



MARBELLA · LONDON · MILAN

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INTERIOR DESIGN  
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JAN-MAY 2020

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IN EUROPE

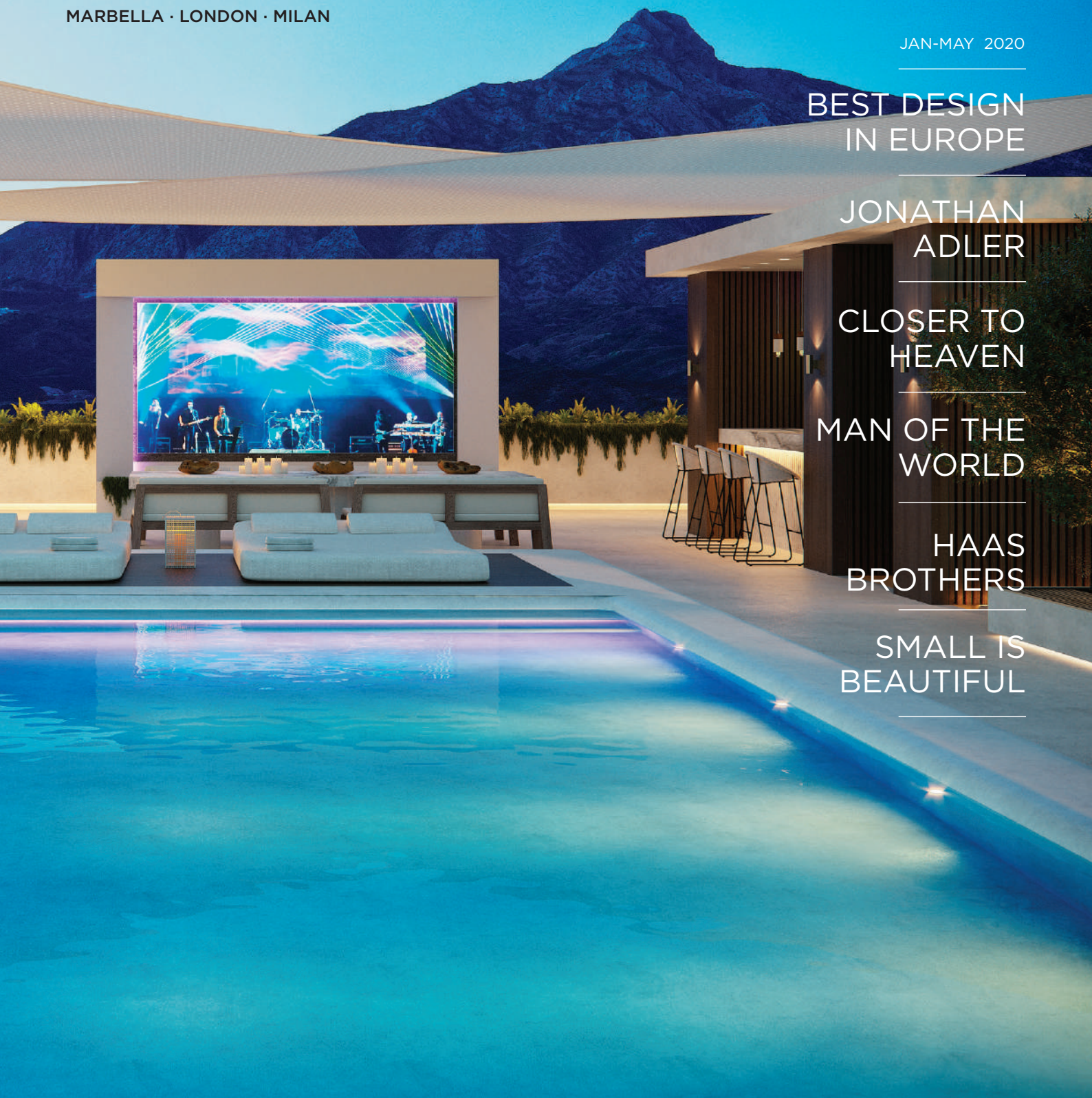
JONATHAN  
ADLER

CLOSER TO  
HEAVEN

MAN OF THE  
WORLD

HAAS  
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UD

## PUBLISHER'S LETTER

We're celebrating! In this issue we open with a report on the International Property Awards, where UDesign won Best in Europe in the architecture category for the design of Villa Alcuizcuz, Marbella's first luxury avant garde property that is truly sustainable. We have great fun talking to Jonathan Adler, who can always be relied upon to bring a happy and chic look to any interior space. We jump into the weird and wonderful world of the LA-based Haas Brothers, and explore what it means to be an artist in political exile with Firouz FarmanFarmaian. We take a trip to Tangier to review a contemporary apartment in the new Tanja Marina Bay and visit four fabulous design-led hotels from Manhattan to the Maldives. Enjoy the journey.

Jason Harris | CEO & Creative Director | UDesign

“Architecture is really about well-being. On the one hand it's about shelter, but it's also about pleasure”

(Zaha Hadid)





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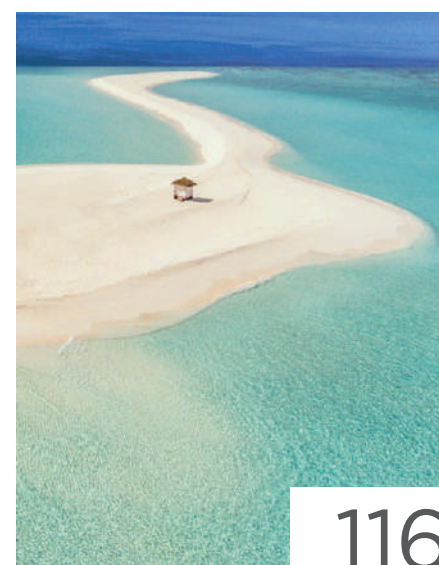
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# HEART OF CLAY

Modern elegance with a touch of the flea market, a design philosophy with a hint of attitude, and fine craftsmanship with a good deal of American glamour. This is Jonathan Adler, both the man and the products he designs.

*Text by Vivion O'Kelly | Photos courtesy of Jonathan Adler*

It's not easy to write about Jonathan Adler. Or to be more specific, it's not that easy to define him in words. Is he maximalist or minimalist? Is he a potter who drifted upwards rather than sideways on his successful career path, or a designer crafted by acquired knowledge and innate talent? Is he a free-wheeling renegade or a serious product designer blessed with an irreverent outlook on life? Most likely, he is exactly what he seems to be: all of these, in measures we cannot measure. But most importantly, it is his extraordinary body of work that defines who he is.

Jonathan began potting at the age of twelve. He had been sent to summer camp, and found himself spending more time at the pottery wheel than playing ball games and splashing about in the water. He studied art history and semiotics (the study of signs and sign processes) at

Jonathan's pottery is predominantly white, giving it a sculptural quality. His sense of humour is evident in the slightly naughty motifs he uses to create patterns.

From left to right: Georgia Vase, Georgia Centrepiece Bowl, Edie Vase, Kiki's Derriere Vase, Georgia Orb Box.

Every wall needs a kiss of glamour. This Hush Beaded Wall Art is hand-beaded on linen ground







Brown University, but not really: he spent almost all his time at the nearby Rhode Island School of Design making pots. His sources of influence were Chanel and Sèvres, pop culture, early hip hop, contemporary art and fashion. An eclectic bag, and little wonder, perhaps, that his pottery teacher was not entirely convinced. Jonathan tells the story in a recent interview with UD Magazine:

“While I was in college, my ceramics teacher told me I had no talent and should move to New York City and become a lawyer. It was the best advice I never took.”

He worked for three years in the entertainment industry following graduation, but pottery, he realised, was his first love. He started teaching in exchange for studio space in 1990, and presented his work at Barneys New York, who were impressed enough to place orders. He founded his own company three years later, worked alone for a few years more and then visited pottery studios in Peru through the non-profit organization Aid to Artisans. Inspired by Peruvian textile design, he began making simple home items, and in 1998, he opened his first store in Manhattan. Today, as a product and interior designer, potter, author and occasional television personality, his

Eve Triple Bulb Vase, Pedestal Bowl and Urn: the design of these pieces is elegant and timeless, with a contemporary touch in the absence of colour and texture, and in the unusual shapes of the handles.



Over the course of his career, Jonathan Adler has appeared on television programs like *Good Morning America* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, referring to his style as **Modern American Glamour**.





**Above:** Standing proud on The Parker Palm Springs Hotel lawn is Adler's first foray into public art, in the form of a seven-foot-tall phallic banana in bronze, held in place by its own banana skin.

**Right:** The Gene Autry Dining Room in The Parker Palm Springs Hotel. Adler gave the iconic Californian hotel a head-to-toe refurbishment ten years after his initial redesign. "This hotel is a psychedelic passion project that has been part of my life for over a decade."

## HEART OF CLAY

work is sold in thirty stores and more than a thousand retailers around the world.

Pottery is a lone occupation, and the Peru experience was crucial to his later success as a designer. "When I went there," he tells us, "I fell in love with the people, the scenery, and the food. I was fortunate to find a group of unbelievably talented artisans to work for me; it was the best thing I could do for my creativity. When I didn't have to make every single piece myself, I was free to design textiles, furniture, lighting, and everything we make today."

This is probably why he is famously reluctant to discuss inspiration, but we asked him anyway.

"People always ask, and it's the most impossible question to answer. I should probably come up with something to say, because the reality is, I have no idea. Inspiration is kind of anything, everything, and yet nothing." Few interviewees in this magazine have come up with such a wise and honest answer to this question.

