



## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

BLEU is an interior design firm with a unique flair for hospitality. As the manager of Bleu, **Rana Nasr** collaborates with a team of passion driven individuals who keep surprising and delighting her. Out of a small Lebanese apartment, which at times doubles as a home, they have taken on some of the most exciting interior design projects for the hospitality industry in the Middle East and Africa.

**What are some of your latest projects executed throughout the region specifically for the hospitality industry?**

We are currently renovating the guestrooms of the Four Seasons Hotel in Beirut. This project has a special meaning for us, as our mentor Pierre-Yves Rochon, is the original designer of the hotel. Before taking on this assignment, we informed him and he, in turn, gave us his blessing.

We also worked with well-reputed chef Maroun Chedid on giving form to his life-long dream of opening his own unique food concept restaurant in the heart of Achrafieh, which will soon be followed by a second branch in KSA. Other projects we are working on include a newly-built Rotana Hotel in Tanzania, a huge exhibition center in the Grand Hyatt, a large part of Le Meridien and a new Marriott courtyard, all in UAE. We also have ongoing projects in Egypt, Seychelles, Oman and Morocco.



**What makes these special?**

How can they be not special? We have put our heart in each one of them! We dream, we work hard, we learn, we take this job and the quality of our deliverables "au-dela" of our own limits. I am a complete fan of this group of people that I keep on pushing every day and who in-turn keep impressing me.

**What are some of the most sought-after trends in your industry and how have you been able to accommodate them?**

As Bob Ramchand, one of the owners of La Petite Maison, once told me, "Ethics and aesthetics are interrelated." Ever since, we came to the realization that if a design is true, then it cannot but be beautiful. What I also learned was that people have a genuine desire

to learn the real story behind the creation of those structures. Whether it is the food, the menu, the chef's dream, a certain context or a location, we always present our design with a narrative, beginning with the words, "Once upon a time." Now, if I had to choose one sought-after trend that I would like to see more often in architecture, it would be the increased incorporation of art. Aside from holding a degree from ESA in Art Management, I also believe that art is an intrinsic part of the beauty of a place/ space; it is part of the original story. A great example to that effect is ArtSy, a restaurant we started working on with Mysk in Muscat. It genuinely looks like an art gallery where food just happens.

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