

BERNARD KHOURY

For a while he was the rebellious boy of Middle Eastern architecture. Today Bernard Khoury is known as an award-winning architect, educationist and art curator. At the helm of Beirut-based firm DW5 since 1993, Harvard-educated Khoury infuses his creations with a deep respect for the relationship between culture, urban fabric and scale. **RECENT PROJECTS:** National Bahraini pavilion, 2014 Venice Biennale's Architecture Exhibition. **UP NEXT:** Learning centre in Armenia and the redesign of La Grande Brasserie du Levant in Beirut. *Beirut; bernardkhoury.com*

HABIBEH MADJDABADI ARCHITECTURE OFFICE

Iranian architect Habibeh Madjdabadi says the role of an architect is to understand which aspect of the project can inspire architectural solutions. Madjdabadi's oeuvre extends from architecture to art installations and conceptual design. **BEST KNOWN FOR:** The 40 Knots House, shortlisted for the 2016 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture and the Mellat Bank building. **INSPIRED BY** "Materials are an important means of expression in my work and I consider them from a poetic point of view." *Tehran; habibehmadjdabadi.com*

SSH

Headed by Ray Phillips, managing director, building design, and Simon Dennison, architecture director, SSH has delivered high profile projects such as the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre and Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre and Museum in Kuwait. **KEY PROJECTS:** Marina Waterfront, Kuwait and the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. **UP NEXT:** Al Salam Palace, Kuwait Children's Hospital and Ras Al Bar Masterplan. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** Successful design must address functionality and sustainability, and go beyond expectations, without compromising budgets. 11 offices worldwide including Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai and Saudi Arabia; *sshic.com*

AL HITMI COMPLEX BY NORR



DESIGN 2000

Set up in the 1970s by the late Sandro Corvi as a furniture retailer in Rome, Design 2000 has now grown into an architectural practice, interior design consultancy and manufacturer of bespoke furniture. In Qatar, Design 2000 is represented by its affiliate, Italian Style Qatar. **KEY PROJECTS:** Exhibition hall at The Pearl Qatar (design by Peia Associati); Hamad International Airport, Doha; Angolan National Assembly, Luanda; royal residences in Africa and the Middle East. **UP NEXT:** Private residences in Monaco, Bahrain, Doha and Miami, villa and majlis in Doha. **LEADERSHIP:** CEO Massimo Cioccoloni, Paolo Schiavi, architect, Daniele Venanzoni, chief designer, Roberto Nicolai. *Rome, Bahrain; designduemila.com*



VILLA BY AAC INTERIORS

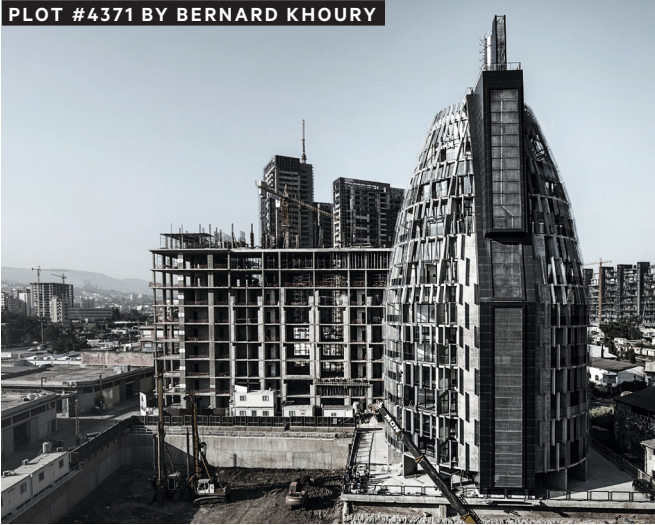
SHEIKH JABER AL AHMAD CULTURAL CENTRE BY SSH



EMBASSY BY DESIGN 2000



PLOT #4371 BY BERNARD KHOURY



NORR

Architects of Dubai's Emirates Towers and Kuwait's Trade Centre, NORR's design solutions are characterised by a multidisciplinary approach that brings together architects, interior designers, engineers, and other specialists. **UP NEXT:** In Dubai - The Address Residence Sky View, The Address Boulevard Hotel and Vida Residence Downtown, First Gulf Bank HQ; Al Zorah Resorts I & II, Ajman; Ajdan Waterfront Development, Saudi Arabia and Lusail Residential Development, Qatar. **23 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Qatar and Saudi Arabia; norr.com**

