



# Grand DESIGNS

Specialists in office fitouts, space planning, interior design consultancy, and furniture, Gemaco Interiors is known for high-profile projects including Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi HQ and the headquarters of government entities.

**ANDRE MORCOS**

CEO @ Gemaco Interiors

**I**f you've travelled to Abu Dhabi or Dubai for business in recent years, the chances are you've come across a Gemaco project in one of the buildings you visited. With clean lines, open spaces, and an elegant contemporary feel, the company has a distinctive style. As one of the leading interior design and fitout firms in the Emirates, its interior solutions feature in a broad range of sectors from oil and gas, aviation, banking and finance, education, and healthcare through to government and utilities.

## Humble beginnings

Founded in 1984, the family business was originally based in a small flat in the Tourist Club area of Abu Dhabi – fast forward three decades and the company was acquired by a leading Emirati investment group in 2014, following Gemaco's commitment to global best practise through implementing integrated management, quality assurance, and environmental management systems. A boom in size and reputation followed.

Andre Morcos oversees the daily running of the business across both its Abu Dhabi headquarters and Dubai branch. He was pro- →



Clean lines

moted to CEO just last year at the height of the pandemic.

The timing for the new role could have been better but interestingly, when Andre talks of the challenges over the last 12 months, he speaks not about his own experience but of his team. “My main concern was not letting the staff feel that they were isolated. So, each week several staff would be in the office, the rest would be working remotely, and then we’d rotate them. As a company we did extremely well and found a way to turn a negative into a positive.”

Andre is proud of the way Gemaco has faced the challenges of the last year and the protection it has afforded its staff: “Even though most companies were offering salary cuts to staff in general, we did not. Some staff got stuck abroad too, but they remained with us on full salaries as we focused on retaining our employees.”

Indeed, the business is bouncing back and now, with over 850,000 square metres in executed design projects under its belt, Gemaco’s eyes are firmly set on the next three to five years. The company’s vision is to be the market leading brand, creating human-centric, collaborative, and sustainable spaces through timeless design solutions. “We are driven by passion in everything we do,” says the CEO.

It’s this human-centric approach that seems to underpin Gemaco’s culture. Not only was this key to keeping the business buoyant through COVID but it brought Andre back to the business as CEO after a two-year break from the company in 2017.

### Collaborate, communicate

He explains that this tight culture mirrors the company ethos, which centres around increased collaboration and communication and optimal utilisation of space and function. Each project is unique with its own DNA. “We believe this translates into a higher productivity rate and an overall better sense of wellbeing for our clients and their teams. We achieve this by knocking down barriers, where our competitors might build walls and partitions and meeting rooms, we reduce that to the bare minimum,” Andre says: “We design human-centric spaces that work for the entire organisation. In other words, our designs are governed by function.”



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So, while collaboration and communication are key differentiators to the Gemaco brand, they are also core values in their internal culture. It’s no surprise then that these same values influence Gemaco’s relationships with their suppliers and partners such as Boss Design, Interface, and Haworth – to name but a few. Strong relations are critical in this industry with its constant evolution, new trends, and advancing technology. “Our supplier relationships are based on integrity,” adds Andre, “and our success could not have been achieved without their support. Material and supplies are always evolving; the way we use offices and especially now, how the workplace is evolving post COVID. So, we work very closely with our suppliers to understand how the latest trends are evolving, what the latest studies are concluding and how they are impacting the workplace.”

It’s an exciting time for the company as Andre prepares for the future: “We are always evolving, whether it’s investing in staff or new services. We’re constantly innovating and challenging ourselves on how we can do things better to provide more value and outstanding service to our clients.” The CEO understands this approach may be considered avant-garde for some but he attributes this culture to Gemaco’s market leadership and is unapologetic about it. “We focus first on our clients and our staff. There will always be different sector opportunities, and maybe we will be delving into new services in the future.”



# boss

Creating Habitats for the New Work Landscape

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