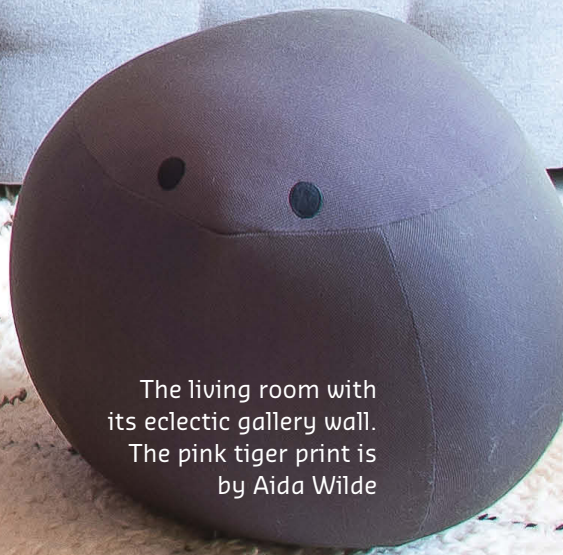
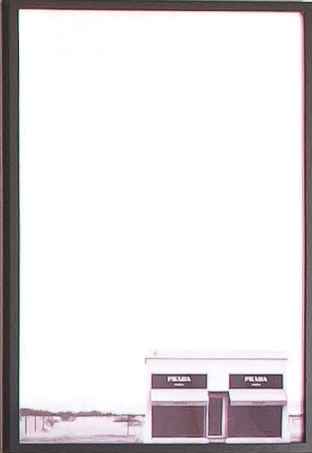


Happy Place

Step inside decor blogger Emilie Jacob's vibrant Dubai home

BY NISHANT D'SILVA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAREN PISSARRA





The living room with its eclectic gallery wall. The pink tiger print is by Aida Wilde



Emilie is partial to pops of neon against a grey background

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Emilie Jacob has been a Dubai resident for 18 months now and in that short time, has already racked up quite an audience for her decor blog, Stella and the Stars.

“I have loved every single minute of it so far,” she tells us. “I grew up in Corsica and the south of France before moving to London as a student. I ended up meeting my husband in London and staying there for 12 years. I am very much a beach girl and Dubai is much closer to what I am used to, in terms of lifestyle.”

You can see how the single-storey house’s L-shape layout, large windows and open space is an easy fit with Emilie’s beachy-with-a-touch-of-Boho style. The location is perfect too for this mum of one, as it is within walking distance of the beach and her daughter’s pre-school.

“The house was being totally gutted and refurbished by the landlords when we first saw it, so I tried to visualise its potential and what I could do with it once ready. The fact that it’s a bungalow made me hesitate at first, as I lived in a three-storey house for years, but actually, it’s been life changing – in a good way. No more



