

Natural Selection

AUSTRALIAN DESIGNER JO ENGLAND IS BRINGING A LAY-BACK, BOHO-CHIC LOOK TO DUBAI. AS OWNHER, HOME STYLISHLY DEMONSTRATES

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life in style TASTEMAKERS

Laid-back, warm and inspiring - Jo England's personality is much like the calm and inviting decor of the Dubai home she shares with her husband, Peter, who works in finance, and their two children, daughter Charlie, 15, and 10-year-old Hattan. The family bought the villa in the leafy Hattan neighborhood of the rapidly growing Middle Eastern city four years ago, and Australian-born England set about transforming the interior into a stylish yet comfortable home. The villa had recently been renovated and included a sleek formal sitting area with large linen-covered sofas, and a cozier bohemian sitting area with slouchy leather sofas and games consoles for the children. "It means we have the best of both worlds," she says. "The electronic gadgets are all in one place, so when we're in the other living area we can talk or read and instead of a television, a striking black-and-white Aboriginal painting is the focal point in the grown-up sitting room. There are several other pieces she has picked up while travelling in an eclectic mix of pieces she has picked up while travelling in several Asian and African countries. "Travel has been a huge part of my life since my teens, and I explored my design style as it opened my eyes to craft traditions from different cultures around the world." Following a career in the advertising industry, England took a 'creative leap' and began developing properties and honing her interior design skills while the family was living in Malaysia.



OPPOSITE: Jo England in her reading nook. The hemp rug is from Australian company Armatopia & Co, which also made her tan tracks. Sustainable practices are at the heart of her style. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** The striking room features a chandelier by the Australian Aboriginal artist Hugué Bourgeois. A South African cane chair (left) and a linen-covered sofa by Tribe. A Malaysian tin cance and a brass candle in the hallway. In the main bathroom, a deep green vintage dresser from Malaysia reminds England of the water in the Maldives.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The pool cabana is a favourite spot for relaxation; the other locations in the house, by New York artist Kristen English-Baker. The bar stools and tables are designed by The Dharma Door and handmade in Bangladesh; the master bedroom has a soothing, tonal colour scheme. The hanging lanterns are from Havaai.

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Her home-town of Byron Bay in Australia is a constant source of inspiration, and England regularly travels to find new pieces for the Tribe collection, which represents her passion for handmade, organic and sustainable goods.

"I love sourcing products, meeting with the artisans and supporting the preservation of timeless skills," she adds. "Ethical trade is the core of my business. It must be good for the environment, the artisan and the community."

England describes the resulting look as 'a little bit bohemian, very global-chic, and above all comfortable'.

In her villa, eclectic pieces sit together beautifully thanks to a palette of natural tones and textures. Fresh bursts of green come from the abundant house plants and vivid paintings of tropical foliage.

"What I love is the story that each piece is meticulously handmade and slightly different to the next," she says. "They all carry a different story - the story of the artisan and the place it was made."

The master bedroom, for example, has a handwoven rug from an Argentinian village paired with hanging lanterns made in rural Malawi and a vintage Chinese dresser.

"At Tribe we have a very specific style that evokes feelings of calm," she says. "I try to create an oasis that reflects each client's personality. My own home is a work in progress but I absolutely love it and I'm very happy with the peace that it brings me as soon as I walk through the front door." □ tribedubai.com

England has turned several run-down Malaysian houses into beautiful light-filled homes, re-planning the spaces with 'plunge pools, indoor trees, floor-to-ceiling windows, vaulted ceilings and sunken TV rooms'.

Working with local artisans and sourcing furnishings that suited the vibe she wanted led her to open the boho-chic store Tribe when she moved to Dubai. As well as selling a mix of socially responsible brands from around the world, she has also developed an own-label collection, and the Tribe team also offers an interior design service. In a city that is known for luxurious, high-glam interiors, Tribe's low-key aesthetic has struck a chord with people seeking something different. A recent commission included a contemporary majlis for a prominent Emirati family. "I saw the opportunity to offer a new point of view," she adds, "that people were searching for something unique - a

