

Colour master

Abdullah Al Atrash explains how his family has maintained MAS Paint's reputation for service and quality for 30 years.

TEXT: JOANNE MOLINA



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Nurturing and sustaining a small business is more difficult than ever in today's fluid marketplace. MAS Paints, a family-owned business, has spent three decades forging an identity that's based on creating personal relationships with consumers and designers – and crafting an ethical platform that reflects its commitment to the region.

From working one-on-one with homeowners to working on the Emirates Palace hotel, the Astana Opera House in Kazakhstan and numerous private projects for royal families, Abdullah Al Atrash – the owner and driving force behind MAS – has met success using a leadership style and vision that reinforce his family's core beliefs.

"Our vision is to set MAS as the benchmark, by confidently maintaining quality and constantly innovating through our current and new products. With our growing range of products, we are able to meet the specific demands of our clients – and we pride ourselves on embracing a long-lasting and mutual co-operation with our customers," says Al Atrash.

His management philosophy comes from very personal roots. "As an Italian, I come from a very rich culture in art and design, and I grew up surrounded by the beauty of Italian architecture," he explains.

It also comes from his love of Dubai. "I consider myself a citizen of the world and I am inspired in Dubai by the many people from so many different places. People from all over the world have met in Dubai and created a melting pot of culture, religions, languages and art; I learn new things daily, and this is where my inspiration comes from," he says.

But it's the company's public commitment to ethics and values that's a rare but welcome distinction.

"Within the company, we work hard to ensure that we make our products environmentally friendly. I am a father of two boys and I want them to be able to enjoy the beauty of the world that I grew up with. I am a very passionate person. To see the hardships around the world really makes me sad. I try to involve MAS in giving back to the community, as I have been very fortunate to be in a position where my family and our company can help," explains Al Atrash.

"As my father is Syrian we do a lot for the Syrian refugees, helping in the little ways we can. We are also sponsors of the Surge School Water Program here in Dubai and the end-of-year gala. I think it is so important not to be pulled into the corporate machine and the greed that has taken over parts of our lives."

And while his expertise lies in what he studied – economics and business – his ability to hire the best people in the field has surrounded him with creative inspiration.

"I have no design experience but from working alongside Marwan Khorzom – the best chemist in the region – and our Director of Design, Renae Hewitt, I have come to appreciate the importance of colour in everyday life and the impact it has on us," says Al Atrash. "Being at MAS, I have developed an appreciation for colours, and the depth of consideration that is put into incorporating colours and textures into our lifestyle and environment. Seeing this has allowed my creativity to evolve," he muses.

This, combined with his intuitive sense of how colour connects cultures – and people – gives MAS its special voice.

"The psychological effects of colour and its effect on emotions have been scientifically researched. Colour is everywhere. It can also represent feeling, emotion and communication. I have seen how colour can transform a space, how textures can enhance your mood," he states. "Colour can create moods and improve your mental well-being. Don't shy away from colour because of trends. Colour is a deeply personal thing. What colours make you feel? Rely on your instincts and play around with colours," he suggests.

This summer, Al Atrash predicts we will see a reflection of the beautiful pastel colours of the season with some bright bursts, which are available in the brand's *Mascryl* and *Mastic Royal* range of everyday acrylic and anti-bacterial paints, which are available in more than 2000 colours.

But his thoughts are on the future. "We're constantly innovating and improving our technology, our formulas and our products – and, of course, [we want] to go into new markets, especially Africa and Southeast Asia. I want to have a company with not only amazing products and service, but also one that pushes the boundaries of research and development," he says. **■**