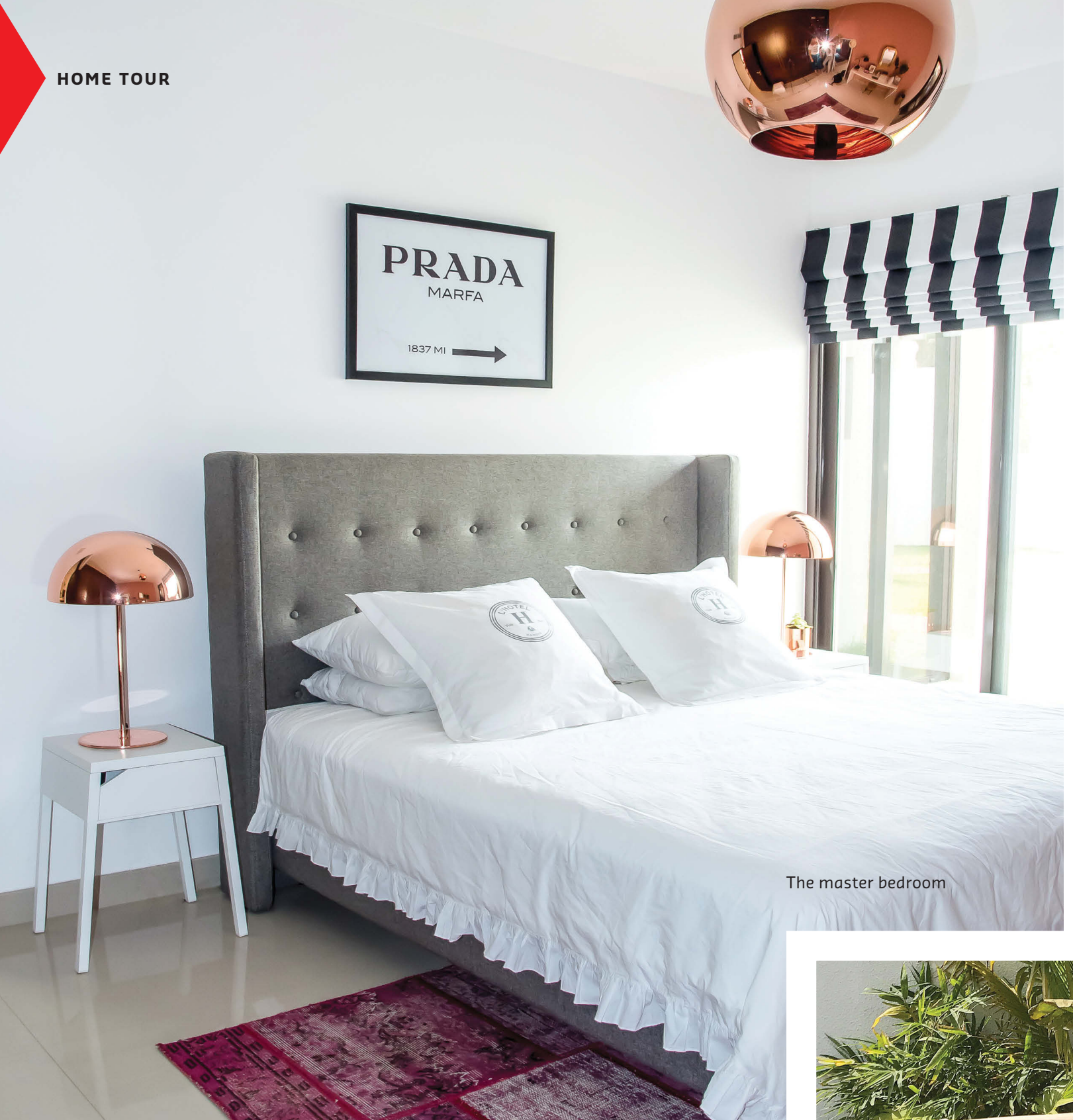
“

A home should feel like a giant hug... And like a collection of things that make you smile when you look at them.”

Emilie Jacob,
Decor blogger



The dining room, furnished largely with IKEA products



The master bedroom

endless going up and down the stairs for me and smaller AC bills! It really ticked all the boxes.”

The decor of the home in its present form took around nine months – “about the same time it takes to make a baby” as Emilie puts it. Sometime after that it finally began to stop feeling like a work in progress.

“Because I breathe interiors, for me nothing is ever final, as I constantly want to revamp rooms. It’s now that I really feel it’s our home, rather than a rental that I am manically trying to fill up with furniture.”

The end result is a home with a chic, tasteful vibe, yet one that feels unpretentious and warm. “A home should feel like a giant hug,” Emilie muses. “And like a collection of things that makes you smile when you look at them. You should be happy in your home and it should reflect your personality.”

Armed with a few Pinterest boards from when she found the house and a rough idea of what she wanted it to eventually look like, Emilie started the decorating project. The first big hurdle was being a Dubai newbie and still



Emilie is bold in her use of colour, as seen in this blush pink wall in the bedroom



The work area, chock full of inspirational images and objects



Pops of neon liven up the garden too

unfamiliar with decor sources. She also had a small budget to work with, post all the expenses of relocation. The decorating thus happened in both, a planned and totally spontaneous way.

“Some of the pieces I really wanted to source were well near impossible to find, so I had to be flexible with what was available. Some stuff I hadn’t even thought about and decided to just go for on a whim. My husband and I have very similar tastes and he doesn’t really like getting involved with the details. He’s quite happy to leave it all to me. I will ask for his opinion on big decisions – like the sofa or master bed – but for the rest, I pretty much have carte blanche. My daughter, Stella chose most of the accessories in her room.”

Her Dubai home carried over some of the unique elements of Emilie’s previous London pad. Emilie describes it as her signature style now. It revolves around grey walls as a blank canvas with bright and colourful accessories



Stella's room, Emilie's second-most favourite spot in the house



that pop in front of it. “I wanted to create something totally different from my pad in London but without realising, I actually created something very similar in style. The only room in the house that’s not grey is our master bedroom. I painted one wall blush pink and the rest is monochrome. Not a pop of neon in sight.”

The living room is Emilie’s happy place in her home. “It’s super colourful, truly reflects my personality and is the most comfortable corner of the house, where we spend the majority of our time. My second-favourite space at home would be my daughter’s bedroom.”

The focal point of the living room is its gallery wall, where Emilie has mixed and matched all sorts of artists and genres. “As you can tell from the selection of pictures, I am partial to an eclectic gallery wall! I adore my limited edition print of the neon pink tiger by the artist Aida Wilde. It was gifted to me by friends who bought it at my favourite gallery in London, Nelly Duff. I have a lovely piece by photographer Pati Robins in the lounge as well, whose style I adore.”

Now that she is well settled in Dubai, does she have any favourite design stores? She proceeds to rattle off a long list. “Nook, The Bowery Company, and D.Tales for Scandi pieces, The Odd Piece for inspiration, The Den and Comptoir 102 for French fabulousness, Home Centre and Pan Emirates for bargains, Zara Home and H&M Home for affordable accessories, Dragonmart for lighting, Tribe and White Moss for natural sustainable pieces, and Caramel & Sun for kids’ decor.”

Any pet design peeves? “Number one would be being afraid of colour and sticking to beige. I truly believe life is too short to live in a neutral house. Symmetric and matchy-matchy decor also makes me cringe. And don’t get me started on tiny floating rugs.”

For aspiring decorators, Emilie’s top tip is to follow your gut. “If something doesn’t make your heart skip a beat, then why should you have it in your home?” ◀



Stella chose most of the accessories for her room