

Home away from home

TO MAKE THIS RENTED APARTMENT FEEL LIKE HOME TO ITS EGYPTIAN EXPATRIATE OWNER, INTERIOR DESIGN JOURNEY BROUGHT THE MAGIC OF THE MIDDLE EAST TO SINGAPORE.



Home

1-bedroom condominium

Floor Area

678 sqft

TEXT REDZMAN RAHMAT

PHOTOGRAPHY WONG WEILIANG

When Shahira Elkady moved to Singapore last year for her job, she rightfully felt a little displaced. Coming from Egypt, the busy professional struggled to find her place in this bustling city. She quickly moved into this rented private apartment, hoping to settle in and begin her new life in a new country.

Things however, didn't go as she had planned. "I've lived here for four months, but I never felt like I was truly at home," Shahira laments. "It was a bit weird because I wasn't too comfortable in my own place. It was just plain and white and it didn't feel very homely. I didn't feel connected to my place."

It was through a friend's recommendation that Shahira was introduced to interior stylist Priya Naik of Interior Design Journey. Originally from the UK, Priya has an

Left: What makes this stylishly contemporary home unique are the accessories and décor pieces littered throughout the rooms. Glass lanterns, colourful tassels and intricate lattice patterns are just some of the details that encourage a Middle Eastern vibe in this apartment.

Opposite: Taking its cues from lavish summer chalets in Egypt, this apartment combines Middle Eastern craftsmanship with tropical vibes and then updated with a contemporary collection of furniture and accessories. For example, the Persian rug is complemented by the clear glass coffee table, and is further accentuated by the mirrored TV console.



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DESIGN NOTES

Transform a plain corner of the room into a social hotspot. An area rug, a couple of poufs for seats and an ottoman as a table set the scene for casual gatherings.

extensive design portfolio that showcases her knack for giving homes their own unique spin. “I got really excited speaking to Priya because she immediately understood what was missing and what I needed. I told her that I wanted something that feels like home and would reflect my Middle Eastern heritage. It’s really important that she gets where I’m coming from, because we can work well together.”

With the client’s brief and requirements in mind, interior stylist Priya quickly came up with her initial design ideas. “It’s a modern take on the Middle Eastern look,” she describes her work. “This includes Egyptian and Moroccan influences, but all with a contemporary flair. It’s not the traditional look, but a modern take on what you’d expect to see.”

The Middle Eastern influences are evident – a Persian rug, a painting of Sufi dancers, Moroccan poufs and Egyptian glassware are just some examples – but Priya also incorporated modern touches to the interior. This includes the mirrored television console and the clear glass table, both furniture pieces that also alleviate the apartment’s inherent small space problem.

Another update to the Middle Eastern look lies in Priya’s take on colours. “I knew I wanted the home to fit with Shahira’s personality, so it has to be very feminine but not

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In this expansive outdoor deck, designer Priya Naik wanted to encourage a laidback atmosphere for lazy evenings with friends. Outdoor furniture pieces, including a swing set, make for the ideal al fresco dining area.



This balcony proves that an outdoor space doesn't have to look cold and unwelcoming. Here, the addition of cushions, a table runner and a weather-friendly rug helps to soften the look.

too overwhelmingly girly. So there are shades of pinks and purples throughout the apartment to really tie the look together.”

Styling this home only took Priya roughly 20 working hours to complete. According to the interior stylist, working with Shahira was easygoing because they both quickly pinpointed a look and narrowed down their shopping list. Shahira agrees: “One of the best parts was going shopping with Priya. She brought me to several shops, and because we already know what to look for, finding the right furniture and accessories was a breeze.”

Putting the look together was just as smooth, with stylist and homeowner working hand in hand to dress up the home. For Shahira, finishing the styling job came with a welcome sense of relief. With its refreshed design and culturally familiar interiors, Shahira finally feels comfortable in her own home.

“I wanted the home to fit [the homeowner’s] personality, so it has to very feminine but not too overwhelmingly girly. So there are shades of pinks and purples throughout the apartment to really tie the look together.”

– Priya Naik, designer

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DESIGN NOTES

Liven up your balcony by hanging glass baubles from the awning. In this home, pretty pink petals in clear glass bubbles are suspended in mid-air.

Right: As with the rest of the home, pastel shades of pinks and purples abound in the bedroom. There are also dashes of blue in the mix, bringing visual contrast to the space. Although space is tight, adding scatter cushions, pretty pillows and a fluffy throw is all it takes to give this bedroom a burst of personality.

