

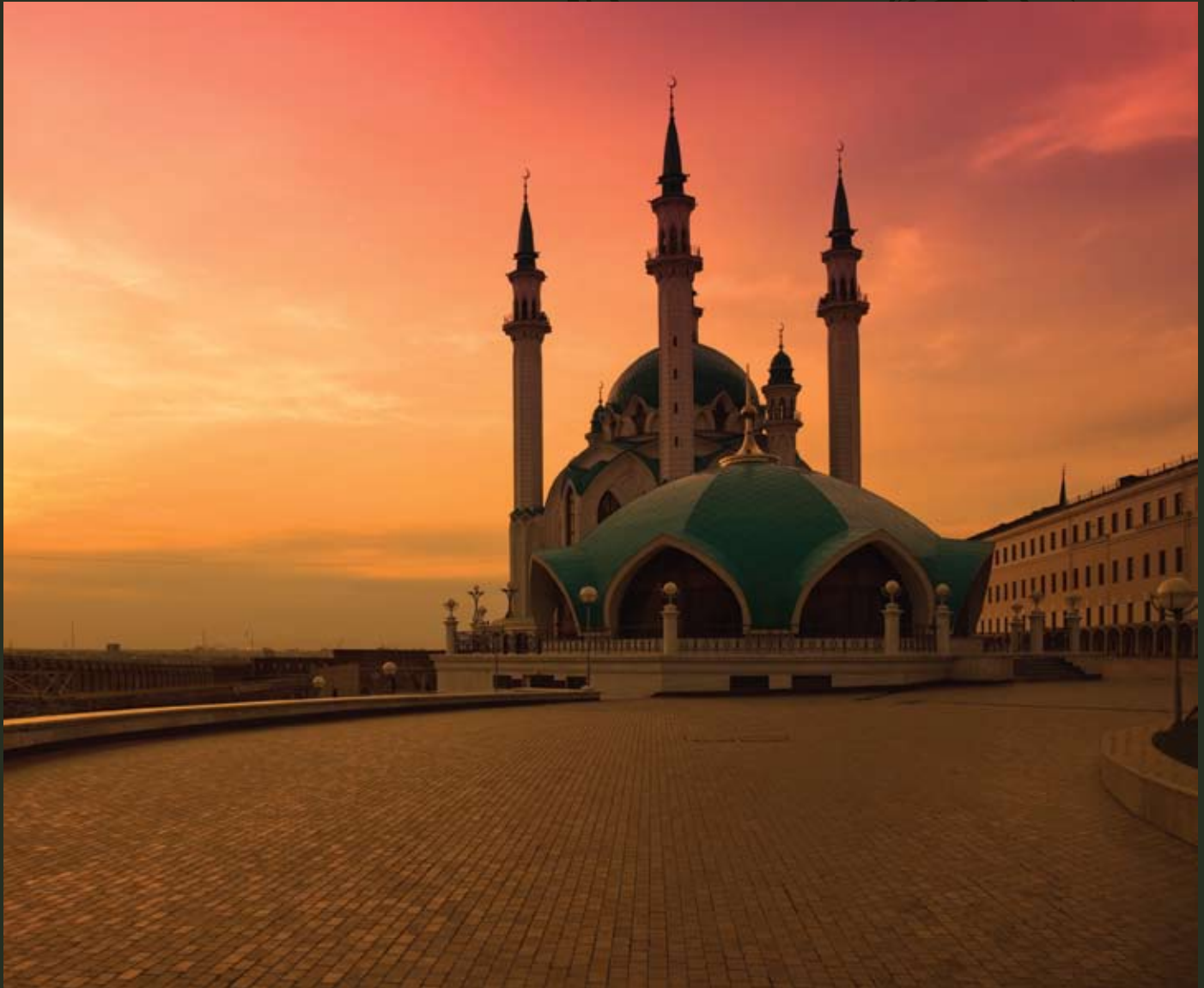
# BAHRAIN Clientele

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**Bahrain City Centre**  
Spotlight on Fine Finds

**Wonders of Worships**  
Magnificent Mosques

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Photo by Manuel Milde

# The Style Guide

News from the world of contemporary design by *Lisa Ball-Lechgar*



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## 1 The London Look

The UK's leading architecture and design event showcasing everything for the modern building and interiors has spawned a series of sister events all over the world. Nowadays, design-istas can fly to Shanghai, Tokyo and Moscow, to name but a few, and explore the latest creations.