WILSON ASSOCIATES

The US-headquartered global interior architectural design firm was founded in 1971; today it employs over 400 design professionals worldwide. Along with hospitality interiors and architecture, the in-house specialty studio Blue Plate consults on restaurant projects. The firm's Middle East and Africa regional office is now headed by Isabel Pintado. **KEY PROJECTS:** In Dubai - interiors of the One&Only Royal Mirage, Atlantis The Palm and Armani Hotel; Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah resort, Muscat; and St.Regis Doha. **Nine offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Singapore; wilsonassociates.com**

DIBA TENSILE ARCHITECTURE

Leila Araghian and Alireza Behzadi co-founded their firm in 2005, specialising in membrane and special structures. An early project - the Tabiat bridge - which redefines the bridge as a sequence of spaces, earned an Architizer A+ award and has been shortlisted for the 2016 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Abo Atash Amphitheatre, Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge, membrane covering for Shahrak-e Gharb Jame Mosque, awning for Modern Elahieh restaurant. **UP NEXT:** ETFE Roof, Iran Mall and Birds Garden Cable net, Lavizan Park. **Tehran; dibats.com**

AAC INTERIORS

Offering interior architecture and design services for residential, corporate and retail projects, this Dubai-based firm works across the Middle East and Europe. They might be known by their luxuriously appointed spaces, but since founding AAC Interiors in 2002, Anne and Alexandra Cantacuzene have steered clear of being locked into a trademark style. "What we work towards is a quality design, delivered to the highest of standards." **MOTTO:** Good design enriches the quality of life and productivity of businesses. **Dubai; aac-interiors.com**



HABIBEH MADJDABADI



**TABIAT BRIDGE BY
DIBA TENSILE ARCHITECTURE**

ATLANTIS BY WILSON ASSOCIATES



LAURA NAZIR INTERIOR DESIGN STUDIO

Interior designer Laura Nazir made the journey from New York to Jeddah 25 years ago. With a roster of high-profile clients, including royalty and ambassadors, Nazir and her team of architects and interior designers imbue their projects with a relaxed modernism. Beyond the Middle East, Nazir has lent her signature pared-back take on luxury to projects in Paris, London, Beverly Hills, Kenya and Buenos Aires. **DESIGN APPROACH:** "Communication is key. And of course, maintaining client confidentiality. I never advertise my works, the practice is built on word of mouth." Jeddah; lauranazir.com

VICK VANLIAN

Designer Vick Vanlian's eponymous firm is just over four years old but has built quite a reputation for its bold style, fearless use of bright colours and nostalgic references in modern settings. **UP NEXT:** Residential apartment in Barcelona, a block of furnished apartments in Dubai, presidential guest house in Ivory Coast and a private villa in Locarno, Switzerland. **SIGNATURE STYLE:** "We strive to play on all the senses wherever possible, as they are all part of experiencing any space, be it interiors or architecture. A splash of pop always adds colour, humour and fun to any space." Beirut and Dubai; vickvanlian.com

GALAL MAHMOUD ARCHITECTS

Beirut in the mid 90s was an exciting place to take an architectural practice started in Paris in 1987. Three decades later, an office in Abu Dhabi and an established name in luxury tourism, that spirit still animates GM Architects. The firm headed by Galal Mahmoud, Randa Chahine, Anwar Hajj and Elie Waked, has designed spaces across the region, infused with a sense of wellbeing, emotion and mystery. **KEY CLIENTS:** Accor Hotels, Starwood Hotels, Rotana Hotels, Fairmont Hotels, Lebanese Ministry of Culture. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Sofitel Tamuda Bay Resort and Spa in Morocco, renovation of the Bristol Hotel in Beirut and the Rotana Salalah in the sultanate of Oman. **UP NEXT:** The Museum of Civilisation in central Beirut and a Sheraton Resort in Dakar. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "To layer buildings and landscapes with emotive space and form." Abu Dhabi, UAE; Beirut, Lebanon; gm-architects.com

