The UAE has been tackling, bravely and determinedly, the challenge that the whole world is facing: painting the world green-er. A timely, well-needed decision, supported by initiatives of form and changes of depth.

At Blanchard, we have for a while now tried to do our share and we have recently truly stepped this up into more sustained, concrete action at a broader

level. Our gestures were always practical within the office, but we ensure now that they are also more of an integral part of the fabric of our methodology, our design approach, our ethos. Of course, in the past, beyond using both sides of our paper before recycling it or shutting off the A/C at night for example, we have also always tried to encourage the use of local materials and skills in our projects. ...And sustainable ones, it goes without saying. We work towards a reduction of shipping when possible, privileging items that can be made or sourced locally.

We have always loved designing bespoke furniture to perfectly complement our tailor-made interiors. Being on the prowl permanently for unique, local, craftsmanship that makes this possible is an added delight, albeit also a challenge, to our mission.

As the Blanchard team in the Dubai studio becomes more and more involved in the development of the interior architecture, more than purely decoration, of the spaces and properties we are approached with, we are given the rare opportunity to address the real issues in their infancy. We

have been looking at the bare bones of a house, the basic needs it should answer for its dwellers and that has in itself provided guidance onto new paths. Not letting the water run while you brush your teeth or do the dishes is one great thing already - and one that we deplore not enough people actually do systematically (DO YOU?). Why not go one step further and make sure that this used water is re-used, for irrigation of your garden for example?

Similarly to Western, more Northern locations, where heat is kept inside and cold out with the help of double glazing for example, our warmer climate calls for the same diligence in ensuring a property is well sealed. To keep the hot out and the cool in, it is as important to have air tight doors, excellent gauge glazing and smart mechanical systems. They need to be located cleverly, maintained carefully and dispensing their magic judiciously. Considering under floor cooling is an option, but it has to be looked at carefully, as it has limitations (namely condensation and cost) to balance its advantages (no ceiling-based cooling system access or unsightly vents, cold-water based as opposed to A/C Freon gas). As a small thought, several local newly built properties could have improved their energy efficiency substantially by having been designed to provide a cross breeze; although not the universal solution (especially in July and August), it is not only delicious, it costs significantly less and has less impact on health than systematic use of A/C. You can also look into planting over the surface of your roof, as this will naturally insulate it, not to mention provide great, fresh produce, flowers (fed with your recycled grey waters), and a lovely area to relax - if safely accessible...

So we find ourselves, the designers but also the house dwellers, the parents, the consumers and the future residents of these green pastures, asking ourselves: what else can we do? Thankfully, nobody expects these suggestions to be developed into solutions without the help of well-versed consultants, who can advise properly. So let's get thinking, talking and implementing!