## Inspiration is kind of anything, everything and yet nothing

We noticed a mid-European influence in his work, especially in his ceramics, and asked him about it. "Yes," he said, "I'm obsessed with the Vienna Secession, which was an art movement of the late 19th century. Now, I look through that lens when I'm designing and often think, how would my muse have lived there and then?"

Was it also correct to suggest, we asked, that one of his influences, especially with regard to furniture and lighting, is the mid-20th century?

"Definitely," he replied. "The modernism of that period is at the core of my design and my design philosophy." ➔





# Start with a neutral base and then go bananas with colour

This design philosophy is not complicated: a craft-based approach and the use of impeccable materials resulting in chic and elegant products made to classical proportions, often disrupted by an almost subversive readiness to abandon his self-imposed rules and surprise us. Put simply, if you appreciate good design, you'll know a Jonathan Adler when you see it.

He uses bright colours and patterns, claiming to reject the concept of colour coordination. We were curious about that one.

"I always say that there are no rules. But I do think that there is a science to working color into your décor. My go-to trick is to start with a neutral base, and then go bananas with colour. And there are a few 'always' combinations: black and white always works and red, white, and blue always works," he said. ➞



**Left:** The Gilded Dora Maar Urn has subversive signs and symbols in glittering gold. Inspired by Dora Maar the French photographer, poet and painter, and most famously Picasso's lover.

An Ultra Lounge Chair with a Quaaludes Beaded Pillow, inspired by the counterculture designs of the 60's

**Right:** Twiggy, the fashion icon of the 60's, looks out over a Mykonos Table Lamp based on a simple Grecian motif, sitting on a Globo Cabinet, lacquered in white with blue acrylic cabochons.







**Left:** The Cheval Wall Sconce. Jonathan and his team sculpt the horse's head in clay, to be cast in solid brass.

The stylized head designs of the Giuliette Urn and the Giuliette Small Urn is a Jonathan Adler trademark.

His best known interior design projects include his work on The Parker Palm Springs Hotel in California and the Eau Palm Beach Resort and Spa in Florida, and much of his work for private clients remains private, given their celebrity. But he has recently collaborated with the Swedish H&M retail chain to produce a more accessible collection, named the H&M Home X Jonathan Adler Collection.

"It has been a dream to work with H&M Home," he says. "I hope people enjoy the collection as much as I enjoyed designing it."

The collection bears the stamp of the American glamour designer, from brightly coloured vases and mugs to candles and cushions, and the occasional item that defies category.

But through all the brass from India, the ceramics and fabrics from Peru and the wood products from Thailand, the standout material of all of Jonathan Adler's work is clay. Pottery, it is apparent as much here as in any of his collections, is in his blood.

[jonathanadler.com](http://jonathanadler.com)



# ROMO

Sarouk Collection

[romo.com](http://romo.com)





photo Giovanni Gastel

**Grande Sofice** sofa by Francesco Binfaré.

"Smart" backrests slightly adjustable, soft lines, perfect curves, an extraordinary softness: fundamental elements for a total comfort and an everlasting elegance.

The seating system is modular to fulfil any need.

**Brasilia** Table by Fernando and Humberto Campana.

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# VISTA LAGO

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# BEST DESIGN IN EUROPE

UDesign wins major architecture awards  
for the design of **Villa Alcuzcuz**



At the European Property Awards, the Marbella-based architecture and interior design studio, UDesign, picked up the 5-star prize for Spain, winning **Best Architecture Single Residence, Spain**. They then went on to win **Best in Europe** in the same category at the finals of the 2019 International Property Awards.

This is a huge win for the architecture and design sector on the Costa del Sol, because such an award reflects a level of excellence unusual in Europe as a whole, and pushes this southwestern corner of the continent closer to the forefront of world residential architecture and design.





It's not mere chance that such important international awards went to a design company, fairly small relative to many others in the world, whose main offices are located on the Costa del Sol. As Stuart Shield, former advertising executive with Saatchi & Saatchi, publisher of the International Property and Travel magazine and founder of the International Property Awards in 1993, told us: "Spain has embraced modern design far better than the United Kingdom."

UDesign was not the only Spanish company to bring home a trophy. Prestige Expo won the top Developer award "Best Residential Property" with their Villa Cullinan in La Zagaleta, and Porcelanosa won "Best International Kitchen Design" for its Star Trek Kitchen, a sleek modern space that emulates space vibes.

The awards cover a numerous and varied range of categories (11 in architecture alone) from quality of design, construction and presentation of individual properties and developments to interiors, architecture and marketing. They are split into regions covering the globe, with participants entering at their relevant national levels and judged by a highly experienced and independent team of professionals who cover the whole range of property disciplines. The winners are then invited to attend a gala

### WORLD'S BEST 2019 Architecture Single Residence

- AFRICA**  
*M8 House* by L8 Studio (Mauritius)
- AMERICAS**  
*Casa Aramara* by Sarco Architects (Costa Rica)
- ARABIA**  
*HD South Villa* by Dori Hitti Architects (Lebanon)
- ASIA PACIFIC**  
*House In Izura* by Life Style Koubou (Japan)
- EUROPE**  
*Villa Alcuñczuz* by UDesign (Spain)
- UK**  
*Lodwick* by Spatial Design Architects (UK)

## Spain has embraced modern design far better than the United Kingdom

Stuart Shield, Founder and  
President of the International  
Property Awards

ceremony for each region, this year's final taking place in the Savoy Hotel in London.

"No other awards have more variety in tastes, countries and backgrounds," says Stuart Shield. "Our awards are a bit like the Stirling Prize, but super-charged." The brand, which all winners have the right to proudly display as a logo on their marketing material, is known across the world from China to Chile, and among the iconic names that sponsor the awards are Jaguar, Mercedes Benz and Bentley Motors. In 2019 there were over 2,800 entrants.

"For 2020 we are starting two new categories that will have no entry fees, these being a Social Housing Award - we want to highlight properties that deliver a high standard of living - and the Student Architecture Award, that allows talented young architects to gain recognition," says Stuart.

UDesign's entry was the 1,537 square metre Villa Alcuñczuz, located in the exclusive La Reserva de Alcuñczuz, a private residential area between Los Arqueros and La Zagaleta. It's just five minutes from the coast and ten minutes from Marbella, offering the perfect blend of privacy and convenience in an incomparable setting.



**Villa Alcuzcuz:** the view across the pool into the Formal Lounge where the high ceiling runs into two floors. The lighting is an imposing design element in itself and the large mural on the wall adds to the splendour of this room.

The ancient Moors knew all about water: it has to be close to the living area, and this concept has become a UDesign trademark in the positioning of all their pools.





Villa Alcuzcuz is Marbella’s first luxury environmentally-friendly home built to Passive House Regulations and Standards, which guarantees more than 75 percent saving on energy costs, even in large sizes, while also providing consistently fresh air throughout the house, structural longevity and the absence of mold, thus bridging the gap between luxury and sustainability.

The house itself and its surroundings has all the luxury features and innovative design one would expect from a developer whose primary philosophy is design-led construction: free flow from space to space, maximum use of natural light, views of the sea from each of its bedrooms, and built from the inside out in such a way that the line between the two becomes blurred.

Besides the quality designer furniture, fixtures, fittings and lighting, Villa Alcuzcuz has an entertainment space truly out of this world. A cinema and games area with pool table, VIP seating areas, DJ booth and bar, state-of-the-art golf simulator, fully equipped gym, spa with treatment rooms, hair dressing salon and relaxation areas.

But what makes the villa unique may not be initially obvious to the casual observer. What makes it truly different is its low carbon footprint, its exceptional energy efficiency, its environmental friendliness and its most advanced domotic system, by which the security, safety, light and climate control of the entire property is intelligently controlled. In short, this house more or less thinks for itself. ➡

All the details, big and small, come together in this stunning view of the Mediterranean from inside the Formal Lounge. Perfectly symmetrical designer fittings, with the ceiling lights redefining the sky and two warriors inviting us to look outwards, make this pure designer opulence.

**Villa Alcuzcuz - the developer**

BRIGHT is a development company that takes a radically different approach, creating exceptional spaces that improve quality of life through pure design. Apart from Villa Alcuzcuz, the company is also developing another project in the Marbella area: Vista Lago Residences, a luxury development of 18 designer villas in Real de la Quinta. It was set up shortly after its current CEO, Michael Rodziewicz, met his counterpart in UDesign, Jason Harris, asking for help in turning his Marbella house into a home. UDesign brings to this partnership years of experience in architecture, high end interior design and custom-made bespoke furniture.





Villa Alcuzcuz – the designer

UD Magazine sat down with Jason Harris, Creative Director of both UDesign and Bright, to talk about architecture and design, winning awards and how he ended up where he is today.

How important is this award for you?

We don't design to win awards. We design because it's what we do. The award is a vindication of what we have already done, a confirmation, if one were needed, that we have done it right. In that sense, it's very important for us.

How did you get into architecture and interior design?

More accident than plan. When my wife and I bought an apartment, it had an upstairs space that wasn't properly integrated with the rest of the apartment. So we designed it into a master bedroom suite and it quickly became a sort of showroom for the neighbours, who wanted something similar. It was all done sporadically. Before we knew it, I had a dozen clients all wanting us to design their various projects. We rented a small studio to make furniture, and it escalated from there. Our first employees were carpenters, not interior designers, so we started designing the furniture we couldn't find anywhere else. Later we realised that rooms were not quite how we wanted them, so we started designing our own rooms, and then villas for those rooms.

Can good design be summed up in a single sentence?

Yes, but the complexity of good design may require various single sentences: Good design should make you feel good / A good designer creates spaces that provoke emotion / The most important ingredient in good design is natural light. And so on...

