

Collector's items

Integrating historic design techniques, Etqaan's furniture is more than just Middle Eastern artefacts



Pictures: Courtesy of Etqaan

✦ Egyptians have been known for their fine woodworking integrating exotic materials such as camel bones, metal and leather. Some of Etqaan's pieces feature mother-of-pearl

By Nichole C. Miranda

Special to PW

Etqaan is an Arabic word that means mastering. And that is exactly what this interior design label has done with its application of craftsmanship and calligraphy in its furniture collection. Etqaan uses a specific style of calligraphy called Kufic to embellish its furniture. The pieces, inspired by the vibrant Coptic era, are sourced from Egypt.

The label is an artistic collaboration between Iwan Crafts, an Egypt-based furniture and artefacts boutique that preserves traditional crafts and heritage, and Hosama, a four-generation family business that dates back to the early 1900s.

Although Iwan Crafts is part of Etqaan's talented in-house design team, the boutique also collaborates with local and international talents. In the past, it joined forces with Argentinian designer and photographer Alberto Pinto and Emirati designer Khalid Shafar.

"For centuries, history has witnessed Egypt become a melting pot of world cultures," says Etqaan's Managing Director, Tamer Zaki. "This has created the perfect habitat for the fusion of different artistic inspirations. During the 11th century, Egyptians excelled in fine woodworking and developed a unique sense of style that was mostly a combination of Coptic, Islamic and European influences that manifested beautifully in the old architecture and furniture designs of the time."

Ancient Egyptian carpentry involved the integration of exotic ingredients such as metal, camel bones and natural leather into wood. Manipulating these materials proved a challenge, and the final products were thus considered coveted collector's item. Continuing the tradition, Etqaan features mother-of-pearl in some of its furniture. This process can occupy six months of a designer's time. In addition to precious pieces like these, Etqaan's range also features



✦ A handcrafted side table

mirrors, ornate chests of drawers, bridal boxes, beds, nightstands, and coffee and side tables. The meticulous artistic procedure ensures none of them are identical.

"Our collection also includes a significant number of fine woodworking and craftsmanship such as ceilings and wall claddings," says Zaki. "These are specified for restoration projects throughout the Middle East, in addition to a large number of private residential and commercial projects."

Etqaan's laborious creative process and the authenticity of its products attract clients from all over the world. The brand's furniture symbolises heritage and flamboyant luxury. It continues its endeavour of spreading Arabian culture by exhibiting its collection at exclusive markets in Los Angeles, London and New York.

Mark your calendar for August because Etqaan will be launching its showroom in Dubai Design District. Until then, its products are displayed at Arte Vivo (Design House, Al Sufouh), Cities boutique (The Galleria Mall, Al Wasl Road) and En Vogue (Jumeirah Beach Road). ■

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Etqaan will launch its own showroom in Dubai Design District in August.

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.