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The Faith, designed by Lincoln Kayiwa, can be used as a flower vase, rack or a candelabrum and comes in black, red, white porcelain, glass, gold and silver. www.kayiwa.fi



inside



Muroor revisited

This unpretentious neighbourhood has a lot to offer **hh4**



Different designs

Martin Waller's home furnishings are inspired by his travels **hh12**

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object of desire



Spice chest

What this miniature chest of drawers lacks in design pedigree it more than makes up for in charm.

With its air of rustic simplicity offsetting the bold monochrome colouring, it stands only 37cm high. Its frame is wood and the fronts of the ceramic drawers have been painted by hand so there's no guarantee that every one will be absolutely identical. And that, of course, only adds to the charm.

Since I was very young I have had a fascination with drawers: they immediately start me thinking about what I can put in them. And this little Indian-made chest would lend itself to many purposes.

My first thought was: spices. Imagine, each drawer with its own vivid stash of differently coloured powder or exotically scented seeds. But sadly, given how little I'm cooking these days, they might go stale long before I got through them.

Nevertheless, it would look lovely on my kitchen counter. So, instead, I could use it to store – in immaculately organised order – those elastic bands, bottle stoppers and twisty ties that usually end up being swept into the “kitchen junk” drawer, never to be found when I really need them.

On the other hand, it would be perfect for my home office, to keep those paper clips, thumb tacks, staples and stuff in. And to add a dash of style to the space. (Given that I spend so much time in my office-office, I want my workspace at home to look as different as possible, while still being efficient).

But then a colleague, on seeing the chest, exclaimed, “Oh, that's exactly what I want for storing my jewellery!”

So there you are. Drawers do get you thinking – especially drawers as pretty as these.

● Available from Marina – Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah (Dh275, \$75)

★ Sandra Lane



go home.

From finding your dream house to tips on decorating your living space to the latest in architectural design, the National on Saturday will take you there. Read *House&Home* every week for more ideas and practical advice to help you feel at home in the Emirates.

TheNational
onSaturday

Coming next week: Desert houses – some of the world's best architects have designs on hot-climate living

diary of a househunter A Non

The perfect swarm

Faisal had found a dream apartment for some friends: four bedrooms and four balconies, if you please; in Khalidiya and costing the same as I was, by then, prepared (albeit rather unhappily) to pay for half that space.

So, naturally, I was thrilled when he took on my case. Hope springs eternal.

After several calls on my part (“You do have to chase him,” the friends had said) he finally called one day as I was about to have lunch.

“I have a villa. Can you come now? I pick you up.”

Can geese fly? Forget lunch; of course I could come now.

It was less than two blocks from the office. A good start.

As we drove into a cul-de-sac looking for parking there were more than a dozen people milling about.

Then we got out of the car and there was an almost palpable mania in the air. “Wow, this is a busy

area – what's going on?” I asked Faisal.

“The villa, madam,” he replied.

Huh? I mean, I've been to a lot of Open House days in my time (it's a normal way of selling houses in New Zealand, for instance) but it's always very relaxed and there are never more than two or three other people there at once. As for viewing rentals in London: well, it's all by appointment and you simply wouldn't dream of scheduling more than one person at a time.

No matter – I just wanted to get inside that villa.

The first job was to get through the gate. There were five or six men there, half-blocking the way, most of them texting or talking urgently into their phones. At the front door, more of the same.

Inside, and it became even more surreal: eight people milling about in the living room; five people in the kitchen, all opening and closing the cupboards; another six people on the stairs (one of them actually running); four people in

bedroom one – more opening and closing of cupboards; six people in bedroom two – one of them actually *inside* the wardrobe; five in the ensuite bathroom (now *that* was crowded) half a dozen people on the balcony, peering over the rail, up the walls, checking the view back into the bedroom. And then up onto the top floor and roof terrace for more of the same.

The house was teeming – like an ants' nest that someone had poked a stick into.

One way I always know if I would enjoy living somewhere is the feeling that I get when I stand quietly in the space for a moment. Something in the air gives a sense of whether it would be a happy home or not.

All I felt in the air here was mania. And I really couldn't tell you what the rooms were like.

But not to worry; the rent was 60 per cent more than my budget anyway. It seemed that Faisal couldn't magic up anything affordable for me after all.

in brief



DSF calling

You have until Feb 15 to take advantage of the deals being offered at the 40 malls and 6,000 retail outlets taking part in the Dubai Shopping Festival. It is the best time to stock up: Marina is offering charming candlesticks for Dh20 (\$5.40), while The One has items on sale for up to 70 per cent off.

Maison&Objets

Do not try to contact an interior designer next week, you probably won't find one. Most or all of them will have flown to Paris to attend the first ever conjoined Meuble Paris and Maison&Objets trade shows. This is where the biggest design trends, ones that can be seen all year in furnishings, accessories, fabrics and decorative touches, are born. The show started yesterday and ends on Tuesday, featuring 3,460 exhibitors, almost half of them international, their eye-catching and creative displays spread across two exhibition centres. As American-style kitchens are opening up into living spaces at a rate of 10 per cent per year, the focus of this year's show is on the home-fashion kitchen.



Nifty garage

The architect Donald J Berg has designed a nifty expandable home storage centre. His Oakville Garage is big enough to house a car, garden tools and a workbench, with options for shed additions on either side, and pull-down stairs to a full loft. Print out free plans at www.TodaysPlans.com