

DESIGN FOR LIVING

# ALTO



ISSUE 05 / SPRING 2014 / £30

*A MOODY, CHIC MEXICAN HOME / TARA BERNERD'S BATTERSEA HIDEAWAY / ROLF SACHS / THE WORLD SHIP  
PORTUGUESE DESIGN / THE JOY OF CLASSIC CARS / BEAUTIFUL LUGGAGE / WHERE TO STAY IN VENICE  
FERRARI'S FF ROAD-TESTED / KENWOOD HOUSE REKINDLED / KELLY HOPPEN / THE ELEGANCE OF SALVAGE*





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'Rain Beau' umbrella might be an easy one, 'Un Raspail, Deux Raspaux', a set of wicker baskets, plays on French grammar: Paris's Boulevard Raspail, home to a well-known organic street market, lies in the 7th arrondissement near Mahdavi's studio, and all French words ending in -ail take -aux in the plural.

The glass 'Don Giovanni' lamp refers to the fictional libertine of European literature (it's 'Don Giovanni', the later Italian incarnation of the character, and not the original 'Don Juan', as a tribute to the glassblowers in Murano who made the prototype). "The lamp's silhouette is almost human and very sensual," says Mahdavi. "It was originally designed with another lamp called 'Casanova' - it's the comeback of the seducers!"

All this storytelling might stem from Mahdavi's early aspirations to become a filmmaker, despite her design-oriented education. She studied architecture at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris and then went to art school in New York to learn about graphic, furniture and industrial design. Gradually, the desire to tell stories through film had transferred to spaces and objects.

There's a ubiquity to Mahdavi's new collection that reflects her childhood and style. She was born in Iran to a Persian father and Egyptian-English mother before spending time in a further 10 countries. "My fascination >

*"THIS COLLECTION IS ABOUT BREAKING DOWN INDOOR-OUTDOOR BARRIERS. IT CAN BE USED IN TOWN, IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OR ON THE BEACH"*

*ABOVE: 'Bikini' cushions in printed silk sum up a carefree summer day*

*ABOVE LEFT: The sensual shape of this glass lamp inspired its name - 'Don Giovanni', after the fictional libertine*

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DESIGN



ORIGON BRUNDTU

for colour comes from childhood memories when we lived for a time in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where everything seemed to be in Technicolor," she says. "My signature mix and match of patterns probably comes from my family background and periods of childhood spent in Iran and Egypt; and my love of elegance comes from the many years I have been living in France, the country of *art de vivre*."

The designer's glazed ceramic 'Landscapes' vases embody the international flavour of her work: they are the result of a collaboration with Beirut's Carwan Gallery, the first Middle Eastern gallery to show at Design Miami's Swiss show in Basel. The project uses techniques from both East and West to produce something fun and relaxed. Vases of varying size, shape and colour can stand alone or fit together like an irregular jigsaw. It's like child's play for homeware - and that sits fine with Mahdavi. "We should always be serious about what we do, but not take ourselves too seriously," she says. ■

www.india-mahdavi.com

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 SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT  
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ABOVE: 'Landscapes' is a series of interlocking vases, each one a different size, shape and colour

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