ARCHITECTURE What is your favourite architectural style, and why?
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Too fun for some, too bland for others. My favourite architectural style is art deco, a style used for visual arts, architecture and design that first appeared in France around the 1920s. It takes its name, which is short for Arts Décoratifs, from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs temple Industriels Modernes, an international art exhibition held in Paris in 1925. Many of the characteristics of art deco were influenced by other architectural styles such as Cubism and Fauvism and by the traditional architectures of China, Japan, India, Persia, Ancient Egypt and Native Americans. Art Deco started becoming more subdued during the Great Depression and its dominance officially ended with World War II, leaving space for modern architectural styles.

In my opinion Art Deco is one of the most splendid architectural styles because of its simple decorativeness, colours and its progressiveness found in shapes and symmetry. In contrast with the earlier style of Art Nouveau which mainly emphasised asymmetry and nature, Art Deco's approach to decorations was more simplistic but not at all less grand. It is characterized by simple shapes, that often had a "streamlined" look, geometric or stylized ornaments and the use of varied, often expensive materials such as man-made ones. The characteristic features showed a newfound love for the machine and for the technological progress of the time by recreating repeating geometrical patterns and using shapes that were not too intricate. The main colours used were deep yellows, reds, greens, blues, and pinks but also softer beiges.

Some people may argue that Art Deco is bland and boring considering its shapes are often repetitive and symmetrical. This could be seen as an inattention to details or decoration from the architect's side but it actually was meant to differentiate Art Deco from all previous styles, even if influenced by them. The geometrical shapes of its designs and the bright colours create an ornation even by not looking intricate and cramped. During its history, Art Deco was often insulted because of its uniqueness, many people thought it wasn't serious enough and, as stated by head of research for the Victoria and Albert Museum, Paul Greenhalgh: "Art Deco is a terribly easy movement to insult, it has maintained that most damning of all qualities -- fun.". In reality the avant-garde that is Art Deco was insulted by critics mainly because of its success and the fact that it was very different from more traditional styles.

Art Deco was and still is one of the most famous and successful architectural styles, even if it was mainly used for commercial buildings and public spaces instead of houses. Its decoration is simple but effective and it creates charming visuals. Many examples of art deco still exist all over the world, from Europe to Asia to America. A prime example is the Art Deco historic district in South Miami Beach with its colours, varying from pastel pinks and baby blues to deep yellows and bright teals. Another very well known example is the Chrysler building in New York. The architectural style's characteristic retro feel and eye catching colours and designs often leave a mark in someone's mind and offer rare picturesque views.

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