Head to Earls Court from 24 to 27 September, and immerse yourself in a world of contemporary design. This year's highlights include an installation of 300 oversized teacups (only in England!), bike tours, and the Skystation chaise longue inspired by Le Corbusier.

Visit [www.100percentdesign.co.uk](http://www.100percentdesign.co.uk)

## 2 Hours of Fun

Sander Mulder moved house only to find that his clock had been damaged. The 31-year-old Dutch designer was so inspired by the broken fragments that he created the 'Continue Time' clock.

Available in brass and aluminium, it features all the hands, but instead of rotating round one central axis they spin around each other. The second hand rotates around the minute hand, which

rotates around the hour hand, which rotates around the central axis. Mulder describes the result as a kinetic artwork with a continuously changing shape that is still a fully functioning clock.

Visit [www.sandermulder.com](http://www.sandermulder.com)

## 3 Cuff'n Decker

Qataris should be getting very excited about David Ericsson's cufflinks - the ideal accessory for those-wearing DIY fanatics from Doha.

Commissioned by VOID Watches, each cufflink is designed to fit standard industrial tools. "I think there is something really interesting in the concept of creating jewellery in a standard factory using the same machines that pump out engine parts at the same time," says Ericsson, who bases himself in Hong-Kong.

The VOID cufflinks are made of recyclable, anodised aluminium and are available in black, gold and silver.

Visit [www.voidwatches.com](http://www.voidwatches.com)



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#### 4 Stylish Statistics

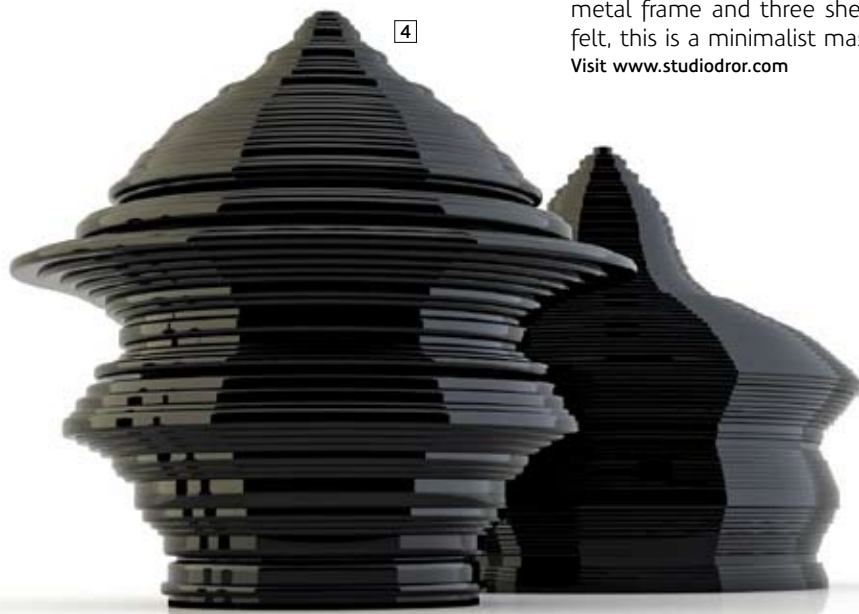
Once upon a time, demographic data was the domain of number-crunchers, but thanks to Parisian designer Mathieu Lehanneur, that is all about to change.

'The Age of the World' is a set of jars that map the ages of a country's population. The ceramic containers consist of 100 layers, each representing a year of life with birth at the bottom and death at the top. The circumference of each level is dictated by the number of people of that age in the country.

Lehanneur - who also works for Issey Miyake - has created five age-pyramids so far, for France, USA, Japan, Russia and Egypt. "What we have here is a fascinating twin-scope view of the state of living; a look at our own life-span in a sculptural surround view," he says philosophically.

Lehanneur told Clientele that he is dying to create a Bahrain piece. If only someone would commission him!

Visit [www.mathieulehanneur.com](http://www.mathieulehanneur.com)



#### 5 Far Eastern Flourish

The world really is a global village when you find a design company called Kimono New York. Their furniture certainly makes a statement.

Dedicated to promoting the tradition of kimono and hand-woven obi fabrics, their mission is to help sustain Japan's cultural heritage. On the one hand, they are trying to encourage the Japanese to return to kimono-wearing days; on the other, they are introducing Americans to the timeless beauty of kimono and obi furniture. In collaboration with designer William Gordon, Kimono New York has released the 'kimono chaise' and 'hakama chair & ottoman'.

