



## **Elegance in simplicity**

**By Piero Lissoni**

**The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah**, located in the Emirate of Ajman, was designed by the famous Italian architect Piero Lissoni, as a modern architectural masterpiece that is the perfect destination for the ultimate luxury design-inspired seaside holiday.

Located a mere 40-minute drive from bustling Dubai, the luxurious The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah is a study in inventive, innovative, and intelligent aesthetics. The resort brings together tradition and innovation, as well as past and present, using an original architectural language and an elementary, pure, poetic aesthetic forms that are inspired by a modern approach to oriental design.

As designed by Lissoni, the project appears simple but is actually complex. Every element was studied in every detail in order to be sustainable as well respectful to the surrounding area and the natural environment. Lissoni's inspiration came from the unique atmosphere of this magical place. The design is elegant all the while maintaining a profound sensitivity towards the natural beauty of the area and capturing the perfumes of the Arabian Gulf blended with those of a tropical mangrove forest.

The interior design is based on sophisticated simplicity and openness. The use of large, transparent openings and slatted wood partitions allow the eye to travel freely to the distant horizon. In true Italian style, the modern architecture blends multiple influences such as the perfumes of the Orient, the flavours of India, and spices arriving from the Occident, Africa, and China. As an architect and a designer, Lissoni personally curated all objects, rugs, photographs, and sofas, to ensure that there was no intrusive furniture, so as not to interrupt the sense of seamless transparency between the rooms and the surrounding landscape. Lissoni has a penchant for hybridisation, the perfection of the imperfect, and unlikely combinations of textures and colours that are not too controlled. He calls this a fondness for a "genuine sense of alchemy" where many things appear to happen by chance.

The resort has been conceived in pure white, with touches of teal, chartreuse, blue, green, and red. Patterned wall tiles in the rooms and dining areas add a playful touch to the elegant design. The resort is divided into three white platform structures that sit parallel to the ocean. Each building was carefully positioned in accordance with the

purpose it is meant to serve. The platforms rise from the oceanfront and the height of the buildings increases with each platform, which preserves uninterrupted views of the ocean from all areas of the resort.

The main hotel consists of a set of separate buildings connected by light walkways, punctuated by shallow water pools extending over the inner courtyard that is also the home to the main restaurant. The cladding of the outer wood panels complements the wooden furnishings inside, and creates an enchanting play of light and shadow as the sun sets and day gives way to night.

The Villas at The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah, are a key element to the resort's structure and have been designed to merge seamlessly with the larger design aesthetic. The three-bedroom villas consist of interconnected buildings that are covered in pristine white stucco and contain a combination of protected terraces and large openings facing the ocean, all offering spectacular views. The two-bedroom villas are formed by deep cantilevering slabs that float over the ground floor to create a series of shaded internal as well as external living areas. Elegant sliding wood panels form a gentle barrier between the interiors and the exterior gardens.

The Oberoi Spa has been conceived as a surprise element – a private and secluded universe waiting to be discovered. Inspired by the layout of an ancient Medina, it comprises several small buildings placed closely together, each offering a specific treatment. The sleek open-air walkways and double-height volumes surrounding them add an emblematic lightness and transparency. The overall mood is inspired by a contemporary approach to traditional oriental architecture.