What do you think of Spain's most famous architect, Santiago Calatrava?

Well, my passion is interiors. I like to look at the insides of buildings, in volumes of space, light, and how it affects space, and his Oculus building in the World Trade Centre station is very impressive in this respect. From the outside it's a piece of great sculpture sitting in the middle of all those skyscrapers, isn't it?



View from the Family TV room across the terrace towards the Formal Lounge





This magnificent terrace manages to cleverly contain five distinct areas: the sunbathing area, the fire pit with comfy sofas, the TV room terrace, the kitchen and dining room terrace, and the formal lounge terrace.

**What do these awards mean for the entire architecture and design sector on the Costa del Sol?**

You know that in Spain, unlike Britain or Ireland, a bar or restaurant increases in value if located close to other good bars and restaurants, because quality attracts quality. The same has happened here on the Costa del Sol with regard to architecture and design, especially in the Marbella area, and this win of ours has added to the upward spiral of excellence. A high degree of competition has been created, and with that the level of quality and design keeps increasing.

**So Marbella really is special?**

Yes, it certainly is. It's the place to be if you want to design and build high end luxury villas. You would think that places like Los Angeles or Beverly Hills could rival Marbella, but they actually don't. There are, of course, some of the most expensive properties in the world in these other areas, but there isn't enough land there to build luxury villas in volume, while the mountains of Ronda and Benahavis still have plenty of available plots with breathtaking views. Now is a great time to be developing new projects here.

**With each new project you have to let go and start all over again. How do you manage?**

Design and architecture doesn't feel like work for me. We try to attract clients so that we can continue to design, rather than design to attract clients. It's all about new ideas and improving on quality and creativity. I almost never go to see my finished projects, because I only see all the things that could be better and get frustrated. We go to design and architectural fairs to see something new and I think to myself: "This is an idea. I can integrate an improved version of this into my next project." It's a never-ending process, and that's what keeps it exciting.

**What's next for Bright?**

Believe it or not, the other day I was thinking even bigger than a single development. I got thinking about a whole community with hotel, shops, bars, restaurants, golf course and everything else, all developed by Bright. Who knows what the future holds?

[villa-alcuzcuz.com](http://villa-alcuzcuz.com) / [udesign.es](http://udesign.es) / [by-bright.com](http://by-bright.com)





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# MAN OF THE WORLD



A descendant of the Qajar dynasty, which ruled Iran from 1794 to 1925, artist Firouz Farman-Farmaian has turned his life-long political exile into a canvas.

*UD Magazine talks to Firouz about the caravan of life, the unknown path and connecting to our roots.*



Interview by Anastasia Sukhanov  
Images courtesy of the artist

**F**irouz FarmanFarmaian is a contemporary artist who embodies many themes that are central to our society: belonging and exile, origins and tolerance, memory and present. A man without a country, he is a man of the world who, having left his homeland in Iran because of political turmoil at the age of four, grew up between Paris, Marrakesh and Marbella. A lover of life in Tarifa, he admits that its wind can make you a little crazy, and he often travels to Finland to reconnect with nature and his Nordic roots. His artworks are just as multifaceted: the architect in him brings scale, the rock band singer brings poetry and rhythm and the diasporic Persian artist an exploration of separation and all the cultures he has absorbed. With previous exhibitions in New York, Paris, London, Washington, Dubai and Tehran, to name a few places, the artist is at ease with movement, as long as the caravan of life brings him to the next adventure.

**At the beginning of your creative path you dropped out of architecture studies and went on the road earning money solely with your art. What gave you the courage to do that?**

My paternal grandfather, Persian architect Abdol-Aziz FarmanFarmaian, was the founder and head of AFFA, the largest contemporary architecture agency of the Middle East up to 1979. Following the Islamic revolution my brother Teymour and I were taken under his wing in Paris to be tutored and prepped before we both signed up for architecture. Teymour became the architect. At first, I also felt at ease in the companionship of the ateliers, the diversity of the courses, the freedom to manage projects and assume control of concepts. But I soon hit creative limitations as I felt increasingly curious to discover new areas of investigation. That's when I decided to hit the road as a writer, director and producer of avant-garde shorts. It was very tough, but I moved from that point up. As the creative process unrolls, I feel confident, content. As long as the caravan weaves its way towards the next exploration. ➡



**A Woman with Veil in Purple** (Panel III), 100 x 120 cm, 2017. Amazonite Pigment, Acrylic, Digital Art layered on Archival Canvas Print.

**Daybreak Panel I** (Chapel series) 2018. Pigment, Acrylic, Majorelle Blue, Wallpaint, Oil Sticks and Earth on Cotton Bedsheet.

As the creative process unrolls, I feel confident, content





**It seems the past inevitably influences us even if we aren't aware of it. When did you start realising that the separation from your country was a theme you had to explore?**

When you come to think of it, the sheer complexity of interwoven circumstances that need to shape up to create a full-scale revolution are simply staggering. And that's what happened in Iran in 1979. At the scale of my tribe, to lose the physical link to our ancestral land has been brutal. Not unlike being thrown out on angry seas and landing on foreign shores. It took time for me to find a path forward. I had many questions to answer.

**Tribalism is a term often used in a derogatory way when it comes to social behaviour, and yet 'tribal' is an adjective enthusiastically embraced by the worlds of art and design. Why?**

This precise dichotomy was the underlying thematic of my last New York exhibition, *Poetry of the Tribe*. It felt timely and appropriate given the political climate in the United States and the rising voices of native poets ringing throughout America. The population of earth is growing, communications have been fluidified, and the idea of "nation" is under threat as we move towards a global consciousness merging the material and the immaterial. The epidemic rejection of this relentless wave is a return to nationalism and protectionist politics, dubbed as a return to tribalism by the mainstream press. It is as simplistic as it is false. On the contrary, tribes have arisen from the heat of this new wave, reconnecting to values such as the sacred, the respect of memory, the safeguarding of the planet through the story of our link to it. The art world is, for many, a refuge where non-formatted spiritual thought is seen as evolved and forward.

**After having spent some time in Finland (where your wife comes from) what can you say about the Nordic cultures and their way of self-expression?**

What strikes you first is their tight connection to nature. I tuned in very fast in Finland. Walking barefoot in blueberry fields listening to the forest. I introduced handpicked blueberries into the Naturescape (Blueberry Panels) Series that sold-out last fall in my Washington DC



**Totem XII Part I**, 170 x 170 cm, 2018. Plastic Paint & Oil stick on Cotton Sheet – from the New York exhibition *Poetry of the Tribe*

Tribalism is a realm of ferocious beauty, of ancestral longing, and ultimately, of love itself

Cyrus Bozorgmehr



**Above: Talisman VI**, 240 x 140 cm, 2019. Flashe Paint, Plastic Paint, Henne, Pigmented Raw Wool & Acrylic Marker on Berber Tent Fabric

**Right: Portrait of a Berber Woman** 100 x70cm, 2019. Pigment, Oil Stick & Acrylic Marker on Archival Print

Both pieces from the London exhibition *Permanence of Trace*







All images on this page from the **Naturescape Series – BlueBerry Study Sequence**, 33,2 x 50 cm, 2015. Oil Stick, Graphite, Gouache, Acrylic & Blueberries on 220 g paper.

exhibition. There is a dialogue between the man and the natural world that has been set aside, but it is very alive in the North. On one side, my mother is a Swedish-Finn expatriate born in Calcutta, brought up in Beirut and married in Tehran, where I was born. My grandfather was an attaché to the Swedish Embassy and lived his life moving around the East. He once compared his family life to one of a travelling caravan. On the other side, my Finnish great grandfather was a painter of Kalevala (epic Nordic poetry). I grew up impacted by his art deco representation of the Vikings fighting a mythical sea dragon on stormy seas. My Finnish grandmother called it *sisu*. I relate to that. It is a very positive mind frame. As my mother puts it: be open, be positive, fight on.

**What characteristics would your ideal home have in terms of architecture and interior design?**

In terms of architecture, a central characteristic would be the connection between the abstract form and the surrounding nature. If I could, I would also introduce responsibility to recycle what we leave behind as a new kind of social contract. Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas talks about it extensively in his Junkspace essay. Inside, I love my mess (which drives my wife crazy). I staple, tape, stack and sketch on any open surface. I collect furniture I inherit. Design-wise I relate to Philippe Starck, but my heart is set in Knoll-style vintage of the 70s. Camilla and I often spend our Sundays hunting the flea markets of Paris. Nowadays, you can often see us roam the dark alleyways of Torremolinos or the Fuengirola *rastro*.

**You're currently based in Marbella and Marrakesh. What is it about the two places that made you settle?**

My parents divorced in the mid-eighties while living in Marbella. My mother stayed on, but my father relocated to Marrakesh. I grew up in constant transit between Marbella, Marrakesh and Paris. Camilla and I adore living by the Strait of Gibraltar, we find it powerfully romantic to have the option to cross over into continents at will. As a result, our art space, Nouvelle Vague Artspace, is based in Spain and our agency, We R the Nomads, is based in Morocco. The agency works on cross-cultural projects such as the production of Memorandum of the Unknown Path. The installation and its prototype book







will be on display at the Royal Theatre of Marrakesh from February 2020 onwards as part of the Marrakesh edition of 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair.

