

Moroccan interiors and Moorish home decor: Style and design

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April 22, 2008 - [PRLog](#) -- the Moroccan home is a palace of the imagination and a poetic harmonizing between man and the natural world. Walls borrow their hues from the earth and desert sand – muted reds and honeyed yellows. Tedelakt, the ancient technique of rendering smooth waxed surfaces using a colored limestone paste and black soap, give walls and floors all the appearance of clay ceramic. Interior structuring takes on organic shapes. Bends and arches complement geometric zellige tiles and curvilinear vases, set with fresh roses from the garden. Floaty, gossamer curtains in place of doors give a pleasing open feeling to the living space, while allowing breezes to circulate freely.

The Moroccan home is a unique blend of African, Berber, and Islamic aesthetics. Plush cushions in richly textured fabrics are set upon carved ebony-stained pine and cedar moucharabi furniture. Casting the afternoon sunlight in abstract patterns are pierced metal and brass lamps standing on tables or hanging overhead. Seating, tables, and accessories throughout the home are patterned and shaped by beautifully crafted hexagonal, octagonal and arched forms. The total effect is a private visual playground and a welcoming museum-like showland that is at once masterful and inviting.

The scents of cedar and roses eddy with the aroma of lamb and apricots. Guests have arrived with a tap-tapping of a brass knocker on a heavy wooden door. The setting sun fires the purple-pink of jasmine and bougainvillea in the garden outside, as Tajine simmers a last few minutes in the oven.

Domestic architecture in Morocco varies greatly according to regional climate and personal wealth. There are the simple stucco constructions of the poorer townsfolk, and there are villas of such magnificence as to lure the wandering soul across several continents for the mere occasion to stand enchanted outside their gates.

In Moroccan homes irrespective of means the blind indented arch is a most charming feature, one whose inspiration is taken directly from the mihrab, or prayer niche constructed on the qibla wall of the mosque. The interior courtyard, or riad, is another characteristic element of Moroccan architecture and of Islamic architecture in general.

Situated most often at the center of the home, the riad is a tool for privacy and practicality. Since often the main door off the street opens onto the courtyard, visitors are directed from the patio into a salon used especially for entertaining – and this without ever passing through other the living areas of the home. The riad allows for plenty of light and needed shade, since the sun's rays and also cooler air can permeate the whole of the dwelling, while at the same time the harsher elements of wind and direct sunlight are kept out.

Interior decor is essential to Islamic architecture. Vaults, cupolas, and arched doorways are principle features which serve both functional and aesthetic purposes. In some village homes, recessed walls and benches set in cement stucco offer simple detail.

More elaborate elements may include geometric and floral motifs carved into wood beams or plaster walls. Ceramic tile, known as zellige, is also used, and may be applied to any and all surfaces, and not limited to walls, floors, roofs, and ceilings. Creative and surprising patterns, molded organic materials, and the intriguing lines of Moroccan structural motifs make the Moroccan home an extraordinary visual playground.

Imagine coming home after a long day's work and slipping into a living room oasis where you're bathed in

soft reds, yellows and oranges while resting on a plush cushion, next to a set of mini palm trees, breathing in the scent of Jasmine incense, listening to light jazz flutes. Selecting Moroccan furniture isn't just about functionality anymore; it's about creating a comfortable habitat where you can relax, de-stress and enjoy your downtime.

Finding the right lighting is the key to creating an ideal atmosphere. As early as 5,000 BC, the Chinese have been building homes in correlation with the sun to provide optimal light, warmth and energy. Historically, Morocco has hosted groups of diverse people from all directions - Phoenicians and Carthaginians from the East, Sub-Saharan Africans from the South, in addition to Romans, Vandals and Andalusians from the North. This Diaspora of culture comes together and can be clearly seen in these colorful Moroccan lamps and lanterns.

What makes Moroccan lamps truly unique is that they're not mass-produced in a sterile factory -- but rather, each shade is made of sheep or goatskin and is then dyed and stretched over a solid iron frame, where it is hand-painted with a needle in brilliant colors, in the decorative tradition of Henna tattoo artistry. Dating back to the Bronze Age, Henna design mimics the Henna plant, which has a plethora of long, thin stalks and tiny blossoms. Much like the tattoos, the lamp designs showcase fluid black lines and shapes, outlined by tiny dots.

Moroccan lamps, varying in shape, size, color and mood offer the opportunity to turn your living room into a stunning art museum. The African Berbers were primarily an agricultural people, so the curved "Berber" floor lamp is painted with a classy, simple style in neutral colors. Tall, slender styles like "The Pharaoh's Light", "Red Sun" or "Orange Magical Arabian Nights" capture one's imagination, while dazzling with dancing patterns, vibrant colors and swaths of vacuous space that instinctively pulls the eyes toward it in wonderment. End table lamps like "African Sun" or "Fez Sun" provide multifunctional use, emanating a soothing glow, while the glass top holds a piece of art, a plant or a tea set for entertaining guests. When you behold a piece like "Ocean Sun," breathing moonlight into the room with its purple hues and oceanic design, you know that this lamp is not just for providing light, but is a piece of art that will compliment other furniture and themes in the room.

Moroccan lanterns made of stained glass resemble the sort of Church decor that pervades the Holy Land. The shapes range from a rounded hot air balloon design, to a diamond-shaped street lantern style and they can be hung from the ceiling or mounted on the wall. Traditionally, the stained glass panes are subtle, soothing colors - an olive green, a periwinkle blue or a hint of gold. Handmade and framed in black wrought iron, Moroccan lanterns can bring that one unforgettable, warm summer night into your home.

Moroccan lamps and Moroccan lanterns will add an air of magic to any room. When paired with Moroccan rugs, plants and other Moroccan furniture, these handmade Moroccan lights really put the finishing touches on a relaxing, unique escape.

For more information on Moroccan interior design, Moorish architecture, arabesque arts and crafts, Moorish lighting, Moroccan furniture, Moroccan homedecor, Moorish wood lattice screens moucharabieh or mashrabieh, please contact:

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