

CONDÉ NAST
House & Garden

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Gardens

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TROPICAL
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THE SEASON**

**FESTIVE DISHES & MODERN BOUQUETS
FOR STYLISH ENTERTAINING**



ISLAND STYLE

ON THE IDYLIC IBIZA COAST, FAR FROM THE PARTY CAPITAL, A MASTERPIECE OF MINIMAL ARCHITECTURE PAYS HOMAGE BOTH TO THE VIEWS AND THE MODERNIST MOVEMENT

TEXT ULRICH CLEWING PHOTOGRAPHS MATTHIEU SALVAING



A steep drop to the water affords the site major drama, its jagged rocks complementing the clean lines of the architecture **OPPOSITE PAGE** From the verandah a simple summery outdoor setting made up of retro Mathieu Matégot pieces looks out to the panoramic ocean vista. Architect Luis Laplace claims this as his absolute favourite spot

PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON BASSON

ne must often walk a winding path to reach the end goal. This is particularly apt for life in Ibiza. A good half hour from Eivissa, the capital city otherwise known as Ibiza Town, a dusty dirt track lures travellers onto the last section of the journey. Then suddenly you are there. The villa perches over the bay like a medieval castle – glistening white like a radiant jewel.

Architect Luis Laplace has fond memories of the first time he stood on top of the cliffs – he could barely believe how exquisitely beautiful this place was. 'The landscape is simply breathtaking. Imagine looking over the water, listening to the sound of the crashing waves as the scent of rosemary tickles your nose. It was instantly clear to me that this was a special place. I felt as if I was standing on another planet.'

The only issue was that the house the owner had just showed him really did no justice, whatsoever, to the idyllic surroundings. Furthermore, although it seemed from the outside that the building was intact, closer inspection revealed several issues: illogical design, structural ailments, the house was even sitting awkwardly...

'In the beginning of this project all we actually did for a number of days and nights was talk,' says Laplace. And, as a passionate (and serious) art collector, the owner proved to be the ideal sparring partner for the architect. 'I like it when an owner takes their time and puts consideration into things. We were in agreement that our work should follow the direction of Mother Nature, rather than us trying to bend it to our will.'

It soon became clear that the owner wasn't going to bring any of his art along. 'He felt that a setting like this was adornment enough.' With that in mind, barring one or two carefully selected pieces, everything was chosen to bring into focus the natural beauty of the surroundings.

So Laplace arranged the layout and opened up the walls. The tiny windows were replaced with retractable glass walls, and massive concrete walls with slender steel beams to detract as little as possible from the view outside. 'Basically, my job was, ▶

In the master bedroom, which opens up totally to the outdoors, low-slung armchairs by Finn Juhl and benches by Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret make an understated modernist statement. The ceramic installation by Georges Jouve on the back wall is the only work that the art collector would allow in the house



'IMAGINE LOOKING OVER THE WATER, LISTENING TO THE SOUND OF THE CRASHING WAVES AS THE SCENT OF ROSEMARY TICKLES YOUR NOSE' **LUIS LAPLACE**

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above all, to clean up the space,' explains Laplace. The old villa instantly took on a totally new character, its relatively modest 200-square-metre footprint appearing a lot lighter and more spacious than it is, due in large part to the terraces on three levels that extend and externalise the house. Standing at the edge of any of them feels like being on the deck of a yacht, with nothing but the Mediterranean stretching out ahead.

While the owner avoided filling the space with art, it has an important presence, albeit through reference. In redesigning the space, Laplace took inspiration from several artists – the trapeze-shaped pools are inspired by the magical glass sculptures by American photographer and sculptor Roni Horn, whose dark mirrored surfaces reflect the sky and surrounding trees.

The interiors were also conceived by Laplace. He chose modern design classics, mainly of Danish, French and American provenance and, a small exception to the 'no art' rule, a 'Marble Box' by artist Jason Rhoades. He is especially mad about the outdoor ensemble of four collectable chairs around a Mathieu Matégot table. 'Matégot is, for me, an exceptional case of 1950s design. The graphic, almost feminine lines of his work aren't for everyone – to appreciate his designs, one has to have uncommonly sophisticated taste,' he says, in praise of the owner.

This level of sophistication is at odds with the dubious reputation Ibiza has acquired over the last few decades. But that is only half of the picture. For the other half one simply has to look a little further. And the road that takes you there isn't always a straight one either. ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Walnut panelling gives a guest room a sense of warmth. Organic ceramic pieces offer colourful accents in the simple space; the sitting room is a mid-century still-life – Charlotte Perriand shelves on the wall, a Nakashima table in the centre of the room and chairs by Hans Wegner and Velca Legnano. In the evenings the delicate filigree lamp by Pierre Guariche gives the moon a little competition; Luis Laplace, the architect designed niches of contemplation, like this office featuring a Hans Wegner table and chair by Pierre Jeanneret. The marble walls' patterns are a nod to the waves outdoors



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