Visit [www.kimononewyork.com](http://www.kimononewyork.com)

#### 6 Birds of a Feather

While few of us have homes large enough for a flock of peacocks to strut around, Dutch designer Dror Benshetrit has created a chair with the same airs and graces. 'The Peacock Chair' is Dror Studio's first collaboration with furniture manufacturer Cappellini. Made of a metal frame and three sheets of woven felt, this is a minimalist masterpiece.

Visit [www.studiodror.com](http://www.studiodror.com)

#### 7 Copper Care

When David Derksen graduates from the Design Academy of Eindhoven, Holland, next month, all eyes will be on his 'Copper Cabinet'.

While other (and more precious) metals often catch the Clientele eye, Derksen's mastery of one-millimetre-thick copper foil is nothing less than impressive. The fragile cabinet which has an almost paper-like quality can be used for storing small, precious possessions. As careful as you handle its content, so must you treat the cabinet.

Visit [www.davidderksen.nl](http://www.davidderksen.nl)

#### 8 Plant Life

Being eco-friendly is difficult, particularly for the discerning design lover. While energy saving products may make you feel good, they don't often look good.

Thank goodness for people like Vivien Muller. Her stylish USB solar-cell Bonsai tree can recharge your mobile phone or camera.

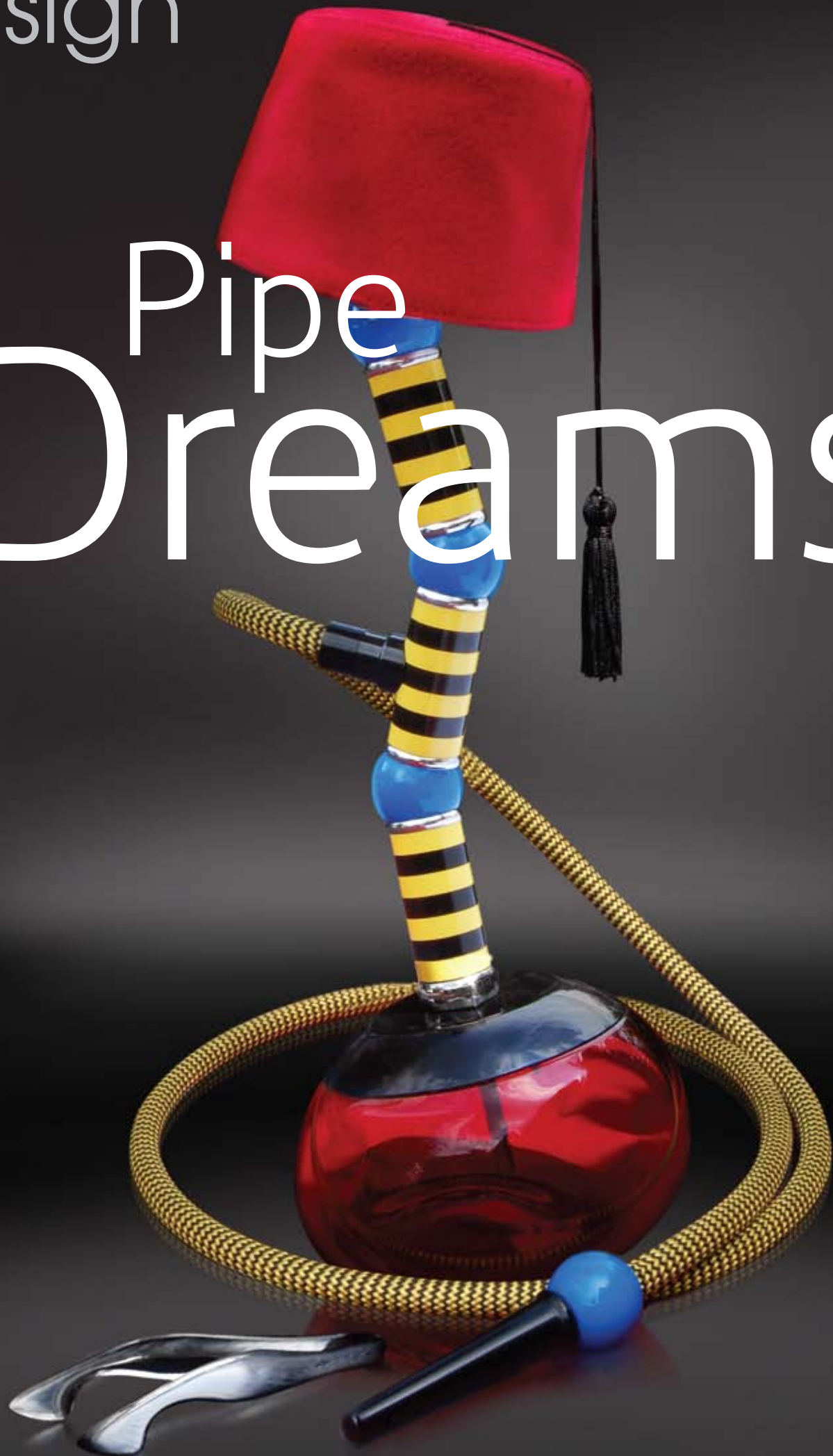
'Photosynthesis' has 54 tiny panels that store energy in a battery during the day. Just leave it on the windowsill. What's more, the branches are flexible, so you can change the shape of the tree whenever you want.

