

la femme

STYLE, FASHION, ELEGANCE

CHANEL
& HAUTE
COUTURE
A WARDROBE FOR
THE WORLD'S ELITE

FARIDA
KHELFA
FASHION'S REAL-LIFE
RAGS-TO-RICHES STORY

AMBER
VALLETTA
THE REBEL SUPERMODEL

THE
NEW
Spring
Style
FIERCE, FEMININE,
FASHIONABLE



my travels



MARIE LAURENT WILFRED

As the founder of her own **INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE FIRM**, Marie Laurent Wilfred creates stunning spaces inspired by the world around her and her **LOVE OF TRAVEL**. She has lived in St Tropez, Switzerland and West Africa, and now lives in Dubai.

Marie Laurent is a French interior architect who graduated from the American University in Dubai. She is a board member of its Architecture and Design programme and has won numerous awards. Her architectural practice, Marie Laurent Architecture, was founded in 2012. Among her projects here, with her signature minimalistic, environmentally friendly and clean design, are Comptoir 102, and Sprungli Boutique and Café. She is also sought-after for her interior work for residential homes, with her much-admired aesthetic of peace and serenity.

"Architecture should be beautiful, should be true, should be simple and should be safe. Fashion is irrelevant, the search for talent and functionality is adamant," says Marie Laurent. For her, travel is synonymous with both vacation time and relaxation, but also as a way to ensure her creativity is recharged.

I have no one particular favourite holiday. I've loved each one of them for what they have brought me. I'm lucky to have had the holidays that I have had, and I always

take the best of each one home with me. Scenery, history, people, food, traditions... it is a pleasure to keep discovering.

I'm a real foodie and I discover places through their cuisines. It is an approach of mine and my husband's that connects us instantly to the local people. I usually get a feel for a place through the first restaurant I go to eat. I can then start to understand the habits and way of living of the local population and the design elements that evolve around this experience.

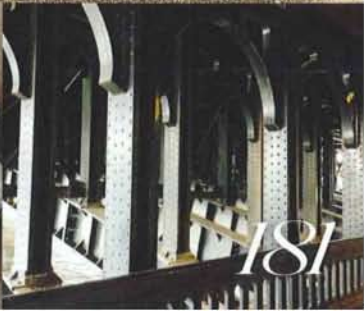
It is important to travel regularly. For me, it is a way to get new inspiration and creativity; also to step back from the day-to-day work. In a city as strong and active as Dubai, we can be easily overwhelmed by the activity and ongoing projects. Travelling to another country allows you to really switch off and adapt to a different rhythm that then gives you energy to come back to Dubai, with fresh eyes on what's happening somewhere else.

It's imperative for me to keep updated with design and different ways of living. ▶





Each country has its own unique rhythm, says Marie Laurent. "It always comes back to my mind when I design any given project." Most recently, she is exploring an affinity between Tokyo's artistic traditions and Zen-like urban planning, and her latest projects.

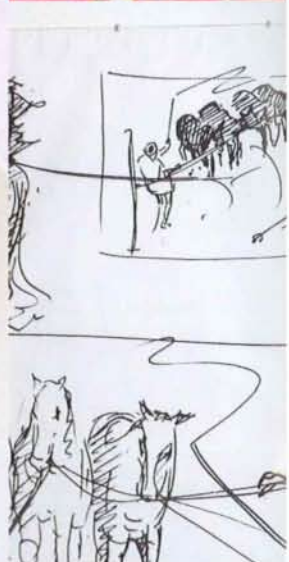
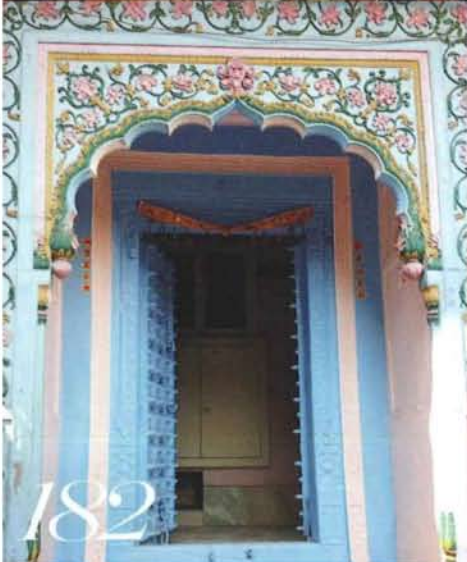