T.ZED ARCHITECTS

Despite being a little over a year old, this firm already has a client list that boasts names such as Royce Group and IFA Hotels & Resorts. Principal Tarik Al Zaharna believes in a consistent, detail-oriented approach that responds to programme, context, and one that translates from a larger geography to interior



BOULEVARD PLAZA BY AEDAS

spaces and details. **KEY PROJECTS:** Index Penthouse, Cocktail Kitchen, S'wich Gourmet, AKIN Barber & Shop, Limestone House Residence. **UP NEXT:** In Dubai - Loci fine dining bistro in DIFC, Macramé concept store and restaurant on Jumeirah Beach Road, Corcel concept store in Dubai Design District, Royce HQ and KOA, a mixed-use block in Al Barari, Ora Japanese fine dining in Kuwait and Lusail Residences. Luxembourg, Dubai and Sharjah; tzed-architects.com

STUDIO M

In 2006, armed with the experience and skill acquired in his formative years working within collaborative environments at some of LA's most esteemed design practices, Abboud Malak formed Studio M Dubai. Known for a wide range of projects from small to large-scale residential to commercial and hospitality, the studio's aesthetic is contemporary yet sophisticated. Malak combines warm materials with clean lines, textural palettes and fine detailing.

INSPIRATION: The designer credits his clean, crisp aesthetic to the modernist Californian West Coast where he opened his first design studio after graduating from the Art Centre College of Design in Pasadena. **AWARD WINNING PROJECTS:** The Pavilion Downtown, The Index Penthouse, DIFC. Dubai; studiom.co

AEDAS

One of the world's leading global architecture and design practices, Aedas is built on the belief that great design can only be delivered by people with a deep social and cultural understanding of the communities they are designing for. The Middle East office, led by managing director Michael Fowler, has been responsible for delivering several significant infrastructure and building projects in the region.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "The practice's unique structure, global presence, and commitment to cutting-edge R&D are testament to our desire to deliver design excellence to clients wherever

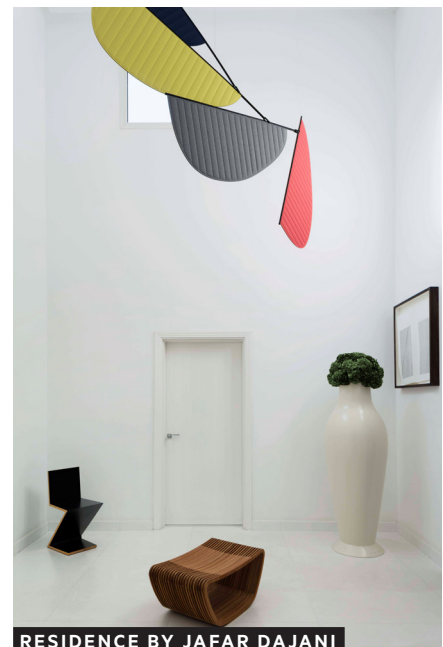
they are in the world." **KEY PROJECTS:** Dubai Metro, Dubai Tram, Ocean Heights, U-Bora Towers, Boulevard Plaza, all in Dubai **KEY CLIENTS:** Roads and Transport Authority, DAMAC Gulf Properties, Emaar Properties. 12 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai and London; aedas.com

SOM

With a portfolio of more than 10,000 projects in over 50 countries, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) specialises in architecture, interior design, engineering and urban planning. The firm, which celebrates its 80th anniversary this year has received more than 1,700 awards so far. **KEY PROJECTS:** SOM is responsible for the design and construction of some of the world's tallest buildings, including Burj Khalifa in Dubai and One Trade Centre in New York City. **UP NEXT:** The Al Ahmadi Cultural Centre, in Kuwait City, which will promote art, music, theatre and dance. 10 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi; som.com

JAFAR DAJANI

Jordan-born interior architect Jafar Dajani studied architecture in the UK, followed by a Masters in interior design, specialising in boutique hotels. Since starting his own design practice in 2013, he has completed several upscale residential projects in Dubai. Dajani is also a furniture designer and an avid arts collector. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "We try to create functional, timeless spaces through our designs, incorporating colour, texture and accessories in a whimsical style." Dubai; jafardajani.ae