[www.10ein.blogspot.com](http://www.10ein.blogspot.com)





# Pipe Dreams



Narghile, kalia, shisha, ghelyoon, hookah or hubble-bubble. Call it by any name but the latest plays on the ancient design have sent traditionalists reaching for their tobacco, writes *Lisa Ball-Lechgar*

The shisha (the term most commonly used in Bahrain) has experienced a certain amount of hostility in recent years. The Middle Eastern cafés of Europe were the first to be touched by the long arm of the law, thanks to a directive from the European Commission. Then the trend swept into the world's largest hub for shisha - the Gulf. In 2008, the Emirate of Sharjah introduced a public ban, while earlier this year Dubai Municipality told fans to sling their hookahs from parks, beaches and other recreational areas. Now Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman are actively clamping down on the activity, although time will only tell if they too will instruct citizens to surrender the mighty 'mabsam' (mouthpiece).

The case for the prosecution may well be hitting the headlines but the argument for the defence is also gathering momentum, due - in no small part - to a new generation of product designers seeking to reinvent the tired shisha silhouette. While they could be accused of promoting a highly unhealthy form of indulgence, truth be told, shisha smoking will continue in some shape, form and propensity as it has done for centuries.

The shisha has a chequered past, with roots not even in the Middle East. Originally, the practice began in India, borne from the husk of a coconut shell. Its popularity spread to Iran and then to the rest of the Arab world. But it was in 17th-century Turkey, during the reign of Sultan Murad IV, that the shisha completed its design revolution. In short, its style and form has never been challenged until now.

A conventional shisha consists of four elements; the mouthpiece, tube, top and body. Each one was traditionally produced



separately by specialist craftsmen, who carried the name of the part they produced. One only has to visit Istanbul to see the imprint they left. There is Marpuçular (Tube Street) in the Grand Bazaar, while Tophane (on the edge of Beyoglu) was known for its shisha bowls, and Beykoz - on the outskirts of Istanbul - was famed for its floral bodies in silver and crystal. Before the dawn of disposable plastic, mouthpieces were carved from amber. Legend has it that the resin of fossilised trees was germ-free, no matter how many smokers had puffed on it!

With burning embers of oak charcoal on top and pomegranate juice or rose oil in the water below, the shisha connoisseur of old followed a strict etiquette. By the beginning of the 20th century, the West as well as women had encroached upon this bastion of Ottoman manhood. It became fashionable for the elite to be

photographed in their finery at tea parties with a shisha by their side.

Fashion has looked once more upon the humble shisha as the latest generation seeks to put their mark on the age-old pastime. Airdiem, a specialist boutique based in Paris, may be far from the puffing crowds of Manama, Beirut or Cairo but it is pioneering the 21st-century shisha.

Founded by husband-and-wife-team Eric and Emmanuelle Gormand, Airdiem is igniting a passion for shisha among the fashionista jet-set, placing it on a pedestal alongside Dior, Balenciaga and Chanel. Having exhibited their daring designs at internationally renowned fairs such as Maison & Objet in Paris, Index in Dubai and Milan Design Week, Airdiem hopes to open a new and dynamic chapter in the shisha tale.

The brains behind the designs at Airdiem hail mainly from the Middle East. Challenging the nostalgia of their childhoods, people like Nedda El Asmar are reinventing a staple element of conventional society. The Belgian designer of Palestinian origin has become a major figure in the world of décor. Hermès, Puiforcat, Robbe & Berkinis and Villeroy & Boch have all picked up on her bold and witty creations. Voted Designer of the Year in 2007 by the French newspaper *l'Express*, her shisha won the 2008 Henry Van de Velde Design Prize, along with the *Observer du Design* award that same year. El Asmar has disposed of the modular elements, preferring to create a single fluid form that oozes elegance as well as affluence. Gilded in silver or gold, El Asmar also adds a dash of ostentation with a choice of red, black or green coral that entwine around the shisha's body.