**What is the main idea behind the Memorandum of the Unknown Path?**

Memorandum of the Unknown Path triggers the necessary question of a return to the source. If ecology of the planet is the restoration of a natural world order, then ecology of the spirit is a restoration of a link to our millenary archaic selves. It stems from an urge to create a Wagnerian 'Gesamtkunstwerk', a total work of art. To illuminate unseen stories, traces, through a Tolstoyan sense of time, weaving its wheels. The installation entangles Moroccan and Persian tribal cultures in a Sufi-like dance of textures and symbols, weaving fabrics sourced in the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara Desert. Created as a site-specific intervention in the main hall of architect Charles Boccara's legendary Théâtre Royal de Marrakesh, it turns nomad tent elements into a work of art. A circle of contemplation and meditation, a haven where different cultures can meet and reflect. The balance between archaic spirit and tech-age philosophies. The juncture of cultures crossing and creating new tribes. The unicity of our planet. Contemporary revolutions.

**Banner of the Unbanished**  
Artist Proof, 2019. Majorelle Blue, Sienna Pigment, Plastic Paint and Acrylic Marker on Tent Fabric.

**Memorandum of the Unknown Path, Théâtre Royal de Marrakesh.**  
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# CLOSER TO HEAVEN

Architectural space is a funny thing. Too little of it makes us feel uncomfortable and too much of it makes us feel uncomfortable. Getting it just right is the key to good architectural design, and we believe this has been achieved in this exceptional Marbella roof terrace.

*Text by Sophie Ann Gatward Wicks | Photos courtesy of UDesign*



The pool, 1.20 metres at its deepest, is more for splashing about and cooling down than for serious swimming in. Beyond it we see the large TV screen and pagoda, whose blinds are electrified to open and close with the seasons and the sun.

The third floor, although not usually referred to as such, is too often neglected. In warm climates, whether the top of a penthouse or the flat roof of a villa, the third floor - the roof terrace - is a space too big and too far away to be properly designed for living. The time has come to change all that. But how we refer to it is a question of linguistics. More importantly, the aim is to improve the quality of architectural design in a large space that should be used more, and will only be used more if the problems inherent in any over-sized space without a roof are solved: lack of intimacy and functionality, the weather and not least, expense. At an average size of 200 to 300 square metres (the surface area of the entire ground floor in most cases), this is an area that will never invite regular use while furnished with a Jacuzzi or plunge pool and barbeque stuck in a corner or, if placed in the middle, lost in the vast space around it, with lonely pieces of rattan furniture strewn around like small blobs of paint on an empty canvas.

A roof terrace, due to its size, is difficult to furnish well, and it can be ridiculously expensive to do so. And when finished, the weather may change with a sudden storm and it's back to square one. But this is only one problem, and perhaps not the worst. Who really wants to traipse up the stairs from the ground floor to take the sun or have a barbeque in a space that has not really been designed for easy and enjoyable living? In too many cases, the answer ends up being no, despite the best of intentions at the beginning. To put it simply, the average roof terrace is less than appreciated and vastly under-used.

So what's the solution? We spoke to the architects at UDesign who designed the magnificent roof terrace you see in this feature. They were very clear about one thing: they wanted to achieve a design that would invite people





This pagoda has been designed for lounging and dining, with the element of fire an integral part of the whole.

The very best materials are used throughout: bleached oak, corian, solid stone and luxury fabrics that will withstand both weather and wear.





upwards. It should have functionality and order. It already, in all likelihood, has the best views of the property, and this may well have been an initial reason for the house purchase, so it should obviously be a place one would like to spend a lot more time in. To be as it should be requires resources and imagination, but the result would be well worth it, both in time spent using it and in the substantial resale value it adds to a property. To make full use of available and, too often, superfluous space is always a priority.

“Imagine inviting guests to your house, lots of them, and suggesting everyone moves up to the terrace,” they told us, “and then imagine the looks of pleasant surprise on their faces when they see that what’s there is not at all what they imagined. Instead of a large expanse of nothingness, they find themselves in a very comfortable and enjoyable space they will never forget, with different areas for different purposes: dining area, bar area, splash pool, Jacuzzi, do-nothing-but-sip-a-cool-drink-and-chat area, take-in-the-view area and any other space your creativity and good design comes up with. Luxury living brings you closer to heaven.”

**Above:** A real-life bar on the rooftop. How could one live without such basic features? If standing around nibbling on a barbecued chicken wing while trying to balance a paper plate was your idea of terrace dining, welcome to a new world of roof terrace design.

**Right:** The olive tree brings nature right up to the top of the house. Note the clever illumination of the tree and underneath its base structure. Light is what turns night to magic.



A good roof terrace should have plenty of do-nothing-but-sip-a-cool-drink-and-chat areas



## A roof terrace requires resources and imagination, but the result is well worth it

The nuts and bolts in a space like this are in the weatherproof fittings and furniture, with nothing like the stark functionality of outdoor furniture of days gone by. These include the clippable and unclippable sun shades and space dividers, the beautifully designed lighting systems that make this pure magic by night, and the extraordinary use of fire and water to create ambience.

This is space for somebody who loves entertaining, comfortably fitting up to a hundred people who will all leave with an experience not easily forgotten. All in all, such a magnificent roof terrace amounts to a lot of effort and not a little expense, but it will pay for itself in many different ways over time. And it will certainly enrich the life of its owner in the meantime.

*If you have a roof terrace that has been seriously neglected and could do with some TLC, contact the team at UDesign. **udesign.es***



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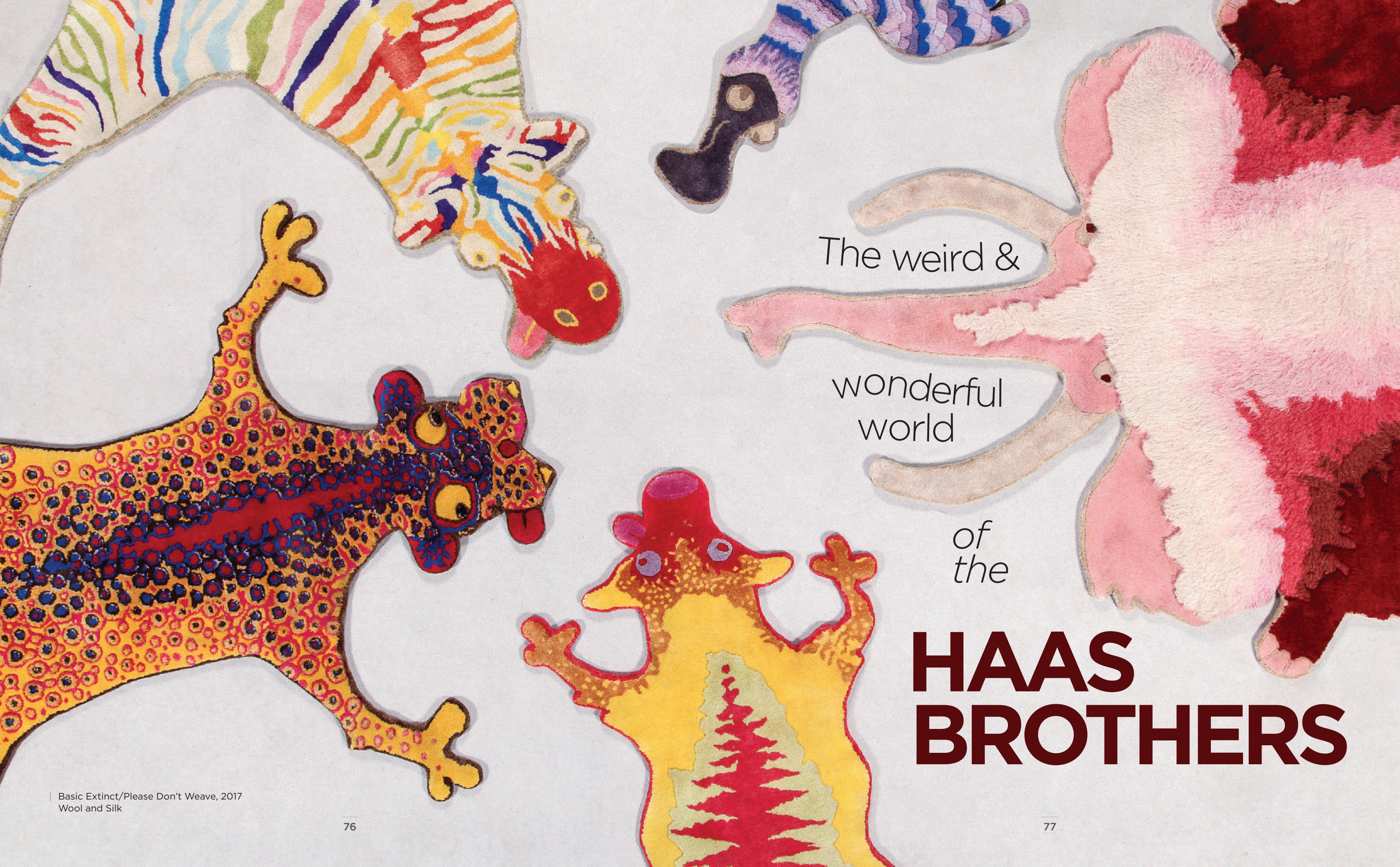


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**HAAS  
BROTHERS**





# The Haas brothers are unconventional, to put it mildly

Simon Haas (left) & Nikolai Haas

Interview by  
Vivion O'Kelly

Photos by  
Alan Nakkash, Joe  
Kramm & Mason Poole

## INTERVIEW WITH SIMON & NIKOLAI HAAS

There's something weird about those Haas brothers. Freaky, one could more accurately say. They make freaky artwork, freaky furniture and freaky *objets d'art*. But among the dictionary definitions of a freak is "an unconventional person". And the Haas brothers are unconventional, to put it mildly, producing work that is also beautiful, highly coloured, fantastic (in the proper sense of the word), sometimes provocative, often absurd and humorous, surreal and very creative.