RESIDENCE BY JAFAR DAJANI

GATSERELIA DESIGN

The man behind Dubai's Play Restaurant & Lounge and the Nikki Beach Restaurant & Beach Club, Gregory Gatsrelia founded his award-winning firm in 1985 in Toronto with his brother, Alexander. In 1996, Gatsrelia Design opened in Beirut, from where it continues to create some of the biggest F&B projects across the Middle East, Morocco and Europe. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "We think of design as a tool to enrich people's lives and help organisations succeed." **KEY INFLUENCES:** 20th century and contemporary art, furniture and design. In 2011, Gatsrelia opened Smogallery in Beirut, which promotes international and local artists and designers. **UP NEXT:** La Brasserie Libanaise in Downtown Beirut and residential projects in Dubai, Paris and New York. Beirut; gatsrelia.com

DSA ARCHITECTS INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1985, this firm has some of Dubai's major hospitality projects to its credit: Madinat Jumeirah, Park Hyatt, One & Only The Palm Jumeirah, Four Seasons Resort and The Oberoi. **PRINCIPALS:** Steve Kelshaw, Peter Davison, Tim Goodall and Floris Smith **UP NEXT:** Crescent Development, Baku; Mall of the Emirates refurbishment, Dubai; Anantara Hotel, Dubai Creek, Dubai; Aqua Raffles Hotel, Jeddah; Marriott Resort & Spa, Ras Al Khaimah; One & Only Resort, Bahrain. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "Delivering exemplary designs which embrace the principles of sustainability, appropriate state-of-the-art technology and high levels of service, to all our projects and clients. Quality architecture, designed and delivered passionately contributes to a better environment." Dubai, Johannesburg, Lisbon; dsa-arch.com

NEXTOFFICE

Espousing a brand of architecture that is contextual and forges deep connections to its site, Nextoffice is at the vanguard of the contemporary design movement in Iran. Helmed by architect, painter and educationist Alireza Taghaboni, the firm has produced some notable buildings despite the challenges posed by sanctions in Iran. **UP NEXT:** Sadra Artists Forum, Afarinesh Multifunctional Complex **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "The main effort of our office is to connect and balance historical typology, contemporary lifestyle and functional aspects of the space." Tehran; nextoffice.ir

PALLAVI DEAN INTERIORS

Born in India and raised in Dubai, Pallavi Dean spent years working in London before returning to the Middle East to establish her interior design consultancy in 2013. Featured on the cover of this issue, she brings with her an international



ALMAS TOWER BY ATKINS



VILLA BY MARIE LAURENT



ONE & ONLY THE PALM, JUMEIRAH BY DSA

sensibility and a strong belief in creating memorable experiences for her clients. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "Before we draw a single line on a piece of paper, we want to truly understand what the client wants after we are gone." **KEY PROJECTS:** Executive Office of Sheikha Bodour Al Qassimi in Sharjah and the headquarters of Taameer Investments in Oman. **UP NEXT:** The Delano Dubai set to open in 2017. Pallavi makes her debut as a product designer at this year's Downtown Design fair with a line of furniture, 'Tension'. Dubai; pallavidean.com

GODWIN AUSTEN JOHNSON

Before founding GAJ in Dubai in 1991, principal and managing partner Brian Johnson had been practicing in the emirate since 1975. With some of the region's most recognised buildings to its name, GAJ's influence on modern Middle Eastern architecture is undeniable. "Our expertise lies in providing exceptional design and project management services across all stages of development right through to the delivery of a built project", says Johnson, who also features on the cover of this issue. **BEST KNOWN FOR:** The Dubai Creek Golf Club remains one of the first architectural projects that tied Dubai's global image to its flair for bold architectural gesturing. Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dubai, Muscat, UK; gaj-uae.ae

ATKINS

Founded in the UK in 1938 and widely recognised for its design and engineering expertise, Atkins has been operating in the Middle East for more than 40 years. **KEY PROJECTS:** Burj Al Arab, Bahrain World Trade Centre, Almas Tower and Jumeirah Beach Hotel. **DESIGN APPROACH:** "Our objective is to deliver a holistic and fully integrated creative approach, which is rooted in data and evidence gathering," says Janus Rostock, design director, Atkins Middle East, featured on the cover of this issue and the architect behind the Dubai Opera House.

