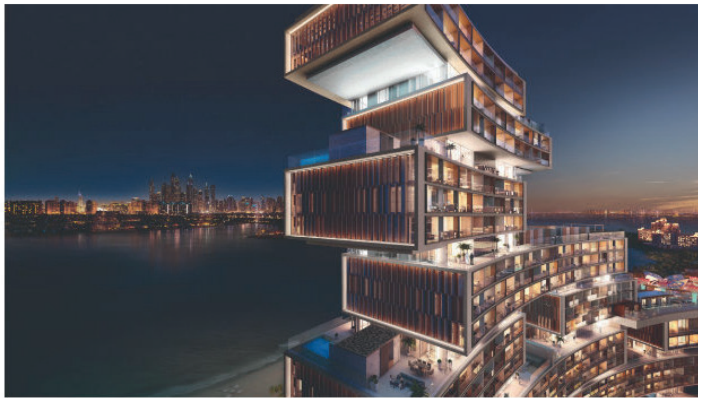


# MANSION GLOBAL

## ‘There’s No Luxury Without Comfort,’ Says Interior Designer

Sybille de Margerie on creating timeless spaces

BY LUCY COHEN BLATTER | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON MARCH 18, 2019 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#)



*Most recently, Ms. de Margerie has worked on the interiors of the Royal Atlantis Residences in Dubai.*

*COMPOSITE: COURTESY OF SYBILLE DE MARGERIE ; THE ROYAL ATLANTIS RESORT & RESIDENCES*

Architect and interior designer Sybille de Margerie founded Sybille de Margerie Studio, formerly known as SM Design, in 1989.

A member of the Taittinger family, known for its Champagne line and high-end hotels, Ms. de Margerie has designed interiors for Louvre Hotels, LVMH group (Hotel Cheval Blanc in Courchevel, France), Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, and private investors. Most recently, the firm designed the interiors of the Royal Atlantis Residences in Dubai. For that project, Ms. de Margerie enlisted five female artisans to create a series of pieces, which included sculptural porcelain wall reliefs from Isabelle Poupinel; gold tapestries from Céline Alexandre’s; hand-sculpted leather walls from Helen Amy Murray; Annie Corbiere’s intricately woven screens; and metalworks by Annie Trussart.

“It’s high-end contemporary design with a high level of bespoke finishes. It’s more understated, and the project wasn’t guided by ego,” she said. “It’s very couture.”

She said she was amazed at the light that infiltrates the space “from morning to evening” in Dubai.

Ms. de Margerie, 54, who lives in Paris, Italy and Dubai, spoke to us about what surprises her most about booming real estate markets, the importance of diversifying investments and more.

**Mansion Global: Describe your dream property.**

**Sybille de Margerie:** A contemporary home on the beach somewhere. I love Italy, for the beautiful sea, the culture and the food. It might be in Sardinia.

**MG: What does luxury mean to you?**

**SM:** First, luxury has to be timeless. You need to know it’ll be luxurious in 10 years. The layout, design, and plan is where luxury starts. Materials and textures come next. We like nice texture and finishes—wood, marble and bronze, which you can feel. The tactile feel is important. The language of the texture is key to us.

**MG: What area do you think is the next hub for luxury properties?**

**SM:** More and more clients are becoming experts. The level they request is higher and higher. For example, in the recent past, Dubai wasn’t delivering truly luxury products, and you were seeing the same types of finishes and the same flats. There was nothing that stood out, but now they’re starting to understand how to make sure their properties do. That’s why more and more French designers are coming to Dubai.

We have projects in Moscow, Dubai and all over the world. Luxury is everywhere and we’ll likely see more in Eastern Europe.

**MG: What’s the biggest surprise in the luxury real estate market now?**

**SM:** Two things. I’m always surprised when real estate is booming in a city, and everyone is buying and building, and there’s no control on development. In Dubai, they’re building like crazy. The fact that people don’t learn is surprising.

It’s key that designers are part of the development process. More and more you’re seeing that. Development projects are associated with big designers. That’s a very good thing.

**MG: Where are the best luxury homes in the world and why?**

**SM:** London has great development projects. You have the luxury buyer there, just like in New York. You can sell homes for a lot per square meter.

**MG: What’s your favorite part of your home?**

**SM:** My kitchen, because I love cooking and entertaining. And I love my bedroom, too.

**MG: What best describes the theme to your home and why?**

**SM:** I like contemporary design, but I also appreciate heritage and tradition, and I combine those two. I bring pieces in from auction and from the flea market. Combination is key, and colors. I like to use color and texture. And comfort is very important to me. There’s no luxury without comfort.

**MG: What’s the most valuable thing in your home?**

**SM:** My art. I like to buy when I travel. It’s part of my memories.

**MG: What are the most valuable amenities to have in a home right now?**

**SM:** Pools and treatment rooms, spa areas and fitness, too. Also, home cinemas. Most luxury homes have all those things. Security, too.

**MG: What's your best piece of real estate advice?**

**SM:** First, think about location. That lasts forever. You should look for a place with a sea view or good location in a city, but either way, location is really important. Architecture and design are important too. When you're buying in a building, you need to keep in mind the monthly costs—especially in hotels.

**MG: What's going on in the news that will have the biggest impact on the luxury real estate market?**

**SM:** Politics can affect luxury brands. The economy is so linked with politics. You see that in the U.S., in Paris and in the U.K. As an investor, you should split your real estate among different locations for that reason.

**MG: What is the best area now for investing in luxury properties?**

**SM:** All the main cities will remain strong—Paris, London and New York are forever. Then you have the new markets. In Italy, for example, real estate is opening up to foreign buyers.

**MG: If you had a choice of living in a new development or a prime resale property, which would you choose and why?**

**SM:** In France you often find that refurbishments of older buildings, that's the best of both worlds. If it's not something like that, I'd prefer a new one.

**MG: What area currently has the best resale value?**

**SM:** London, New York, then Paris. The buyers are in the first two the most.