The fact that a body of work is unconventional does not, in itself, signify excellence, any more than conventionality always means the absence of creativity. Picasso, after all, painted the same subject matter that had been painted for thousands of years. He just did it differently. Like Nikolai and Simon Haas, he looked at things as they had not been looked at before. More sculptors than painters, the two brothers have managed to retain, as adults, the exuberant *joie de vivre* that their upbringing in a creative environment instilled in them. It's no coincidence that Picasso's father was also an artist.



Design Miami, 2017



Although born in Santa Monica, and now regarded as quintessentially Californian, they grew up in Austin, Texas. Their mother was an opera singer and their father a sculptor, and as children they were given more or less free rein (and probably reign) in the studio. They made things, gaining at an early age both the skills needed to work creatively and the creativity needed to work skillfully. Simon chose, when the time came, to study at the Rhode Island School of Design and Nikolai formed a band in Los Angeles.

They began working together in 2009, making bespoke furniture for the actor Toby Maguire, and success in this venture attracted other celebrity clients in L.A. They opened their studio there a year later, since then exhibiting in some of the most prestigious venues in the country and collaborating with people in other creative fields. Their work has been shown worldwide.

In 2014 the brothers travelled to South Africa and found inspiration in the traditional craft of coloured beadwork, which led to a collaborative project with local Cape Town women, which they named Afreaks. The immediate result was exhibitions in Cape Town and the United States of fantasy creatures and giant mushrooms in patterned beadwork, while in the longer term they helped provide a steady income for the Monkeybiz team, as they are named, back in South Africa.

**One's first reaction to your work: these guys are crazy! How seriously do you work on each idea you develop?**

**Niki:** Ha ha! I'm happy that's the reaction, because we work really hard on all of our work but truly want the experience of it to be fun and easy. Our work is humorous and brightly coloured and odd at first glance, but we're really adamant about inserting real meaning into it. We often create micro economies around our work, as well as try to use our platform to advocate human rights. That's truly what our work is about. The crazy aesthetic is just our means of delivery. The true work of our practice is staying true to the philosophies and culture we've set up inside our studio. **Simon:** We take our work very seriously. Each object takes hundreds of hours of hand work and years of research and development. We strive to make objects that are funny and surreal but that are extremely carefully and beautifully made.



Pumpkin Eater, 2019 |



**The nature of your work as art pieces, and your reputation, must make it too expensive for the average home owner. Would you ever consider producing a bargain range?**

**Niki:** Yes, we have! We did a project with Rihanna, called *L'Objet*, and we've just released a set of miniature sculptures named Microfreaks. All of these projects are meant to be more affordable. To be fair, they are still expensive, but much less so than our art pieces. In the future we plan on releasing some cartoons! They will be basically free, so we're stoked about that too. **Simon:** Our work is expensive primarily because it is handmade with fine materials, and we wouldn't sacrifice quality in the interest of producing something less expensive.

**You've expressed admiration for Duchamp, Warhol and Basquait, which of these would you like to have collaborated with?**

**Niki:** I want to collaborate with people who don't work in such a similar vein as us. Instead of working with another painter or sculptor, we've chosen to work with musicians, cartoonists and communities in need – people who don't do what we do.

**Simon:** If I could collaborate with anyone living or dead, it would have to be Gaudí. His imagination and appreciation for science would get me very excited.

**Many of your pieces are undeniably cute. How do you avoid falling into the trap this could create?**

**Niki:** It's only a trap if you see it that way. We're just making what we make! I like cute shit. I'm happy for people to see it that way. **Simon:** I don't think cuteness is a trap! I think it's a really valuable thing. It actually serves an important purpose – imagine if babies weren't cute! Cuteness is essential for survival and humans have a strong positive reaction to it.

Our work is expensive because it's made by hand with fine materials

| Right: The Afreaks Series, Beaded Sculpture, Cast Bronze, 2015

Below: Accretions, Ceramic 2016



We take our work very seriously. Each object takes hundreds of hours of hand work

**Afreaks debuted at Miami Design in 2015. Do you see this collaboration as long term?**

**Niki:** Yes! It took about two years to build that collection so the project has been rolling for about six years now. We plan on creating freaks for the foreseeable future and beyond. So I'd consider that long term. We'd love to keep it going for as long as possible because that was a community with so little money that our project brought a much needed income. It would be a shame to pull that income from the community. **Simon:** We very much see this as long term. We have been working with the same group of women for more than six years and hope to keep it going for much longer. They've become a really important part of our practice.

**You're both young, bright and creative. What plans do you have to avoid becoming old and boring?**

**Niki:** Haha, I have a two-year-old, so that's my main plan. That and to keep making art and having fun. **Simon:** I can't avoid becoming old and if I wind up having a calmer







| Bathy Bates, Pele de Tigre Marble, 2018

and less exciting life, I very much hope that I settle into it happily. I really value having a calm and quiet home life and will take all the changes life brings in my stride.

**Are you changing the world?**

**Niki:** I think we're changing our little corner of it, yes. I know we're making a big difference in the communities we engage, so hopefully those differences echo into bigger things in the future. **Simon:** I do hope to leave a mark on the world but I don't think I can say in my own lifetime whether I've changed it or not. If anything I'd like to influence young artists by telling them to just keep pursuing what they're doing and not let what others think stop them; that boundaries set in place by markets should never influence what you want to make.

[thehaasbrothers.com](http://thehaasbrothers.com)

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## UDESIGN SHOWCASE

# TANGIER

## APARTMENT

Tangier, the Moroccan Saint-Tropez, is the meeting point of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, but it's not just the waters that have been mixing here for centuries. Berbers, Phoenicians, Arabs, colonial powers, artists and celebrities have all left traces of their culture on the modern version of this mythical city. This Tangier apartment melds perfectly with the setting, combining ultra-modern interior design and comfort with the traditional elements of a Moroccan home.

*Anastasia Sukhanov reviews the interior design of this corner apartment in the brand-new Tanja Marina Bay development.*

Tom Dixon Melt lights hang gracefully over the custom-made dining table accompanied by Tom Dixon white leather chairs.





With 200 metres of LED lighting, the domotics in this contemporary home are a masterpiece

**F**ar from a typical home you'd see anywhere in Morocco, this spacious 320 square metre corner apartment was created by combining two separate flats in the new Tanja Marina Bay development. Knocking down walls and practically starting from scratch UDesign completely reinvented the space turning it into a fresh contemporary home with breathtaking views over the port on one side and the main promenade of Tangier on the other.

Aside from three bedrooms, the apartment has extensive common space, which consists of the dining area, living area, TV lounge and *jaima*, a traditional Moroccan sitting area. One could practically spend the whole day between the four areas – chatting, making and drinking tea, relaxing next to the fireplace and watching the ferries go by.

To reinforce the contemporary feel, UDesign chose to flood the apartment with LED lighting. A selection of white and RGB colour schemes allows the owner to set the mood for the entire common area at the touch of a button – anything from cosy pink to disco-blue. As far as domotic solutions go, this is a masterpiece. After all, domotic software is only as good as the lighting and appliances that complement it and, in this case, there are about 200 metres of LED lighting and various lamps. The system can be programmed to slowly change from one colour scheme to another, creating a relaxing flow of coloured light throughout the entire apartment.

The common space revolves around a circular dining table with a eucalyptus top, custom-made by UDesign and clearly underlined by a burnt orange silk rug and Tom Dixon lights. The TV area is complete with an ample















## UDESIGN SHOWCASE

The circular nature of elements in this area evoke the spirit of the past, where elders and guests of the tribe sat in a circle around the fire, under the desert stars. U Turn Chairs by Benson, centre low tables in gold and onyx by Edra, mirrors by Sovet Italia.

custom-made UDesign sofa and LED fireplace. The eucalyptus theme is continued with vertical detailing on the TV panel, in combination with large format granite tiles. The elegant wall cabinet has been custom-made by UDesign in eucalyptus and white glass, tying up the colour scheme of this part of the common area. It's all in the details though: mystery and depth are brought to this interior with two bronze mirrors by Catellan Italia and Pulpo floor lamps.

The kitchen is open-plan and, naturally, equipped with top-level Gaggenau appliances. To achieve the level of lighting and the floating effect, the whole kitchen structure was wrapped around an LED unit. The colours and character of Morocco are brought back into the otherwise neutral space with a funky digital art piece depicting tagine tops. A very special area of this contemporary apartment is the *jaima*, a classical element of Berber culture. A traditional Berber desert camp would have a designated space centered around the fire or secluded by a tent, where men could congregate to discuss important business matters and smoke shisha. While the design of this *jaima* is far from its origins, it is clearly set up to encourage quality conversation. The porthole style Sovet Italia mirrors bring cruise liner vibes and allow someone standing in the kitchen to see the boats entering the port. →

Under the watchful eye of a stylish Nomon clock, the open-plan kitchen can be both casual and smart, depending on the LED scheme chosen for lighting.







Mystery and depth are brought to this interior in the details









The master suite, with its own lounge, is an oasis of privacy and quiet

While all the common areas of the apartment encourage one to roam free and socialise, the master suite is an oasis of privacy and quiet. Consisting of a lounge, walk-in wardrobe, bathroom and bedroom itself, it's broken down into areas by a smoked eucalyptus panel holding the TV and the LED fireplace. The bed is custom-made by UDesign from off-white Nobu leather, with a Moroccan touch added by the multi-coloured Contardi pendant lamps. The two guest bedrooms are designed in simple and fresh Mediterranean tones, both complete with the legendary Caadre mirror designed by Philippe Starck for Fiam Italia.

The grooved eucalyptus wooden panel above the sumptuous master bed has integrated LED lights, just in case you feel like adding a twist to your alarm clock routine.