UP NEXT: Dubai Opera House, which opens on August 31 with a performance by Plácido Domingo. 300 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Doha, Bahrain and Riyadh; atkinsglobal.com

MARIE LAURENT ARCHITECTURE

Environmental awareness, quality, and clarity are key themes that guide Marie Laurent Architecture. At the head of Project A since 2009 before founding her eponymous firm, the French-born and Dubai-educated Laurent – also featured on the cover of this issue – has built a brand name creating spaces suffused with air and light. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Penthouses in Dubai Marina, villas on the Palm Jumeirah, offices in D3, Art Dubai and Emirates Towers, Comptoir 102 – all in Dubai. **UP NEXT:** An artistic concept project in D3, Dubai and a commercial library and temporary office concept in Sharjah. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "Architecture should be beautiful, should be sure, and should be simple." Dubai; marilaurent.com

CHAKIB RICHANI

Lebanon, France, London, KSA, Oman, Jordan, Syria and of course, the UAE are just a few of the countries where Chakib Richani has left his quiet, pure mark. The Venezuelan-born architect, already on the AD100 in 2010 and on the cover of this issue, focuses on the flow of spaces and light, and the design and location of furniture. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Elie Saab headquarters and residences in Beirut and Paris; Zinc Crown House, Dubai and a modern mansion in Amman. **UP NEXT:** High-end villas in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and interior projects in Beirut, and the Chakib Richani collection of home objects in noble materials. **KEY DESIGN ITEMS:** The award winning Petit wall light and Ribbon console **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "I aim to create a holistic experience of the senses where spaces unfold in time." Beirut; richani.com

FOSTER + PARTNERS

Led by Norman Foster, British architecture, design and engineering studio Foster + Partners has established an international reputation with buildings such as the Beijing Airport, Hearst Headquarters, New York and the German Parliament in Berlin. Over the past five decades, the firm has developed a sustainable approach to architecture. **KEY PROJECTS:** The 240,000-sq m Al Faisaliah Complex, Riyadh, featuring Saudi Arabia's first skyscraper; Abu Dhabi's Masdar City intended to be carbon neutral and zero waste and Zayed National Museum, Saadiyat Island Cultural District. **Abu Dhabi; fosterandpartners.com**

PROSPECT DESIGN INTERNATIONAL

The firm behind some of the ritziest entertaining spaces in Dubai, including Billionaire Mansion in Taj Hotel, The Gramercy in DIFC and VIP Room, JW Marriott Marquis Hotel, believes in translating a client's brief into a design that balances functionality, form and purpose.

PRINCIPALS: Fady Chams, Samy Chams, Alia Soufan **KEY PROJECTS:** In Dubai - Cove Beach Club, Jumeirah Beach Hotel; Sass Café, Al Fattan Tower; 40Kong, H Hotel; Eden Beach Club, Rixos Hotel; Cielo Sky Lounge, Dubai Golf; People by Crystal nightclub, Raffles Hotel. **UP NEXT:** Gotha nightclub, Okku Grill & Beach Club and Parq outdoor restaurant. **ON RESTAURANT DESIGN:** "Being striking isn't enough. A good designer should understand the owner's vision and cuisine philosophy and convert them into a harmonious interior." **Dubai and Cannes; prospect-design.com**



BP HQ BY PERKINS+WILL

RMJM

RMJM's designs have won numerous awards and delivered commercial success to scores of clients. 2016 marks the 60th anniversary of the firm, established in the UK (the Dubai office was founded in 1971). **KEY PROJECTS:** Gate Precinct DIFC, Hyatt Regency Dubai Creek Heights, Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, H Hotel and Office Tower, all in Dubai and Abu Dhabi's Capital Gate and ADNEC Complex. **UP NEXT:** DIFC Gate Avenue, Innovation Hub business park, hotels in Dubai and a major mixed use project in Riyadh.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "Our buildings are considered, realistic and contextual buildings. We take time to understand what our clients want from their project – their aspirations, budget and target audience. We treat every building as a unique opportunity." **30 studios worldwide, including Dubai; rmjm.com**

