



Pictures: Courtesy Noon Art Hotel

# Where it's always Noon

Combining culture and creativity under one roof, these hotel apartments offer an oasis of art in Al Barsha

By Nichole Nikoliovich

**Special to PW**

**T**he word noon derives numerous translations across different languages. In Arabic, “noon” is considered a beautiful letter that echoes with Islamic heritage, and holds a steep position in Arabian culture. Due to the vast va-

riety of meanings it holds, a lot of thought was invested in the selection of this letter as the name for the Noon Art Boutique Hotel Apartments.

For most visitors, Al Barsha is usually a suburb of Mall of the Emirates. Trendy areas such as Dubai Marina or Downtown tend to attract more commuters and compliments than Al Barsha does. But folded in its narrow alleys sits a hidden gem. Not many people can place the hotel, but the ones who know their Picasso from their Modigliani call it their second home.

The Noon Art hotel creates an experience that promises to stay with guests long after they leave.

The building began as a blank canvas. UAE business man Khalid Abdulla Al Mutawa decided to take his passion for art to another level. He wanted to launch an establishment that provided the best services in the industry. But that is what every hotel promises.

It is fine art that makes Al Mutawa's hotel stand out. Taking inspiration from primitive man who decorated his cave with paintings, Al Mutawa merges fine art with a finer lifestyle. He worked closely with three artists from the Middle East whose art harmonised with the ethics of the hotel. Ali Hassan, a contemporary artist from Qatar, specialised in calligraphy. He was proficient in drawing the letter noon with the most elegant of paint strokes. Tunisia is where the next artist was found — Khaled Bin Slimane, a man who had a passionate affair with ceramics. And finally it was Dr Najat Makki with her globally renowned art forms who also joined the team.

Director and daughter of the hotel's pioneer, Rasha Al Mutawa, says, “A Noon Hotel team was put together for the design, as well as for assisting the three artists. Skin architecture from Kuwait was also introduced into most of the furniture pieces.”

At first glimpse, Noon Art Hotel feels like an art gallery you can call home. The hotel boasts 45 apartments, spanning 12 floors of the building. Guests can take their pick from one-, two- and three-bedroom suites. The hotel also offers a decadent range of recreational facilities.

The journey through Arabian history commences in the foyer. It is ornamented with Islamic references, most of which are synonymous with the letter noon or the 99 names of Allah. The piece de resistance of the entire room is the dramatic sofa, which is crafted from wood that resembles a prehistoric skeleton. In fact, the flamboyant frame is a variation of the letter noon. The other Arabian accents are calligraphic friezes on the walls and a concave cavity in the ceiling. The light shining through illuminates guests' paths with the spirit of noon.

The next floor comprises a restaurant that caters food for the eyes and mouth, serving international cuisine, with a side of local art. The eatery showcases the vibrant work of regional artists. It is also populated with striking furniture displaying bold handwork and hues.

The three floors that follow are inspired by the unique styling of the three artists. Each floor is dedicated to a particular artist, with fragments of their work and sculptures woven into the apartments. Their patterns are carved into the wooden closets, their art is tattooed

onto panes of glass in the kitchen and bathroom and even the carpets are customised. Joseph Haider, General Manager, says, “We're excited to bring this bespoke offering to Dubai. Noon Art Boutique Hotel Apartments is a refreshing concept that will encapsulate the importance of art and culture in this ever-expanding city.

“We have created a beautiful refuge for like-minded people to come together and nurture the artistic heritage of Dubai,” says Haider.

The real estate value of the hotel exceeds Dh100 million due to the subtle details incorporated in the finishing and furnishing. The location is fruitful for business because it's a walking distance from Mall of the Emirates and a brief journey on wheels to the host of galleries in Al Quoz and DIFC. ■

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This section features lesser-known places and events that are delightfully distinct in their own way. It could be a quaint little café or simply a charming lake. If it's got character and brings a smile to your face, it's a hidden gem that will find a place on this page. If you know of a hidden gem, email the Editor at enag@gulfnews.com.

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