Finished in Calacatta marble tiles, the bathroom has a striking colour accent in the form of an LED backlit moss sculpture by UDesign.







**Above:** Walk-in wardrobe in smoked glass. At the end of the wardrobe there is a vanity unit and stool right by the window with views across the bay.

**Right:** The lounge area of the suite. The central column that separates the space has a screen on both sides.







Over the last hundred years, Tangier became a destination for many European and American diplomats, spies, writers, artists and businessmen. Like any city with substantial history, it attracts both opportunists and romantics, and holds within it many different moods. UDesign has reinvented this apartment to reflect this diversity and preserve Moroccan and Mediterranean heritage while creating a modern and bright home.

[udesign.es](http://udesign.es)

Picking up the Moroccan flavour of the rest of the apartment, the guest bedrooms are visually amplified by the legendary Caadre mirrors designed by Philippe Starck for Fiam Italia.

The interior design process

UDesign’s in-house visual artists create very realistic and highly detailed 3D renderings. During the interior design process of this Tangier apartment, the client was shown 3D renders of the finished design for their approval. As you can see from the renderings and real photographs below, it’s pretty difficult to tell the two apart. Answers at the bottom of the page. No peeking!

Which image is a 3D rendering and which is a photograph?



Both images on top are renderings



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## DESIGNER ESCAPES

# CHIC & SEXY RETREATS



In this issue we look at a sumptuous urban palace and three stunning beach properties: a French hotel in midtown Manhattan, a hippy-chic spot on an unspoiled Mediterranean isle, a treetop retreat on the Mexican Riviera and an eco-paradise in the idyllic Maldives.

by Fiona Flores Watson



KUDADOO, MALDIVES

If environmental concerns are as important to you as a stunning location, then this luxury eco-conscious island resort in the Indian Ocean with solar power, energy-efficient climate control and sustainable building materials is perfect.

On a secluded private isle in the Maldives, the multi award-winning tropical hotel has just 15 over-water wooden villas, built with minimum environmental impact on the seabed. For guests, everything is included during their stay - unlimited meals, drinks, leisure activities, excursions and wellness treatments, as well as one's own private 24-hours-a-day butler.

Naturally, the low-key luxe villas at Kudadoo (the name means small island) feature a private pool. Architect Yuji Kamazaki wanted the residences to feel as natural as possible, with timber roofs and shaded outdoor living areas, opening on two sides to give the feel of being close to the turquoise waters, while the oak floor is from sustainably-managed forests. The design is inspired by the architect's native Japan.

This is an ideal place to disconnect, with spa experiences including a cave lined with 1,000-year-old Himalayan salt, while the more active can go paddleboarding, sailing or kiteboarding. For speed freaks, there are speedboats and jet skis – look out for dolphins. Guests can also get close to the undersea world by snorkelling and scuba diving in coral reefs, spotting turtles, rays and sharks, and having fun on water scooters.

Our favourite gastronomic experiences are the floating breakfast in one's own pool, and the world's largest all-glass undersea restaurant (at the next door sister resort), although one can also dine on the beach by candle light, in one's own villa, or at the central building, whose roof is covered with the solar panels that power the resort. Many ingredients are organic and sustainably sourced, or grown on the island, which also has a water-bottling plant – single-use plastics aren't allowed - to add to the eco-friendly vibe of the resort.

[kudadoo.com](http://kudadoo.com)

This multi award-winning tropical hotel has just 15 over-water luxury wooden villas



The outdoor deck of each villa is a spacious extension of the living space topped off with a 44 m² infinity plunge pool, for those who don't fancy braving the sea.



Below: The roof of Kudadoo's iconic two-storey architectural masterpiece, the Retreat, generates sufficient electricity to serve 50 residents and 100 staff occupying the resort at any one time.







## AZULIK, MEXICO

Picture a hotel whose candle-lit rooms are either perched on the jungle treetops or peeking out at the Caribbean, made entirely of natural materials. Designed in harmony with its natural environment and local Mayan beliefs, following a distinctive yet free-flowing architectural form, Azulik eco-retreat is a unique and ground-breaking concept in the fashionable Mexican beach resort of Tulum.

A hotel largely without mod-cons like TV, air conditioning and in-room WIFI can present a challenge to our modern-day preconceived assumptions and expectations. But Azulik is a different sort of project, embracing nature, art and ancient wisdom.

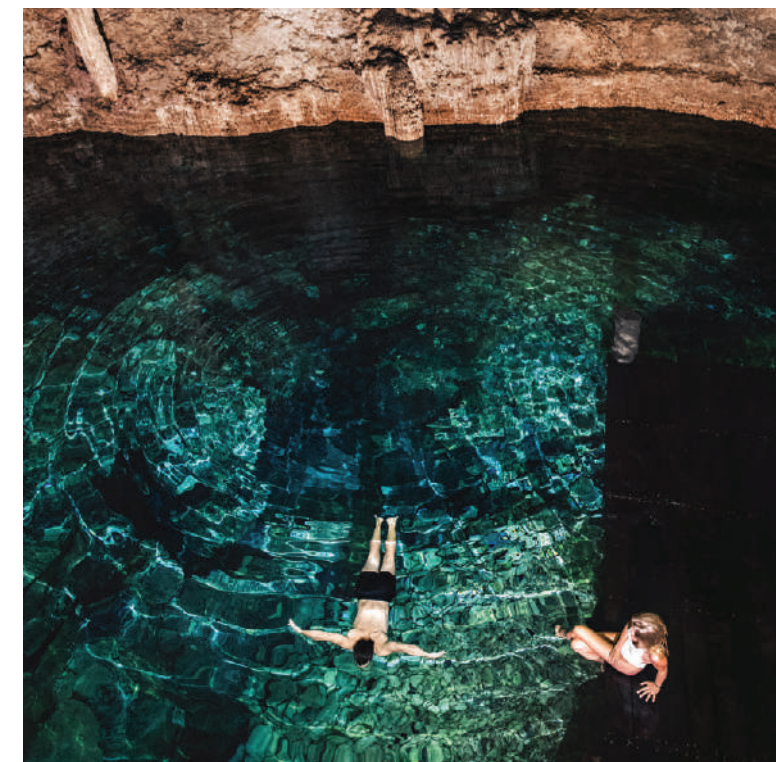
The eco-resort's 48 Insta-friendly villas, or "habitable sculptures", are furnished with wooden beds and mosaic-tiled or volcanic stone bathtubs. Guests can choose from several room types including the spectacular, spacious, sea-facing Aqua suite (100 m<sup>2</sup>), featuring indoor waterways and direct beach access, while even the most bijoux, basic Jungle rooms (7 m<sup>2</sup>) have power points and an outdoor balcony with private hot tub fed by cenote water (from sacred underground pools).

All the villas, restaurants and other facilities within the resort are connected by raised winding walkways, with trees growing naturally around and through them – hence the uneven floors.

The Patagonian-born artist and entrepreneur behind the project, Roth, has no formal architectural training, and built the hotel gradually and organically using locally-sourced sustainable materials from the jungle such as *bejuco* (an indigenous climbing plant) and *jiles* (wooden sticks).

Azulik (meaning blue wind) has an onsite gallery, SFER IK, with characteristically amorphous shapes and undulating floors made of concrete and timber (Peggy Guggenheim's great-grandson co-curated the inaugural exhibition); a house of ancestral medicine; a spa and beauty salon; and a shop selling clothing and accessories.

[azulik.com](http://azulik.com)





## FIVE FLOWERS, FORMENTERA

As the first five-star hotel on the least-known of the Balearic islands, this newly-opened hipster hangout has a fun hippie-luxe vibe.

The hotel, which opened in May 2019, immediately shows its quirky, whimsical side, with huge sculptural flowers adorning each corner of its white concrete and glass block, like something out of a psychedelic fairytale. Inside, one finds soft, rounded chairs in a petal-like design, as well as pods often seen in forward-thinking tech companies.

The organic interior design of the 79 good-sized rooms features orchid-shaped basins, complete with applique-type flower decorations hanging from the ceiling and enhancing the walls. The floral theme continues with the room names, from Flower Boutique to Flower Garden and Flower Sky. All rooms have their own terrace or balcony, but the premiums (Flower Sky and the suites) also come with private whirlpool tub.

The 1960s and 1970s hippie flower-power theme – zingy orange, citrus yellow and bubblegum pink colour pop chairs and cushions on a white background – combines with modern facilities, such as a 55-inch flatscreen TV, ambient lighting controlled by touch panels, and a Bluetooth speaker.

Es Pujols beach, with its clear turquoise waters, is just two minutes' walk away, and one can cycle to other beaches nearby. There's a Japanese restaurant by Michelin-starred chef Hideki Matsuhisa on the roof terrace, complete with tasting menu, as well as a Mediterranean restaurant by the ground floor pool.

For cooling off without leaving their luxurious surroundings, guests have an infinity pool on the hotel roof, offering fabulous 360-degree views over the surrounding countryside and the sea, perfect for enjoying a romantic sunset cocktail, as well as a larger pool on the ground floor with sunloungers and daybeds.

[fiveflowershotel.com](http://fiveflowershotel.com)

This brand-new quirky hotel is like something out of a psychedelic fairytale



**Above:** The bright interior of a Flower Boutique room

**Top right:** The bathroom in a Flower Premium room

**Bottom right:** Even the toilets have not escaped the hippy flower-power theme.





BACCARAT HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY

When it comes to sophistication and opulence, they don't come much more glamorous than this Manhattan gem

The first hotel by the legendary French crystal house the Baccarat is decorated, lined and hung with 15,000 pieces of hand-cut crystalware that glimmers and glistens throughout. Combining Parisian living with New York urban style, its 114 rooms and suites occupy the first 12 floors of a 185-metre-tall tower on West 53rd Street. Add a restaurant by two-Michelin-starred Gabriel Kreuther, as well as the US's only De La Mer Spa with a stunning indoor pool, and you have a highly desirable property.

