

THE RULE BREAKER

Spanish interior designer **Lorenzo Castillo**'s approach might be unconventional but he knows how to mix old and new

Interview: **Lucy Land**

From the King of Spain to the King of Jordan, Lorenzo Castillo's client list reads like a who's who. This year alone, he's working on numerous hotels, including Shangri-La Hotels (in Hong Kong and Singapore); Cartier boutiques; and his first book as well as the homes of his private clients. We meet one of Spain's best-dressed men (so says *GQ España*) at The Odd Piece, during the launch of his design collaboration with The Rug Company...

Tell us about your new designs for The Rug Company...

I wanted the rugs to be very useable so you can use the same rug in a very classic space with antiques and chandeliers or in a contemporary one with very white walls and neutral, white furniture.

Where do you get your inspiration for the designs?

Architecture. I like Renaissance, Baroque, 16th and 17th-century Spanish architecture because I think buildings from these periods look very modern. For example, the geometric pattern in my designs comes from the marble floors in 17th century interiors. I live in the centre of Madrid and I like to walk around where the façades are full of details – amazing. They inspire my wallpaper and my fabric designs.

And what inspires your choice of colour?

The location is very important. But I don't like the rule that you have to use blue and white in a summerhouse. I'm currently working on a big project in the Dominican Republic, but it won't have the typical coral stone and blue-and-white stripes of most homes there. The light is very strong in the Dominican Republic so I want to use strong, warm colours. Similarly, why use green in a country house when you're already surrounded by greenery? Why not orange, which is warm, cosy and beautiful?

What interiors advice would you give to those of us living in new buildings in the UAE?

If you have a big villa with a garden, then you don't have a problem – you can do whatever you like and include lots of richness. However, for those living in newly built apartments, especially with low ceilings, I would suggest using neutral colours and styles to create a calm space. Add a few select antique pieces, and some large-scale modern art – that's a fresh and beautiful mix.



What are your style rules?

I would like to give you a magic recipe but there really aren't any hard-and-fast rules. My advice would be to follow your instinct. You can mix as many fabrics and patterns as you wish but I would recommend you stick to one palette of colours. If you're using green and white, for example, just use green and white – don't mix that palette with red or with other colours. And in terms of furniture, styles, you can mix whatever you want but always follow the idea of harmony or balance – that's very important.

What's your favourite design era?

I like Spanish decorative arts from the 17th century to the 20th-century. I like the very masculine style – furniture with simple lines – of the 17th-century; but I also like the 18th-century, especially French and Swedish design, which is more feminine and works well for the countryside. I also really love mid-century design because it's perfect for refreshing and updating every interior. I really enjoy mixing modern and classic.

What tips would you give to someone who usually sticks to one style?

I think it's boring to stick to one style. When you're using just one style, you are very strict and focused on one thing only, which is limiting. While studying for my degree in history of art I fell in love with different things, from Egyptian and Roman works to 20th century art, including Picasso. These reflect the riches of life. Why focus on one thing when you can be open to the entire world?

How important are rugs to an interior?

Interiors are like a box formed by the ceiling, walls and the rugs. The rugs, especially if you have a plain floor such as a white marble floor, are as important as the ceiling or the walls because they unify the space.

What is the most important thing to get right in a home?

Comfort. Which is even more important than aesthetics. But I always tell my clients that you can have both. Why have comfort without aesthetics?

Shop for Lorenzo Castillo's collection of rug designs at therugcompany.com