RAMY BOUTROS

One of the designers featured on the cover of this issue, Ramy Boutros is a true aesthete. In addition to architectural and interior design services, he provides clients with custom furniture and jewellery design as well as curatorial services of rare and collectible art. Ramy believes in realising clients' fantasies with design, whether it's a bank headquarters or an objet d'art, and often balances period references with modern elements. **UP NEXT:** The fit-out of a superyacht in 1940s style, and the interiors of the Jean Nouvel-designed Landmark Hotel in downtown Beirut. **Beirut; ramyboutros.com**

CLAUDE MISSIR

Started almost two decades ago, Claude Missir's firm handles projects in Europe and the Middle East, from luxury and boutique hotels to commercial spaces and yachts. The designer, who appears on the cover of this issue, has a signature functional, fun and innovative aesthetic stamped across all of his work. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Kempinski hotel in Aqaba and a string of cafés and restaurants in Beirut. **UP NEXT:** Residential apartments in London, Paris and Beirut. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "To deliver a supplement of soul and ingenuity to each of our projects." **Beirut; claudemissir.com**

ANARCHITECT

With over a decade of experience working in Europe and the Middle East, British architect Jonathan Ashmore (featured on the cover of this issue) founded Anarchitect in 2013. The award-winning architecture and interior design practice creates architecture at diverse scales of design with superlative craft, detail and materiality. **RECENT WORKS:** Home-grown brands such as No57 Café in Abu Dhabi. **UP NEXT:** A boutique hotel in the UAE and a luxury spa by a globally recognised brand making its debut in the region. **Dubai; anarchitect.com**

PERKINS+WILL

Since 1935, Perkins+Will has reimagined how space can be used to foster stronger ties between communities, nature and the built environment. The firm employs 1,900 architects and design professionals, of which 96 are based in Dubai. Steven Charlton is managing director of the Middle East region, while principal design director Diane Thorsen is featured on our cover. **KEY PROJECTS:** Refurbishing the lobby, business lounges and presidential suites in Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel in Dubai, interior design of the LinkedIn Corporation in Dubai and the Diplomatic Quarter Hotel in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. **UP NEXT:** The twin tower residential development BLVD Heights, Downtown Dubai. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "We believe that design has the power to positively transform people and the planet". **23 offices worldwide, including Dubai; perkinswill.com**

HBA

One of the world's leading hospitality interior design firms, HBA (Hirsch Bedner Associates) employs more than 1,800 designers around the globe. David Tkint, featured on the cover of this issue, leads the Dubai office. HBA's project experience spans hotels, restaurants, spas, casinos and residences, and specialisations – including interior design, architecture, graphic design and art, among others. **KEY PROJECTS:** The St. Regis and Four Seasons Abu Dhabi, Raffles Istanbul and Jakarta, and Grand Hyatt Dubai. **UP NEXT:** The new Hilton Curio Qatar and Kempinski Beirut. **20 offices worldwide, including Dubai; www.hba.com**





RESIDENCE BY ZEN INTERIORS



WAJIH NAKKASH

ZEN INTERIORS

Husband-and-wife team Merete Broen and Patrick van Ijzendoorn established Zen Interiors in 2003 and have designed over 1,600 residences since then. The firm has its own furniture line in its signature well-travelled style. **KEY PROJECTS:** A villa just outside of Nairobi, which won “Best-Designed Villa in the World” at the International Property Awards, a penthouse in La Reve and a villa on The Palm, which also have won awards. **Dubai; zeninteriors.net**

BISHOP DESIGN

Founded by Paul and Ellen Bishop in 2004, Bishop Design has an impressive list of projects. While Paul manages the hospitality, retail and commercial projects, Ellen has recently opened a new division dedicated to the residential sector. Partners in business and life, Paul and Ellen use

state-of-the-art materials and products, incorporating bespoke custom-made pieces to design contemporary and sophisticated spaces. **RECENT PROJECTS:** KOI Restaurant & Lounge in Abu Dhabi and La Serre Bistro & Boulangerie in Dubai. **Dubai; bishopdesignme.com**