Baccarat, which was founded in 1764, is famous for its exquisite crystalware: glasses, bowls and lamps, as well as jewellery and decorative pieces. The hotel's lofty ceilings are adorned with 17 custom-made chandeliers featuring

**Below:** Inspired by the Côte d'Azur, the pool's checkered floor and warm, pure water make for a dreamlike quality, as does the comfort of its crisp white daybeds.



**Above:** The Bar takes its visual cues from great American long bars of decades past, glamorous ballrooms of French *hôtels particuliers* and the royal stables at Versailles, with distinctive barrel vaulting and natural-wood walls defining much of the space.

signature red crystals, which are made with 24-carat gold dust. One of them, with 64 arms, is in the Grand Salon.

The mood of the hotel is pampering, but on a grand scale. Interior designers Gilles and Boissier (both Parisian, *naturellement*) have used an upscale palette of soft ivory and platinum gray, accented with bold red, while huge displays of fresh blood-red roses provide a dramatic touch against the chic neutral background.

Rooms feel light, spacious and sleek, with sumptuous Mascioni bedding and a monogrammed Baccarat cashmere throw, wood parquet floors and luxurious white marble bathrooms. One even gets a red minibar cabinet with Baccarat crystal glasses, as well as lamps and wall sconces from the French luxury brand. →





We love the crisp white Mascioni bedding and the upscale palette of soft ivory and platinum grey, accented with splashes of bold red

A Parisian connoisseur scoured auction houses for unusual art works, and the hotel is filled with a fascinating variety of pieces, including quirky photographs, paintings and prints which add a sharp contemporary edge. The bar, with its high vaulted ceiling modelled on the stables at Versailles, boasts risqué black and white photographic prints to accompany one's signature cocktail. The afternoon tea menu is a sight to behold, with Turkish and Russian-themed menus. There's even an outdoor terrace, to survey the city; you're on West 53rd Street and Fifth Avenue, opposite MoMA.

Baccarat is reinterpreted in a contemporary way in an LED light show in reception, featuring 2,000 classic Harcourt glasses. Additionally, 11 French or France-based artists were commissioned to reinterpret the Harcourt, into twisted and deconstructed versions, celebrating a new, avant garde perspective on the French house which has provided crystalware to royal families, dignitaries and celebrities around the world for centuries.

[baccarathotels.com](http://baccarathotels.com)

The mood of the hotel is pampering, but on a grand scale



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# LIVING THE SPACE





# Small is BEAUTIFUL

— *the Olive Tree Villa* —

Big is not always beautiful. Sure, a palatial pad or massive mansion is all well and good, but sometimes small but perfectly formed is the more desirable option.

— *Text by Giles Brown, photos courtesy of UDesign* —





Nestling in an exclusive location on the Greek Islands, The Olive Tree Villa combines contemporary design with an innovative and imaginative use of space that effortlessly blends both indoor and outdoor living. One of the principle aims in the design of The Olive Tree Villa was to achieve the impression of a large living space without exceeding the constructed square meterage allocated to the plot. The aim of the UDesign architects was to make the most of the least – to create a building with a relatively small (compared to what has become the norm in luxury housing) constructed square meterage but to make it feel really spacious. This was, of course, the original concept of the villa, and everything else would develop from there.

To achieve this, the team at UDesign came up with the ingenious solution of creating an open garden space that feels as if it's attached to the main living room, but without actually being part of the villa's constructed area. The innovative garden space gives the impression of being part of the living room but, being technically outside the house, it is not counted as part of the building. Having come up with the idea of an interior garden area, the next challenge was what to put in it to make it interesting. The idea here was to create the most dramatic effect possible.

Given the inherent beauty of trees in general, and more specifically, the sturdy but sinuous olive tree, sculptural in shape and relating to times long lost in the history of the Mediterranean, the idea of using it as an integral part of the building was an easy winner. Properly illuminated by night, the rugged bark becomes the patina on the twisting shapes of the trunk, and as natural sculpture, it works beautifully in a villa like this, quite apart from providing the name of the property itself.

With the olive tree and a vertical garden on one side, and a bright Costel Larka painting on the other, the living room doesn't feel like a space enclosed by walls.





A game of textures  
between the onyx wall  
panel and the natural  
wood of the tables is  
settled by the common  
warmth of their colour.







The intelligent layout of the villa maximizes the feeling of space. The first thing that one sees on entering the house is the olive tree and the courtyard. To the left are the bedrooms and to the right, the living room and kitchen area. The courtyard is surrounded by glass, allowing plenty of natural light to filter to the hallway, bedroom areas, the landing and into the lounge. As the courtyard, with its olive tree, is the main feature of the entire villa, it was decided not to separate the lounge from the olive tree itself. To solve that issue, folding glass concertina doors were installed instead of a fixed wall. When folded back, one could literally sit at the dining table, reach out to the tree and pick an olive. ➔

One can sit at the dining table, reach out to the tree and pick an olive



If searching for an example of a kitchen perfectly integrated into the living space, look no further. This onyx-panelled cooking area is so subtle it camouflages the kitchen almost completely.





**Above:** The use of stunning views as an integral architectural element is a classic feature of the UDesign style.

**Left:** The velvet Utrecht armchairs by Cassina, which add a constructivist vibe to the living room, were created by Dutch designer Gerrit Thomas Rietveld back in 1935. The model reveals a designer's fascination with distilling a piece of furniture to its structural basics.

Positioning the dining table correctly, the feeling is as if eating in the garden itself, with the olive tree as part of the dining room layout. A green wall was also added to become an essential part of the overall design, increasing the illusion of outside dining. As one of the team's architects observed: "In terms of bringing nature to the inside, this is as far as we have ever gone, and I love that".

The feeling of nature continues in the interior finishes and features of the Olive Tree Villa. The fireplace uses natural wood and granite, and the tables use natural wood as well as brass. Granite also features in the fireplace, kitchen and on the kitchen island, and in the bathrooms, which also use individually made white artisan tiles. The ceiling continues on this theme, with architectural lighting highlighting the contrast between the roughness of the olive tree and the smoothness of the granite. ➡





SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL



UD INTERIOR DESIGN

The master bedroom features a UDesign custom-made bed and wood panelling.  
**Left:** These 3-dimensional bathroom tiles are a subtle beige, but mismatched in such an eclectic way that they become true artwork.



## A dark pool with LED lights brings a different vibe to the terrace



The living area is also a perfect example of combining natural influences with clinical and clean contemporary objects, featuring a singular dramatic abstract artwork on the wall in the living space. The master bedroom, which overlooks the pool, features a UDesign bed, and beautiful wood panelling. The headboard has lights integrated into the unit itself, while the side tables act as a stylish continuation of the piece. The lights also highlight the wood behind the bed, giving the whole room a cosy and well-detailed feel. The outside space includes a BBQ on the terrace, as well as a stylish pool made with dark granite.

The unusual colour of the swimming pool was a highly successful attempt to bring an inviting atmosphere to a feature that can often seem too clinical in its whiteness. This is the essence of the design concept behind a property that is somewhat smaller than usual for a luxury villa, and it is what makes the Olive Tree Villa stand out from the crowd.

Proportionality, practicality and easy access are vital elements in the overall design, and the result is a glorious piece of architectural and interior design handcraft. In this case, small is, indeed, beautiful.

*All architecture and interior design in this feature is by UDesign.*

**udesign.es**



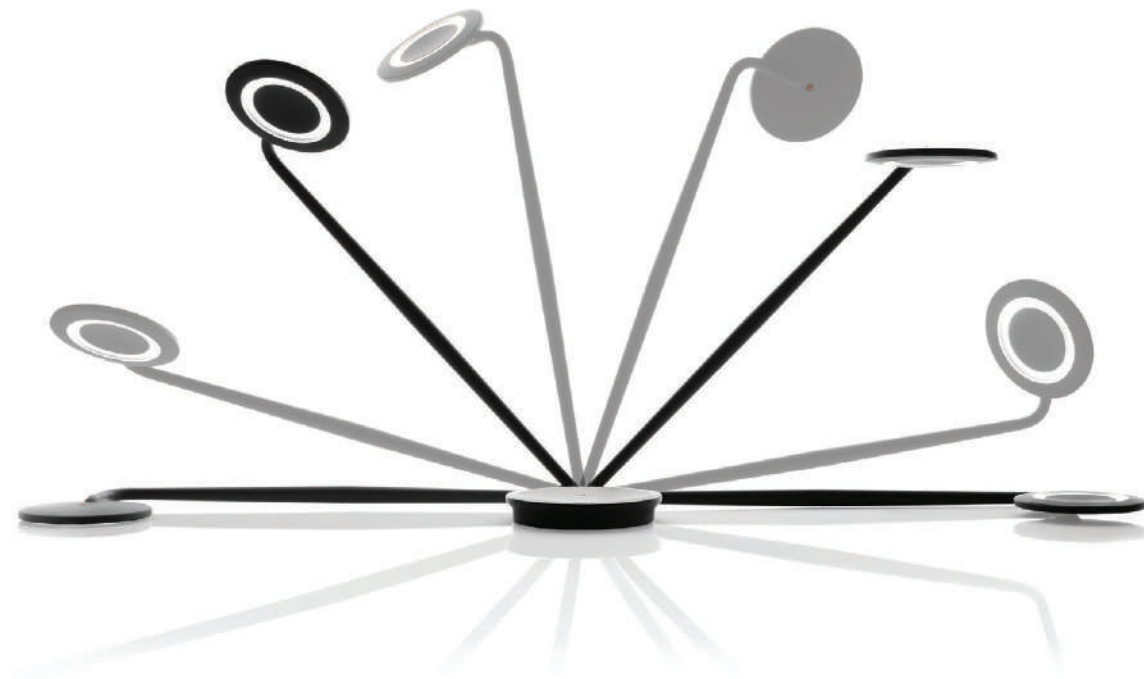
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## DESIGN TRENDS



## THE SUSTAINABLE PIXO PLUS

We love this new ultra efficient Pixo Plus work light by Pablo. Not only does it look cute and provide a warm, non-reflective light, but it's environmentally friendly as well. The compact LED light integrates wireless charging technology, and also has a USB port. It's surprisingly agile, its head combining a switch with 360 degree rotation of the head and the arm, allowing a light focus upwards, sideways and down. It uses only six watts of power, which is 90% more efficient than a comparable halogen light source and 40% more efficient than a compact fluorescent light. It will last for an incredible 50,000 hours or 25 years of daily use. Made from 97% recyclable materials, it is sold unassembled to reduce on packaging.