The experimental spirit of Beirut can be credited for even more futuristic forms. The downtown district of Gemmayzeh is home to several young designers, such as the jeweller Nada Ghazal, fashion guru Rabih Keyrouz and Sybille and Ziad >

*Facing page: Hilton McConnico is known for his colourful creations and this shisha is no exception. Inset: 'Pure (version d'or)' by Palestinian-Belgian designer Nedda El Asmar.*

**Eric Gormand of Airdiem tells Clientele about his penchant for shisha:**

**Clientele: What made you launch such a specialist company?**

**Gormand:** *I discovered the narghile on a trip to the Middle East and fell in love. So we launched Airdiem, which continues the excellence of narghile craftsmanship France was once famed for. Firms like Baccarat, Saint Louis and Christofle used to make narghiles for diplomats and royalty all over the world. We hope to revive this and go global.*

**Clientele: Do you think the narghile is under threat?**

**Gormand:** *It's is one of the oldest products in the world. It symbolises the friendliness of Middle Eastern cultures and creates an image of the region that maybe some people don't want spread. I would love VIPs and politicians to protect the narghile and be proud of the values it stands for.*

**Clientele: What's a couple in France doing promoting a Middle Eastern pastime!**

**Gormand:** *I'm tempted to move to the Middle East but I need to be near my craftsmen to make the best products.*

**Clientele: How do you find designers?**

**Gormand:** *Every collaboration is a 'rencontre' where I encounter a certain sensitivity and visionary concept. We've partnered with our designers because we loved their approach and previous work.*

**Clientele: Are people shocked?**

**Gormand:** *Not at all. Redesigning is so important when you want to satisfy new appetites. We are attracting new, young, cosmopolitan customers from regions such as Asia, Brazil and Europe.*

**Clientele: What's next for Airdiem?**

**Gormand:** *Look out for three new pieces by the end of this year from top international designers as well as a book. Finally, Airdiem is opening in Bahrain, so watch out!*



'A' by TRIBUDESIGN



The 'WhY' by Atelier SZ



'Conal (version rouge)' by Nedda El Asmar

Abillama, aka Atelier SZ. The duo are on a mission to give a visual aesthetic to every product they touch, transforming each one into a funky, quirky, up-to-the-minute design that is practical as well as fun.

Atelier SZ's 'WhY' has been its calling card for a number of years but the applause for such innovative design has still not subsided. Ultra-modern and cool, the first prototype received its world premier at the Salon de Mobile in Milan back in 2004, thanks to the renowned designer William Sawaya who created a special 'Made in Lebanon' pavilion to showcase emerging design talent from his home country. Having gone into limited production and released a series of variations, Atelier SZ's narghile series has become a trailblazer.

The traditional shisha has still not reached its limits of radical reinvention unless one considers the work of TRIBUDESIGN, a young studio based on the legendary Monot Street in Beirut's Achrafieh district.

The team has ambitions to change society from a passive consumer of imported products to an active creator; an attitude that gained momentum following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in 2004, and was captured in banners proudly declaring home-grown products to be '100% Lebanese'.

In a bid to reinforce this idea and celebrate a distinctive culture amid the woven mass of worldwide trends, TRIBUDESIGN came up with their interpretation of the shisha. The first laid-back piece in their nascent 'White' collection is simply called 'A', and takes the shisha concept horizontal. Having deconstructed every aspect of the conventional form, the flat, slim minimalist singular shape sets a new trend in shisha etiquette. Using materials such as stainless steel and hand-stitched leather, TRIBUDESIGN has sent the shisha makers of Istanbul turning in their graves.

'A' took around 20 months to develop but the wait was most definitely worth it. Earlier this year, TRIBUDESIGN picked up a coveted Red Dot Design Award in recognition of their experimental zeal.

The shisha of the East is experiencing a facelift and resurgence among trendsetters. By the end of the year, Airdiem hope to establish a presence in Bahrain and is also planning to launch a very special shisha in partnership with Baccarat by the middle of 2010. It looks as if the renewed interest in shisha is literally going up in smoke. ■

Airdiem opens in Bahrain later this year. Visit [www.airdiem.com](http://www.airdiem.com) or [www.elegantsmoker.com](http://www.elegantsmoker.com)