



# Artistic grandeur

CID VISITS THE NEWLY OPENED ST REGIS DUBAI HOTEL TO EXPLORE THE INTERIORS AND EXCLUSIVELY COMMISSIONED ARTWORK, SOLELY DONE BY UAE-BASED ARTISTS



Guests may not choose a hotel for its art, but they would certainly remember their stay if the artwork on display made an impact on them. Whether just a digital graphic, simple calligraphy or a large scale mural, pieces of art can greatly influence the aesthetics of a hotel and the overall guest experience.

The artwork of the St Regis Dubai, located in the hotly anticipated new location of Al Habtoor City, incorporates both the rich history and traditions of the original hotel and is solely done by UAE-based artists.

Louise Duggan, founder of Ophelia Art Consultancy, exclusively commissioned the art pieces for the St Regis Dubai.

She says: “As an art consultancy based in Dubai, for me, it is really important to support the local market, to promote locally-based artists and to give them a chance to show their work. It doesn’t make sense to go, buy and ship artwork from abroad when we have a base of artists here who are fantastic.

“They range from artists who work just in their spare time, creating amazing pieces that they don’t show to anybody, to well-known artists that we use for

**1**  
The St. Regis Bar Dubai features a mural of a vintage Bentley Mulsane done by UAE-based artist Roberto Raad.

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There are elements of polo incorporated into the design and décor, including polo saddles which have been ridden by one of the hotel owners, Mohammed Habtoor.

**3**  
The artwork in J&G Steakhouse is a mix of vintage scenes from New York City and art deco-inspired prints of the Burj Khalifa and Cayan Tower.



rich culture of the Middle East with the mural at the check-in desks being the most important.

“The mural in the lobby captures the region’s natural elements such as the desert, the Bedouin on horseback, the UAE national bird – the falcon, Arabian horses and Saluki dogs,” she says.

Following tradition that each St Regis Bar has a mural inspired by its location, the St Regis Bar Dubai features a mural of a vintage Bentley Mulsanne. The UAE-based artist Roberto Raad did the painting with a lean towards an Art Deco finish.

“The theme of The St Regis Bar is speed and sport. There are elements of polo incorporated into the design and décor, including polo saddles, which have been ridden by one of the hotel owners Mohammed Habtoor.

“Another mural behind the bar in the Champagne Lounge reflects the land and sea with a central panel of pearls as an acknowledgement of the UAE’s pearl-diving culture and heritage. Also, Syrian artist Hamad Alhenawi did the three-piece art on the wall of the Sidra Lounge,” adds the art consultant.

Inspired by culinary master Jean-Georges Vongerichten, J&G Steakhouse features dark-wood furniture with leather upholstery, while the artwork is a mix of vintage scenes from New York City and Art Deco-inspired prints of the Burj Khalifa and Cayan Tower.

“It gives me great pleasure seeing how St Regis’ commitment to art and design is brought to life with outstanding artwork throughout the hotel,” says Faiek El Saadani, hotel manager at St Regis Dubai.

The French beaux-arts architecture and neo-classical interiors of the St Regis Dubai pay homage to the original hotel, which opened in 1904 in New York, on the corner of 55th Street and

some of the feature pieces, like Brazilian Roberto Raad who painted the signature mural in the lobby. Our idea is to promote them and to get their work in a public space. We have all the facilities to do the framing, printing and the stretching of the canvas. From the concept right through to art being on the wall, we take full responsibility, making sure every piece is absolutely perfect.”

Duggan describes the artwork concept as one that reflects “the home of a man who has travelled extensively around the world”.

She says: “The artwork must have some reflection of the interiors. We wanted to create a residential feel but obviously with a commercial aspect. So, the concept was to tell the story, this is someone’s home, this is where they lived and the artwork they’ve collected, but their roots are in the UAE.

