

RETAIL FOCUS

Project: Robinsons

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The first Robinsons department store in the Middle East opened its doors in March at Dubai Festival City, making it the largest department store in the region. At 18,000 sq m with 600 local, regional and international brands, the store offers three magnificent floors of contemporary and designer fashion, food, art and culture experiences, delighting guests in an immersive journey.



International design agency, **HMKM** drew inspiration from Robinsons' roots, in particular from Singapore's blend of green landscapes and edgy, contemporary architecture to produce a scheme founded on the notion of a future landscape.



That dynamic runs through every aspect of the design, starting with a sense of dramatic external and internal facades which blend large-scale animated screens with sinuous, interlacing lines of timber, bronze anodised aluminium and polished brass, and large-scale vertical garden walls and columns by visionary botanist designer, Patrick Blanc. Throughout the interior, contemporary forms and digital elements are balanced with warm materials and lush planting.



Customers approaching from the waterfront arrive in the ground floor menswear space via a series of broad, terrace-like steps. The department is centred on a central pavilion, defined by a slatted oak ceiling raft and fleshed out with herringbone leather panelled walls, end-grain oak flooring, warm lacquers and dark metal frames. On the same floor, a destination urban zone is given its own identity, with a central DJ booth, polished concrete flooring and fixtures crafted from timber, terrazzo and perforated metal.



From conception through to completion, dpa lighting advised, designed and created an integrated lighting scheme that will enhance the customer journey and gives each department its own character and unique feature elements to complete the luxury experience of the store.



Floored in Palissandro Classico and Kaliston marbles, the remainder of the floor is devoted to beauty with a studio-style makeup zone framed in shimmering metal and centred under a bespoke geometric light installation. Lighting design in the department store was completed by dpa lighting. The fragrance area has been given a softer feel with rich marble and brass fixtures, soft Deco chandeliers and plush seating.



Womenswear and accessories are located on the first floor, articulated by a series of internal rotundas, each of which are centred on a swooping, tree-like timber frame, designed to filter daylight and create memorable sculptural statements. Highlights within the floor include a shoe department and a swimwear zone complete with ombré feature walls and splashes of neon acrylic.



The lingerie department has been given its own distinct atmosphere, separated from the main floor with layered, rose gold-framed screens, washed timber fixtures and subtle grey hues. In contrast, eveningwear ramps up the glamour with a palette that surrounds the customer with soft gold, bronze and champagne tones. The department includes a dedicated space for evening abayas, as well as VIP fitting room suites.



The store's service areas also have the same attention to detail, from the luxurious VIP lounges and treatment spaces to each floor's fitting rooms – each tailor-made to suit its individual department, with spacious interiors, eye-catching feature materials and subtly integrated technology – to the carefully selected furniture pieces.



Childrenswear and John Lewis' Home collections are located on the second floor. The children's department is awash with vibrant colours, inspired by the idea of a village; interactive play zones and playful house-style frames set up a vividly graphic aesthetic. John Lewis is only available at Robinsons in the Middle East and is the brand's largest store outside the UK. Natural tones feature in the homeware space, with pale neutrals interspersed with honeycomb-tiled stone.



Natural light and views are maximised through the incorporation of destination restaurants that allow waterside dining on multiple levels. Running through the central atrium, a series of vertical garden columns which span the store's three levels bring HMKM's future landscape concept full circle.