

# EAST *MIEETS* MIDDLE EAST

A laboratory of ideas and a living testament to her work over the past decade, NADA DEBS' Beirut apartment is, for her, simply "home"

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**B**rought up in Japan, educated in America, and with her heart firmly in Lebanon, Nada Debs, 48, is one the region's most fascinating names in design. So a look around the Beirut home that she inherited from her family in 2000, was destined to be a treat.

Packed with original art, vibrantly contrasting wall coverings and a fabulous array of textiles, from rich lace to antique rugs, this is a space for all seasons and very much at one with its artistic owner's personal aesthetic.

Nada moved into her four-bedroom pad, in the Verdun area of Beirut, 10 years ago and, while she didn't pick the location, she has certainly made her own mark on the space, transforming it from an old family home into a creative and very personal paradise.

"Because the apartment is so rectilinear and the volumes are basic and square, I needed to create concentrated spaces within each of the areas," she tells *Bazaar*. So that's exactly what she did, transforming the space into a home that could accommodate some of the pieces that she is most proud of.

"A lot of my pieces are original prototypes of my work," explains Nada, whose Orient-inspired creations have taken the region, and the world, by storm. She fused these creations from her own collection with vintage finds, to create a look that friends and family simply describe as 'Nada'.

"I chose to use vintage carpets to create spaces and to place my furniture around them. One of the carpets is a circular, 4.5m-diameter Chinese rug that was handed down to me from an uncle who used to live in Shanghai. My other rugs are vintage carpets from Eastern countries and others are rugs that I have cut out in the shape of pebbles," she explains. Nada adds, "I just recently closed off my balcony using my concrete wall tiles and bought a few pieces from London in addition to my prototype pieces. This room has an indoor/outdoor feel as I can open up the windows to make it seem that I'm on a balcony."

But while this apartment is an artistically stimulating space, to Nada it's just home. It's stylish, above all else, but it's also a comfortable hideaway where she receives regular visits from her two teenage sons. "My boys visit most weekends and they end up with a whole quarter of the house to themselves," enthuses Nada, ►

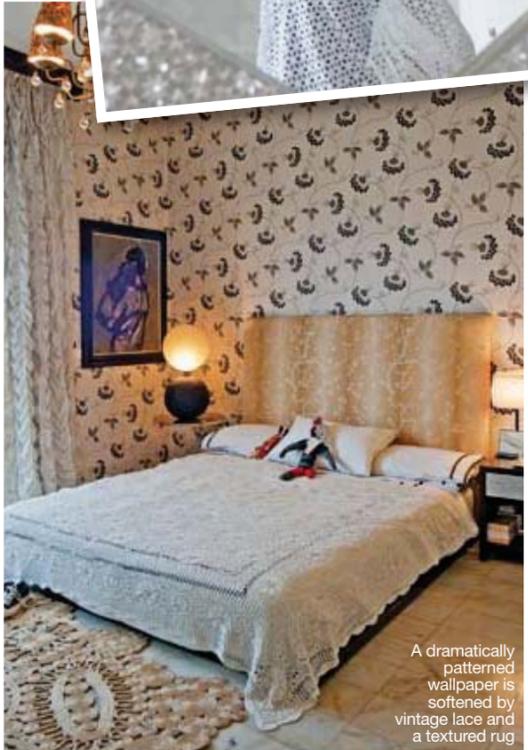
Nada with some of her iconic mother-of-pearl mirrors





Nada's signature pattern is a modern take on traditional Islamic geometry

Nada's love of colour is evident in the red Origami console and Wared cabinet



A dramatically patterned wallpaper is softened by vintage lace and a textured rug



A Japanese painting complements a white Arabesque Moderne armchair. In the foreground a pair of Nada's signature floating stools, handpainted with poems by Dia Batal

before reflecting on the rest of the home that has been a decade in the making.

“My living room has a modular sofa that I created, which goes around my vintage Chinese rug. It’s black, which is a colour I use everywhere to accentuate my interiors. I have also used screens to divide my spaces – four hand-carved mashrabiya panels made of black MDF on one side and plexiglass mashrabiya swivel screens on the other,” explains Nada. She adds, “My dining room, on the other hand, is inspired by the movie *In the Mood for Love* by Wong Kar Wai. I love the vintage feel of things; it makes me feel very cosy. My dining table is a piece of solid flamed mahogany on industrial wheels.” No, we’re not jealous at all.

Upstairs chez Debs is no different. Nada’s bedroom is lined with an eye-popping monochrome patterned wallpaper, a look brought back down to earth by an unusual vintage armchair, lace bedspread and intricately detailed rug.

“My bedroom has black and cream foliage wallpaper that can make the eyes go crazy – but it has a vintage feel. My armchair is something I picked up from the street. It’s a stylised classic bergère and a very funny shape, but I love it.”

# “I’M ALWAYS CHANGING AND TRYING NEW LAYOUTS”

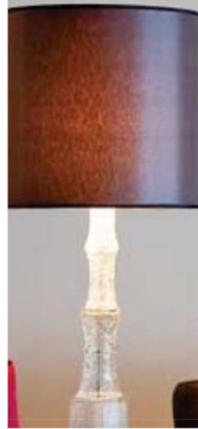
So, is there anything about the apartment that Nada would have done differently, if she could turn back the clock? “Yes, I’m always changing and trying out new layouts. Now I am working on doing a modern Arabesque diwan room in one of my living room spaces. It’s very exciting.” She adds: “Your home should always be comfortable and welcoming. It should reflect you and your lifestyle. It is

okay to get ideas from magazines but you must never forget to personalise your home with things that you love, not things that are fashionable or exact copies from magazines. For me, a home should reflect your past, your present, your personal life, your lifestyle. It’s so important that when someone visits your home, they say: ‘Oh wow, this is YOU!’” We couldn’t agree more, Nada. ■

“I LOVE THE VINTAGE FEEL, IT MAKES ME VERY COSY”



Nada's coffee bean table sits on an antique Chinese rug, between two curved sofas



In the dining room, the deliberately mismatched furniture includes chairs by Bokja

A Nada Debs Bar cabinet in plexiglass and mother-of-pearl sits on the enclosed balcony



Wooden bookends, inspired by calligraphy, house a quirky mix of treasures