

idProperty

A golden hand is shown from the wrist up, reaching towards the top of the frame. The hand is highly reflective, with bright highlights on the fingers and palm. The background is a dark, textured surface covered in intricate, light-colored Arabic calligraphy. The overall composition is vertical and centered.

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SHOW OF HANDS

A restaurant's ambience is usually defined by its furniture, with accessories playing a silent supporting role.

At Loui's, located in Downtown Dubai, that way of thinking is turned on its head. The restaurant serves multiethnic cuisine for a multiethnic clientele, with a side helping of art. Overscaled accessories take centre stage in a setting that gives new meaning to the term 'dinner theatre'.

Two oversized, pillar-like hands seem to hold up the ceiling, creating an art installation in a commercial environment. Done in gold, they are a witty comment on Dubai's taste and appetite for art and food.

The designer, architect Mustafa Khamash, says Loui's is a reflection of Dubai's identity: "extremes, multicultural, multilingual and over-dimensional". He makes a reference to this with a cacophony of sentences scrawled on the ceiling. Food and furniture are drawn from the different regions of Asia, Italy and Lebanon.

As Khamash explains: "With Loui's, I wanted to start my long-term design project: 'Art over function and space'. It's a concept vision that puts design in pole position and turns the space into an art space, whether it's a private or commercial environment. I wanted to capture Dubai's style, mixing and matching influences from different nations in one space." 

Celebrazioni!

Many candles have been blown out and glasses raised recently to the future of design. The biggest birthday party is set to take place in Milan mid-month as the annual Italian Furniture Fair, *i Saloni*, celebrates its big five-o. Designers, architects and journalists from all corners of the globe are excitedly getting ready to present the future direction of contemporary furniture at the year's most anticipated design event.

Alessi, the Italian family-owned company synonymous with quirky yet functional creations, dominates the list of birthday celebrants following 90 years of designing and manufacturing high quality products.

Matteo Alessi was in Dubai to attend the inauguration of the two-week *Alessi Museum* collection exhibition at Bloomingdale's Home, as well as the opening of the Alessi flagship store in Tavola, Mall of the Emirates (MoE). Guests at the latter, co-hosted by **identity**, were privy to a preview of prototypes of the new spring/summer 2011 Alessi collection.

At the other wing of the mall, Harvey Nichols was given a new façade of cut glass and turquoise, and furnished with limited edition collections for its fifth anniversary in Dubai.

American chains Crate&Barrel and Pottery Barn also joined in the festivities, celebrating their first anniversaries in the city with colourful parties while showing off their new season collections.

Still in MoE, Louis Vuitton launched its first in-store family room, with the unveiling of a children's art collaboration with artist Nadim Karam for the benefit of the START charity. This follows in the trend of private rooms started by Bottega Veneta which allow groups of shoppers to indulge in closed-door retail parties in the comfort of plush private shopping spaces.

Mustafa Khamash of Kart Design, best known for running the Kartell store, continues to host launch parties for the new Loui's restaurant he designed in Downtown Dubai, further enhancing the city's culinary scene.

Mega store IKEA was also part of the celebratory melee as a traditional log, flown in especially from Sweden, was cut to declare open the 33,000 square metre 'Blue box' on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi.

Meanwhile across the Gulf, the growing design fraternity in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, welcomed the opening of the multi-brand interiors showroom Gallery Design with open arms. With two floors and over 4,500 square metres of retail space, the custom-designed, stand-alone store represents some of the best global brands, including Bulthaup, Moroso, Poliform Minotti, Poltrona Frau and many more.

See you at *i Saloni*...

Alessi.



Clockwise from top left: Mustafa Khamash, Matteo Alessi, Chocolates marking Alessi's 90th birthday.



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