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Sizzling anticipation for Dubai
Watch Week and Only Watch

Hublot's material world

New models

Watches and Wonders novelties

Portfolio

*Summer of sports
Inside Vacheron Constantin*

Interviews

*Fabian Cancellara gets personal
Chef Alvin Leung's devilish side
Ada Hegerberg's winning attitude*

My time

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RACHEL SILVESTRI

Sounds appealing

It's all about the music — but you might never have heard it like this before. *GMT GCC* gets an earful from Amir Anwar, one of the co-founders of UAE long-timers Dubai Audio, where superlative experiences and sound performance rule.

If there's something that Amir Anwar doesn't know about audio, then it's not worth knowing. With almost 30 years in the business he has a lifetime of knowledge just waiting to be shared, but his sheer excitement and enthusiasm for sound makes it seem as though he'd only just discovered it. Fastidiously up to date with all the latest in audio technology as well as a fountain of knowledge about what's happening in music and other tech industries too, it's no wonder that Dubai Audio has had three decades of success — projects founded on this level of passion rarely fail.

And there's more: Amir is just one of three co-founders and company directors. A trio of brothers originating from India and educated in Europe and the United States, they are all equally as passionate about what their business stands for, and are a truly international bunch. That is, as Amir says, they used to be...

"We were international until we got here and started calling Dubai home," he laughs. "And it still is. My children, my brother's children, everybody was born here."

But it's the birth of their joint business that's kept them here all these years. Dubai Audio came from a desire to bring

the same kind of sound quality that the brothers had experienced overseas to the region, in the process building a community of audiophiles who were safe in the knowledge that if they wanted the best and most up-to-date in speaker tech they knew just the place to go.

Starting out by catering to the residential market, Dubai Audio has grown to also encompass commercial projects as well as fulfilling the dreams of those seeking ultra high-end sound solutions. Basically — if you want it to sound good, the boys have got you covered.

"Our core criteria is performance," says Amir. "We're very performance driven, that's the basis for everything that we offer as a company and it needs to meet our expectations. But then again, within our segment, over the years the way people consume music has changed. You travel with it, work with it... The manufacturers that we work with realise that you don't have to compromise on quality just because our lifestyles have changed, so even if you're on the go, it's all about giving you the best quality of something that we love.

"Some people have music in the background all the time, but I think that when you have quality and get into the way ►►

Adil, Amir and Ahmed Anwar are the brotherly trio behind Dubai Audio's three decades of success.



"Our clients are very discerning and the brands we represent really are luxurious. We don't do these things to try and be outrageous — quite the opposite, we design experiences for clients that want the best."

Amir Anwar, co-founder, Dubai Audio



Clockwise from top: Dubai Audio's plush listening environments; Goldmund speakers form part of the business's Elite Collections; brand-new Lorca timepieces will launch at Dubai Audio in November.

the artist intended the music to be heard, it's a completely different experience. Sometimes you don't know what's out there unless you get the chance to try it, so we really invest a lot in how we create those experiences in a very natural environment, to showcase the best of our products."

Dubai Audio's expansive Sheikh Zayed Road showroom is the business's current environment, the evolution of the original Deira premises founded in 1994. And with a new Dubai Hills Mall address set to open this month, Dubai Audio's auditory experiences will be spreading out into the city's newer areas too. But the business's work isn't just confined to the Emirates — in fact, their wares are enhancing sound experiences far and wide.

"In some cases, the association we have with manufacturers lets us do business internationally, providing Bluetooth speakers and alarm clocks for hotel guest rooms — things like that," shares Amir. "So we supplied the Ritz-Carlton in Hong Kong and the Rosewood in Bangkok, as well as some properties in the Seychelles. We have even started working with a watch brand. The first time I told somebody that they said, why watches? But it's a case of — it all comes back to the music."

Indeed, the brand that Dubai Audio has partnered with — new independent watchmaker Lorca, on the verge of launching their first timepiece, the Model No. 1 GMT — was founded by New York-

based Swiss-Canadian musician Jesse Marchant. Inspired to create his debut watch after touring Europe and frequently feeling that his ideal horological travel partner was missing, Lorca's first models are set to be delivered in November.

"I love his music, by the way," smiles Amir. "When I found out he was launching his watch company, it was just something for us to get behind. I love people who are able to execute and create something that they've dreamed of, and to actually see it come to life. It's an incredible feeling, to be able to help with a product and work with the creator. So we will be bringing these watches to Dubai in November, as soon as they're released."

But back to the day job — Dubai Audio's stock-in-trade is in sound, and with a range of brands from the niche to the high-end in its 'Elite Collections', there's something for everyone. From the 1960s Italian flair of Brionvega and the futuristic profile of Syng systems, to the reassuringly expensive work of Dan D'Agostino, Sonus Faber and Goldmund, at the top end it becomes almost easy to justify dropping half or three quarters of a mil on some of these works of audio and visual art.

"We have had the opportunity to be involved in some amazing projects," says Amir. "Simply amazing. Our clients are very discerning and the brands we represent really are luxurious. We don't do these things to try and be outrageous — quite the opposite, we

design experiences for clients that want the best, because of the engineering that's behind it. It's like high-end watches — the attention to detail, the craftsmanship and the ethos that goes into everything about them."

So when starting out in 1994, was it an uphill struggle to gain understanding for what the brothers had to offer? Amir says that aspect can't be underestimated: "When we first started out as a business, people looked at us as though we were absolutely nuts, because in this region there were only two or three brands that the majority associated with these sorts of products. But we said no, there has to be life beyond these narrow choices. What we were doing wasn't actually very different — where we grew up in Europe and the US, there were entire streets where you could go, make an appointment, or just walk in and discover something new. But here, the culture was very different — they were different times. So what we brought was the exposure and saying, you know what? We want people to experience something better. Not necessarily more expensive, just better. We all love music, and that really is the key."

So who are the brothers behind the music? Amir is the youngest and takes care of projects. Then middle brother Adil looks

after all Dubai Audio's high-end brands, while eldest brother Ahmed is responsible for operations, keeping everything on track and allowing his younger brothers to push towards the business's goals and new opportunities. It's a formula that's worked for almost three decades now, and the brothers don't have any plans to change it.

"It just works," says Amir. "It's got a lot to do with mutual respect and mutual confidence in one another. If you're working with people you don't know, sometimes it's difficult to know if things will work out. Whereas with us, we don't question that confidence, which is really great, and everybody takes part in decisions, which is so important."

Dubai Audio's motto — giving heart and soul to sound — goes so much deeper than just the aural. A true Dubai success story, this is a family business that's seen the comings and goings of the decades, and has continued steadfast regardless. And it's true, at the base of it all is a love of music. But it's clear that the combination of personalities and the relationship between the founding brothers may be the secret ingredient that has kept their recipe fresh all these years. And one thing's certain, if it's fresh sounds you're after, you'll do no better than Dubai Audio. 