“So, originally from the UAE, our traveller spent some of his childhood

in India, before joining the navy where he visited Singapore, China and the Mediterranean. His career then took him to West and East Africa,” says Duggan. “During his travels, he collected artwork and artefacts from all around the world, including photographs from Africa and street art from Asia, but his collection was always based on his love of the UAE. The St Regis Dubai reflects his eclectic collection and his life journey.”

She explains that every piece of art in the hotel has been selected to reflect the

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6 - 7 Every piece of art in the hotel has been selected to reflect the rich culture of the UAE.

### BENTLEY SUITE

After New York and Istanbul, Bentley is continuing its celebrated collaboration with St Regis Hotels & Resorts with a new Bentley Suite making its debut at The St Regis Dubai. The hotel’s one-bedroom suite, inspired by the bespoke craftsmanship of the Bentley Mulsanne, is the first of its kind in the Middle East, offering leather finishes, colours, patterns and wood veneers combined with the glamour of Bentley and elegance of the St Regis brand.



Fifth Avenue. With the opening of the original St Regis, its founder John Jacob Astor IV aimed to create an experience beyond expectation, incorporating understated elegance, attention to detail and a design that evokes the feeling of a residential home.

“We have taken his vision and integrated a selection of touch-points throughout the architecture and design of the St Regis Dubai,” says Saadani. “The Dubai hotel embodies an ideal vision of John Jacob Astor’s formal residence. It is our interpretation of what he would have sought were he to build a home in Dubai today.”

Entering the hotel takes guests back to the 18th century of classical design, accentuated with bespoke elements such as the chandelier comprising 1,200 pieces of hand-cut crystals, which illuminates the grand staircase.

The hotel follows the design genre of a Metropolitan Manor, one of the four discrete-design genres of St Regis, featuring a grand staircase. The staircase in the lobby has 90 steps in total, 45 on each side leading up to mezzanine level.

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The main chandelier comprises 1,200 pieces of hand-cut crystals.

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The staircase in the lobby has 90 steps in total: 45 on each side leading up to mezzanine level.

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Bathrooms feature vintage nickel faucets by Kohler.

Saadani says: “The chandelier itself is an interior landmark, which we are very proud of, and makes a great talking point among guests on their first visit. While the bronze features within the lobby on the staircase railings are eye-catching elements, the marble throughout the lobby and the entire first floor is truly the pièce de résistance, which everyone loves.”

These days, hotel guests don’t just look for a room, they focus on the overall experience at their hotel. Saadani de-



scribes the St Regis guests as discerning world travellers, who enjoy the finer things in life.

“Social, political and business leaders, St Regis guests are experts in the art of living. Less of a nation than of a mind-set, they are members of a global elite, driving change in a fast-changing world, embracing legacy and heritage but indulging in their own tastes and vicissitudes,” he says.

Accommodation comprises 182 guest rooms and 52 suites, including the very first Bentley Suite in the Middle East, soon to be unveiled. Spanning 913 m<sup>2</sup>, the hotel’s two-story top suite is located in the central dome of the building and features a rooftop plunge pool, vast living room with an elegant dining room, study, lounge area and spacious majlis.

Based on the concept of the grandeur of luxury living and classic styling, each room offers a bright and airy ambience.

The signature St Regis beds, chande-

liers, chests and armchairs with intricate detailing and statement wallpapers in subtle beige and off-white colour variations also reflect the neo-classical example of elegance. The rooms feature spacious marble bathrooms with a separate walk-in shower and vintage nickel faucets by Kohler.

Situated on the site of the Metropolitan Hotel, one of Dubai’s oldest landmarks, St Regis Dubai lays within the highly anticipated Al Habtoor City, which will soon feature two other Starwood hotels under the W Hotel and Westin brands, alongside three residential towers and a theatre, located along the upcoming Dubai Water Canal.

“St Regis Hotels are located in the ultimate locations within the world’s most desired destinations. The St Regis Dubai continues this tradition with its prime location on Sheikh Zayed Road in Al Habtoor City, the new heart of Dubai,” concludes Saadani. □