

# Developers bring in top homeware brands and raise the bar on luxury homes

By: Kavita Daswani



*One of 12 homes in Bottega Veneta's Eisenbahn 1 development in Berlin.*

For the one per cent, their second, third or fifth homes in London, Los Angeles or New York are interchangeable - another palatial flat with Four Seasons-level amenities.

But bring in a luxury fashion brand and suddenly a property looks a lot more interesting, as developers are realising.

These designer-developer alliances are popping up everywhere: under construction in Dubai are the Palazzo Versace Residences, opulent homes where the furniture is overstuffed and framed in gold. At the other end of the design spectrum is the 20 Pine Collection in New York, whose interiors were done in minimalist cool by Armani Casa, the furniture arm of the Giorgio Armani empire.

<http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/fashion-luxury/article/1796460/developers-bring-top-homeware-brands-and-raise-bar-luxury>

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And in Berlin, Tomas Maier, the creative director of Bottega Veneta, is working on Eisenbahn 1, a 12-residence building. It is the first such project of Maier in conjunction with Ralf Schmitz, a 150-year-old German property firm.

Maier is helping design the common spaces and lobby, weighing in on what materials should be used for the floor, the colour of the walls and which Bottega Veneta Home furnishings will be used.

Berlin is having a real estate renaissance; Eisenbahn 1 will be a throwback to the grand residences that lined Berlin's wide thoroughfares in the 1920s, says Daniel Schmitz, a fifth generation scion of the company. Six residences in the building, to be completed by autumn 2016, have already sold.

"Tomas corresponds well with our aesthetic," says Schmitz. "That there is the involvement of Bottega Veneta is an important factor - it's something that makes the whole project unique."

These alliances are unfolding in other ways. In Miami, an upcoming series of residences will feature a brand so innovative even the developers don't know what it is yet: they are holding confidential meetings with high-end brands to create exclusive furniture and interior offerings for the project.

Michael Goldstein, president of sales at The Mansions at Acqualina in Sunny Isles Beach, Miami, says the developers were spurred on to create more designer-driven properties after the success of The Mansions: the 72 homes, designed with Fendi Casa, sold out in 21 weeks.

"You're only seeing these alliances in the super-high-end luxury market," he says.

"The people who buy our properties love fashion, and now that Fendi has a high-end furniture line, it was a great way to brand ourselves."

Goldstein says, however, that even though these developer-designer relationships are on an upswing, builders do not have a wide range of choice. Fendi Casa has among the most extensive furniture collections available to furnish large lobbies and common spaces. Other designers they looked at didn't have enough options.

Goldstein says he wanted to offer buyers Fendi furniture packages for their units, so owners could have everything from a crocodile skin piano to a coffee spoon all designed and provided by Fendi.

For developers, selecting a designer to work with can be tricky. "Nobody has a problem looking at beautiful Fendi furniture," says Goldstein.

"They just might not all want to see Fendi pillows with the big Swarovski studded crystal 'F' on it. We're selling to many types of people, so we have to get it right."

Which is why, for a new multibillion-dollar development called The Estates at Acqualina, Goldstein says the design team has to think far outside the box. Furniture lines from Hermès and Armani Casa are sufficiently luxurious, but are not extensive enough. Missoni's bright colours may not appeal to everyone. Ralph Lauren Home is perhaps too mainstream.

"When we work with a designer, it has to be something that nobody has done before," he says.

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