



# ARABIA HARPER'S BAZAAR Your LIFE

Marwa Taymour (left) entrusted the design of her home in The Villa to D'Ora Tokai (right), with a brief for it to restore calm the moment you step inside



Your LIFE  
The informal dining room features the smooth curves of a quartz dining table and Panton chairs by Vitra

## Cloud DANCER

MARWA TAYMOUR's The White Arcade is a luminous familial sanctuary bathed in NATURAL LIGHT

Photography by CASA MIA VISUALS — Words by NATASHA FARUQUE



“I wanted calm. I wanted air. I wanted warmth without noise”

MARWA TAYMOUR



Above: The C-shaped DOT Objects sofa in the courtyard, designed by D’Ora, becomes a seamless continuation of the surrounding arches. Right: Light oak herringbone floors frame the 10-seater onyx dining table, with chairs from West Elm



Above and below: Mesmerising art installations anchor the internal spaces, from the double-height courtyard to the dining room. Far right: The serene family kitchen where daily cooking unfolds



“Minimalism was non-negotiable,” says Marwa Taymour, when thinking back about the brief that she gave D’Ora Tokai Designs. “I knew from the beginning that I did not want to drift into trend driven colour stories, no matter how beautiful they can be. I wanted calm. I wanted air. I wanted warmth without noise.”

And that is how The White Arcade – an apt name for this 675sqm, two-level house in Dubai’s The Villa community – came to encapsulate the pared-back aesthetic its Emirati owner yearned for. “Simplicity was a conscious choice,” the HR professional at GE Vernova tells us. “I wanted the house to feel light and cohesive, but also steady; a place that calms you the moment you walk in.”

The impetus for change came with the birth of Marwa’s third child. Although the growing family, already residents of the same community, needed to

accommodate the new addition, “This move was not only about space,” Marwa insists. “It was about creating a home that reflected who we are today. I felt ready to bring to life a vision I had been carrying for years. My previous home was upgraded, but it was not aligned with the minimalist direction I truly wanted.”

Partnering with D’Ora, who heads up her own eponymous design firm, to lead from concept to execution, was a natural choice for Marwa, given the two have worked together on four projects over the last five years. “Prior to The White Arcade, we designed a private family residence and several high-end investment properties in Dubai Marina and Downtown for Marwa,” explains D’Ora, a multidisciplinary designer working across interior architecture, product design and fashion. “Each project carried a different objective, some deeply personal, others strategically revenue-driven, yet all were approached with the same architectural discipline and long-term vision.”

This wasn’t just a cosmetic project. The home itself had a more traditional, rectangular architecture with marble flooring and segmented windows. Through redesign, the team introduced arches, softened the lines and created visual continuity. Architectural interventions included enclosing a large balcony to create bespoke walk-in wardrobes, reconfiguring walls to introduce an additional bedroom, and creating a ▶



*Clockwise from left: The bedroom's calming neutral palette is highlighted with accents of warm browns and oranges to add texture; Marwa's dressing table stands as an island in her walk-in wardrobe; The bathroom continues the sense of peace and relaxation, with marble-walled double shower and standalone oval bathtub; Vases of flowers throughout bring colour and nature into the home: It's all in the details, with the bedroom's full-length gold mirror and traditional mannequin*



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secondary prep kitchen to support the main one. The courtyard was also raised and reconfigured to function as a central living space. And nearly every piece of furniture was designed specifically for the home.

Although these major changes might seem daunting, D’Ora felt that the greatest challenge lay elsewhere. She explains that it was tricky to “synthesise multiple cultural and architectural narratives into one coherent language. The home carried Mediterranean references, the family brings Arabic heritage and our studio approaches architecture through a European lens. Bringing these influences into alignment required a clear architectural vision, one that could translate different histories and sensibilities into a unified spatial identity that feels authentic to the family’s life and values.”

The end result was an unqualified success, with the family moving in once the villa was finished, their vision realised, furnished and styled. “Architecturally and aesthetically, the home feels complete to me,” Marwa notes, adding, “The only changes I foresee are natural evolutions tied to family life. My youngest child is three, and his room was designed perfectly for this stage of life. As he grows, that space will evolve with him. We also converted one room into a family space with paintings, toys and informal seating. In the future, I imagine transforming it into a gym room to encourage a more active lifestyle for all of us. The structure and spirit of the home, however, will remain unchanged.”

When talking about her favourite spaces, Marwa pinpoints the skylight – one of the aspects, along with the courtyard, that prompted her to buy the house. “It feels symbolic. It reflects the effort, patience and faith that went into transforming the house.”

She also notes that, “When I sit on the sofa and look to my right, I see the curves of the arches, the courtyard donut sofa framed beyond, a glimpse of the dining area and the corridor with its moulded walls and warm lighting. That layered perspective, the way every space speaks to the next feels connected, intentional, and balanced.”

D’Ora knew that Marwa’s life was “fast, complex and in constant motion,” so her home needed to be instantly restorative and serene, from the moment she stepped in, she says, wanting the space to “hug, hold and gently cradle our client and her family.” At first glance The White Arcade may come across as a soothing sanctuary, a photogenic canvas – but it also fully performs its function as a family home filled with warmth. ■



*Clockwise from top: The c-shaped living room sofa by DOT Objects turns the attention inwards, inviting conversation and connection; The home’s oak floors create continuity, through both order and symmetry; Marble walls with modern light fixtures curate corners with ease*



## “Simplicity was a conscious choice”

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*The home’s design blends Spanish architecture with subtle Arabic and European influences. The repeated arches soften transitions and create natural rhythm as you move from room to room*