CREATIVE CLINIC

Founded in 2010 by Ceebo Shah and Khaled Sharan, turnkey design firm Creative Clinic has evolved into the go-to designers for nightlife and hospitality design in the Middle East. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** Never be mundane. **BEST KNOWN FOR:** The Act and Blue Marlin Ibiza, Dubai; Illusion, Doha. **UP NEXT:** An uber cool nightclub in Dubai. **Dubai; creativeclinic.ae**

NAKKASH

Since 1983, Nakkash - now a father, daughter and son enterprise - has been bringing contemporary interiors and bespoke furniture to a well-heeled (and sometimes royal) clientele. The interior design consultancy services the GCC, Africa and Europe. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Meydan Racecourse, Nassimi beach and Roberto's Restaurant. **UP NEXT:** Burj Al Arab and various developments by Emaar. **MISSION:** “To add a distinctive touch of elegance to every design situation and refine the lifestyle of our clients.” **Dubai; nakkashgallery.com**

VIKTOR UDZENIJA

Architect Viktor Udzenija worked with Foster + Partners and delivered Index tower in DIFC, Dubai, before moving on to establish his eponymous practice in 2013. **KEY PROJECTS:** Index tower penthouse, Dubai Marina penthouse, Jumeirah private residence, Skai Holdings HQ **UP NEXT:** Mamzar Towers, Dubai, private residence on Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, penthouse in the Index tower. **Dubai; viktorudzenija.com**

KHAMMASH ARCHITECTS

Founder Ammar Khammash, also a renowned watercolour artist, is a champion of sustainable practices and natural materials. Since being set

ROYAL ACADEMY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION



up in 1994, Khammash Architects has completed projects all over the Middle East. **DESIGN APPROACH:** “Our methodology encompasses diverse fields – history, geology, archeology, ecology, ethnography, botany and socio-economics.” **KEY PROJECTS:** Feynan Ecolodge hotel, Royal Academy for Nature Conservation, Ajloun, Jordan (shortlisted for the 2016 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture). **UP NEXT:** HBTF Club House, Wadi Mujib Visitor Centre, Wadi Hidan Visitor Centre. **Amman; khammash.com**

LW DESIGN

It is nearly impossible to have lived in Dubai without visiting one of LW Design's projects such as Raffles Hotel, Grosvenor House, Vida Hotel or the Arabian Ranches Polo Club. Ongoing projects all over the globe demonstrate the firm's keen understanding of design, cultural context and market. **UP NEXT:** UAE embassies in Kabul, Afghanistan and Rabat, Morocco and the Raffles Hotel in Shenzhen, China, opening 2017. **Dubai, Hong Kong, Sao Paulo and London; lw.co**

DADA & ASSOCIATES

Under the watch of Nabil Dada, the brand has evolved from a small contemporary furniture gallery in Sanayeh, Lebanon, to one of the region's foremost design firms; with almost 40 years of experience and 200 projects in Lebanon, the Middle East and Europe under their belt. **KEY PROJECTS:** Mohammed Al Amine Mosque, Beirut and the Kempinski Hotel on Jordan's Dead Sea. **Beirut; dada-associates.com**

NABIL GHOLAM ARCHITECTS

With offices in Beirut and Seville, Spain, Nabil Gholam Architects is a multidisciplinary practice that offers urban, architectural and interior design services in addition to product and furniture design. The firm has distinguished itself as a leader in integrating the broader social and environmental impact of its projects. **KEY PROJECTS:** The Skygate Tower, located in the Achrafieh neighbourhood of Beirut, the building showcases sweeping views across the city from its vertiginous vantage. In 2015, it earned a prestigious LEED Gold certification for the Iran Oxy Engineering Complex at the American University of Beirut. **Beirut; nabilgholam.com**

H2R DESIGNS

Fun, functional and collaborative best describes the work of H2R Designs. Founded in London in 2012 by brothers, Hasan and Husain Roomi, along with Jacqui Shaddock, the firm expanded to Dubai, focusing on F&B, and making a name for itself with the Tom & Serg cafe in Dubai.