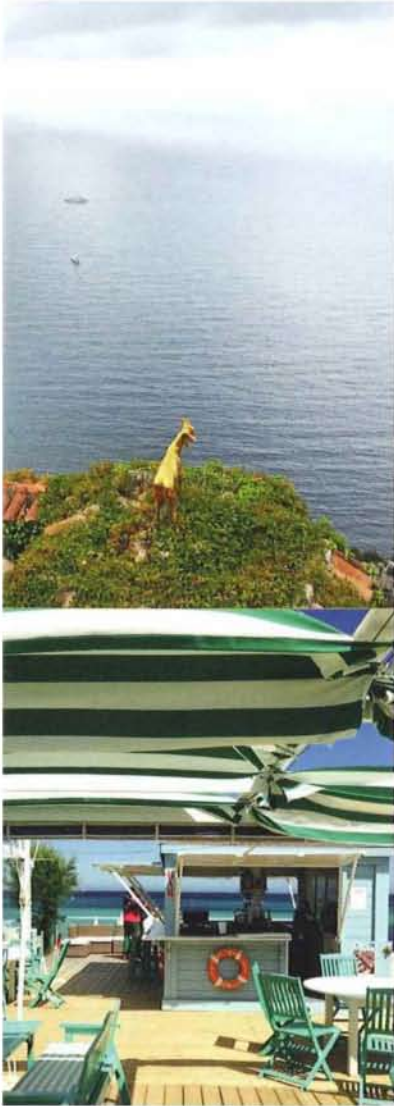
my travels

“YOU CAN BE AT A PLAZA IN VENICE, A BEACH IN SEYCHELLES, OR IN A PUB IN LONDON AND LOOK AT THE LIFE AROUND YOU AND BE ENDLESSLY INSPIRED.”



A passionate explorer with an authentic wanderlust, Marie Laurent's seeks out a connection to the people and culture on her travels; food and its local culture is one such means of understanding her latest destination.





► With many of my clients being well travelled themselves, I need to make sure I relate to what they are talking about and bring them the most unique ideas.

Every country has its particular rhythm, lifestyle and approach to everyday activities. This always springs to mind when I design a project ; it helps me to understand the end client and present a design that fits their lifestyle.

Inspiring me right now is Tokyo, its organisation, architecture, urban planning and cleanliness of such a dense city is phenomenal. The country manages to be both meticulous in attention to details and at the same time, wreak creativity and artistic expression from the young generation, seen in neighbourhoods like Shibuya. Dressing up becomes an art, very eclectic with the contrast of tradition and the will to be unique was very strong and extremely interesting. I loved the politeness and interaction with people that seems so proper. Coming home from Japan, I went straight back to my drawing boards inspired for the next project.

My most recent holiday was to Switzerland where I went to school and lived for few years. I seek out new places, but if I do revisit the same place, there is always a new discovery to make. This time, when we went skiing, we saw a stunning landscape in the mountains. All the trees were full of snow and everywhere you looked, it was endlessly white. We design a lot of white interiors, as I think that it best reflects natural light. Being in a white landscape gave me a strong feeling of freedom. This is what we aim for in our designs.

At the end of a car rally, after a long drive through more than eight countries in Europe, my husband and I drove to Portofino for a night. We discovered a small hotel at the entrance of a tiny village. Built on the mountains, the window opened out onto a terrace with an amazing view. And the figs and mozzarella with olive oil that we ate there was exceptional!

I travel a lot for work and try to take a few more days to enjoy any place I'm going to

as well. It would be shame to go to Italy for a meeting and not take the time to appreciate the city.

I often go back to the South of France where my family is based. It is comforting to go back to a place that you call home. Its spirit, personal memories and objects make it yours. On the beach or looking out at the sea – that is nature's architecture, designed to experience barefoot.

More than any type of holiday, for me it's about the time the day – lunchtime! You've already had a glimpse of the place in the morning, and you stop for a while to discover and celebrate more through their menu. You can be at a plaza in Venice, on a beach in Seychelles, or in a pub in London and look at the life around you to take it all in and be endlessly inspired. Then, you still have the full afternoon and evening to enjoy it.

My ideal holiday attire is like my holiday style, it's about keeping it simple. An exciting new place that bring with it different people, food experiences and then taking the time to appreciate all of it.

This year, I will travel to Europe several times, Paris Maison and Object, Milan Salone , London design fair, Venezia Biennale, Germany. I will certainly take the time to enjoy again Hong Kong , discover more about India and Sri Lanka, and hopefully discover new places and new experience. I would like to be more in touch with the nature. Sustainable architecture is essential and a must today. A safari in Africa, the northern lights in Norway would be great inspirations for our next projects.

I have so many vivid memories of my travels. Cooking in a kitchen in Galle and discovering the rich and vibrant spices we were using, real sushi in Tokyo in a Michelin-starred 'shoebbox' with a very intense chef; going through a village in India on the back of an elephant and bonding with village children; driving from Copenhagen to Monaco through Russia in six days... We would need another holiday to tell all the stories. ■