RECENT PROJECTS: Dining venues – The Sum of Us, Paperfig, byParkers, Copper, The Artisan.

UP NEXT: A hotel and a number of F&B concepts. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "It's not where you take things from – it's where you take them to". Dubai; H2rdesign.com

VSHD

Finding innovative design solutions and blending form, function and aesthetic needs are the main objectives of VSHD. Founded in 2007 by Rania Hamed, the firm has already completed over 20 residential villas in Dubai. VSHD is expanding its boundaries with completed penthouses in London and Cairo. **UP NEXT:** A mansion in Orlando, Florida. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "We believe in a new kind of minimalism with a nonchalant sophistication that is slightly imperfect, yet cool." Dubai; vshd.net

GENSLER

The motto for this architecture, design and planning firm is straightforward yet ambitious: 'Design is the means. The starting points are goals, strategies and expectations, which are transcended to create a new and better reality. Design is transformative.' **KEY PROJECTS:** The Shanghai Tower, The Avenues in Kuwait City and The Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Residences, Dubai. **UP NEXT:** Msheireb Downtown Doha, a 31-hectare mixed-use project designed to achieve LEED Gold standards; a 300-metre high landmark tower within King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. **46 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi and Dubai;** gensler.com

WOODS BAGOT

With a team of over 1,000 experts working across Australia, Europe, North America and the Middle East, the architecture firm has been based in Dubai for more than 15 years. **UP NEXT:** Al Jada master plan, Sharjah, a 251-hectare mixed use development. In Abu Dhabi, Shams Marina will ensure pedestrian connectivity between hotels, residential units and boutiques. **KEY PROJECTS:** The 32,000-square metre IRENA Headquarters, Abu Dhabi, and the first phase of Dubai Design District, part of a wider plan for Expo 2020. **17 offices worldwide, including Dubai;** woodsbagot.com

KART DESIGN

Mustafa Khamash's 11-year-old interior design practice has been privy to the highest levels of



HAKKASAN BY WOODS BAGOT



OUTLET VILLAGE MALL BY U+A

government assignments in the UAE. His VIP clientele regard him as a trusted partner, which is why they return. With an understanding for the region's inclination towards chic opulence, and the importance of an environment in the overall success of an organisation's culture and bottom line, Kart Design is dedicated to creating a lasting impact within spaces. **KEY PROJECTS:** The Executive Office, the Prime Minister's Office, both in Emirates Towers, and the Ministry of Cabinet affairs. Dubai; kartdesign.net

U+A

Founded in 2007, and led by principals Pedram Rad and Martin Dufresne, this firm has built prestigious projects in Dubai and the region. Powered by global knowledge and driven by local expertise, the team of design specialists adopts a collaborative approach to provide the best progressive build solution for hotels, hospitality, residential, mixed-use, multi-storey buildings and commercial developments. **KEY PROJECTS:** DFWAC CEO Office, Outlet Village Mall, ICCA. **UP NEXT:** DPG Business Bay Parks, Deyaar Midtown, Jeddah Corniche. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "Setting standards to meet those of international levels within viable creativity is the key philosophy that drives our thought

processes." Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Toronto; ua-architects.com

YAFAWI DESIGN

His eclectic style with boldly coloured accents has taken Beirut-based Wissam Yafawi to London, Paris, Geneva and Forte Dei Marmi, Italy to cater to high-end clients who seek a unique edge in their interiors. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "Two years ago I would have told you less is more, but now I believe more is more, if you know how to do it. Each new project is a new challenge. The minimalist look is too easy, the real challenge is in doing more." Beirut; yafawidesign.com

AGI ARCHITECTS

With a noticeable international character and a multidisciplinary focus, this firm strives to create environments that add value through imaginative design, materials and construction and technology-aided solutions. Founded in 2006 by Harvard alumnus Nasser Bader Abulhassan, the firm stresses research and innovation. **RECENT PROJECTS:** The Hisham A. Alsager Cardiac Centre was designed to re-imagine the rehabilitation centre as a positive space and a hub for social activity. Kuwait City, Kuwait; Madrid, Spain; agi-architects.com