[pablodesigns.com](http://pablodesigns.com) / [tuscaloosa.es](http://tuscaloosa.es)



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# DESIGN TRENDS

## THE MAGICAL CANOPY OF LIGHT

We are mesmerised by Preciosa Lighting's extraordinary installation at the Mandarin Oriental Jumeira in Dubai. The hotel is located close to the beach, and Preciosa was given a mandate to unite the expansive hotel lobby to the sparkling sea beyond.

Preciosa underlined the warm, inviting interior with an illuminated arboretum of 14 trees that mimic the local desert flora and create a unique experience for guests. This dynamic installation features trees in three different sizes with matte-champagne metal trunks. The trees grow into a sparkling canopy of branches filled with hundreds of hand-blown Bohemian crystal leaves. Being a dynamic installation, the lights in the trees are specially programmed to produce different effects – there is a day scene, a night scene, and every hour the lights 'move' through the trees: absolutely stunning, and worth visiting the hotel for this light show alone.

Preciosa worked with design studio DESIGNWILKES on the project. "The original design was inspired by a trip to Dubai at the time of year when the flame of the trees in the forest were in full bloom," said Jeffrey Wilkes, Principal Designer. "The canopy of orange blossoms brightened the landscape. It was the inspiration for the idea of the Canopy of Light. The hotel's position on the beach also influenced our design. We purposely avoided coloured light because we wanted to replicate the silver sparkle of the water...the dappled surface of the ocean beyond is brought to life."

[preciosalighting.com](http://preciosalighting.com)  
[mandarinoriental.com](http://mandarinoriental.com)







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Gentry sofa, 2011  
 Phoenix low table, 2004  
 Fjord stool, 2002  
 by Patricia Urquiola  
 Tia Maria low table, 2012  
 by Enrico Franzolini

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## DESIGN TRENDS

### THE FOREST CHAIR

The Forest Chair is a sculptural wonder, exclusively crafted by the Italian sculptor and designer Marcantonio Raimondi Malerba for Scarlet Splendour, the Indian company currently causing a stir in the design world with its avant garde luxury furniture. For his debut creations for the company, Marcantonio came up with Vegetal Animal, a concept that evokes strong emotions to represent nature. The Forest Chair is a glimpse of Scarlet Splendour's new collection, which will be unveiled at Salone del Mobile 2020.

[scarletsplendour.com](http://scarletsplendour.com)





## DESIGN TRENDS

**VERANDA COLLECTION**

Over the last ten years Mark Alexander has established a reputation for creating the finest natural textiles. Going into 2020, the studio builds on this reputation with the launch of a comprehensive range of Naturally Beautiful Wallcoverings and five fabric collections: Rhythm, Veranda, Casual, Jazz III and Urbane. We love the ethnic vibe of Veranda, made up of outdoor and easy-care fabrics. The new collections will be launched during Paris Deco Off (16-20 January 2020) in The Romo Group showroom.

[markalexander.com](http://markalexander.com)

**VIBRANT BRITISH STYLE**

Capturing imaginations with a fresh approach to wool, the Beam Collection breathes new life into classic checks and introduces statement designs that have a tailored and sophisticated feel. Woven in the UK, this collection of pure wools embodies the vibrancy of British style, in which Kirkby Design have paired traditional techniques with modern designs and a rich colour palette, creating a contemporary collection that commands attention.

[kirkbydesign.com](http://kirkbydesign.com)



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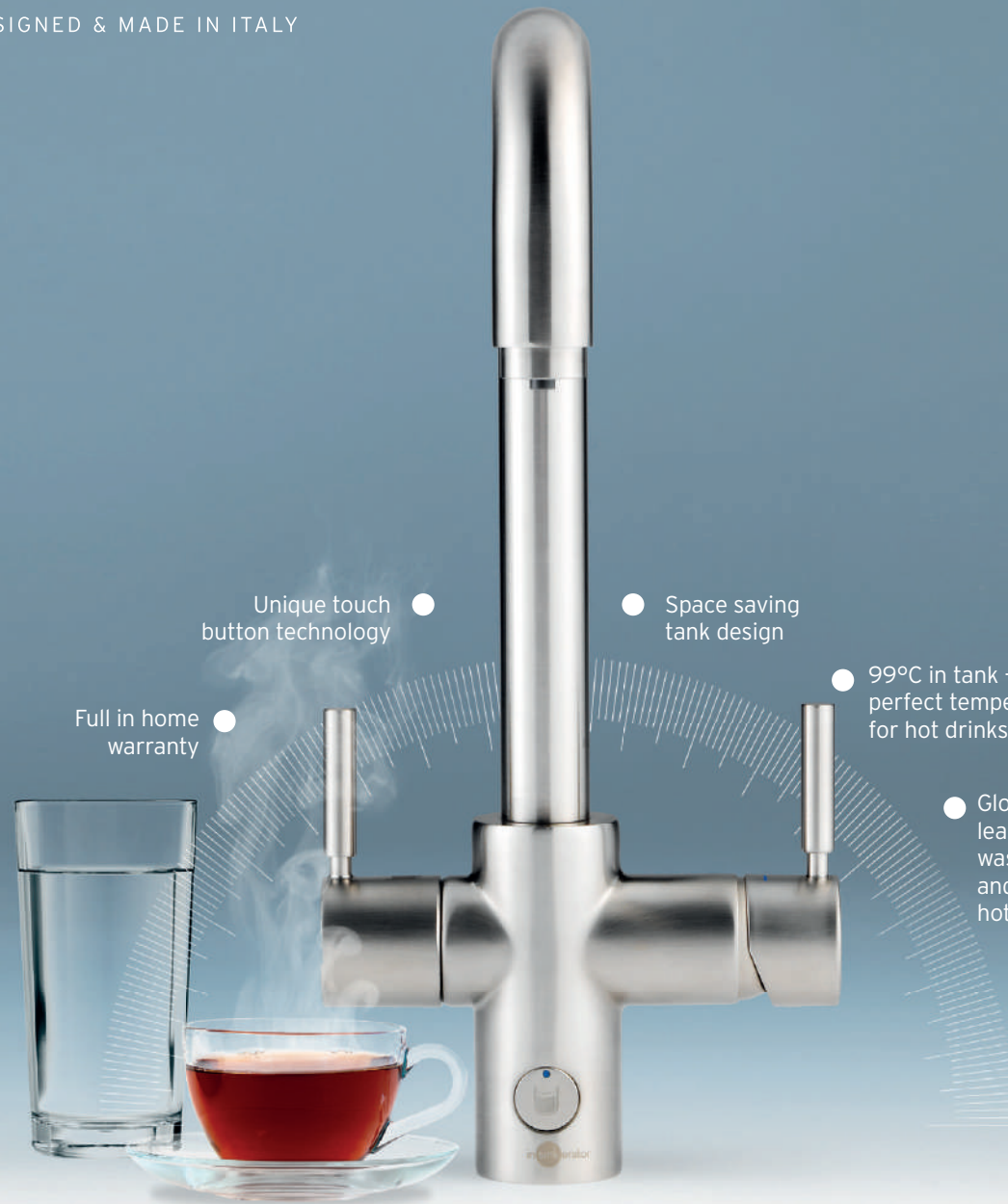
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## DESIGN TRENDS



### 10 YEARS OF FRANCO FASALI

Franco Fasoli's first book, titled *Public/Private: Ten Years from the Career of Franco Fasoli*, gives an account of the Argentinian artist's career from two different perspectives. "The book is divided into two parts," explains Fasoli. "The first deals with my work in the street and the second, my work in the studio." Based in Barcelona, Fasoli's work documents the contradictions and rituals of modern Latin American societies. "I use popular symbols and rituals from the countries I visit to create the mythology that characterizes my paintings, one in which animal and human bodies melt into each other, becoming confused and creating struggles that are also dances, wars and celebrations."

Available for purchase on  
[inkandmovement.com](http://inkandmovement.com)

### DESIGN, ART & INNOVATION

BUIT is a new sculptural outdoor furniture collection designed by Mayice Studio for the GANDIABLASCO brand. Mayice is a multi-disciplinary studio with its headquarters in Madrid founded by award-winning architects Marta Alonso Yebra and Imanol Calderón Elósegui in 2014 based on the principles of experimentation and innovation in space and objects. This artistic furniture collection features anodised aluminium mesh woven with a special padded textile for the outdoors.

[gandiablasco.com](http://gandiablasco.com)





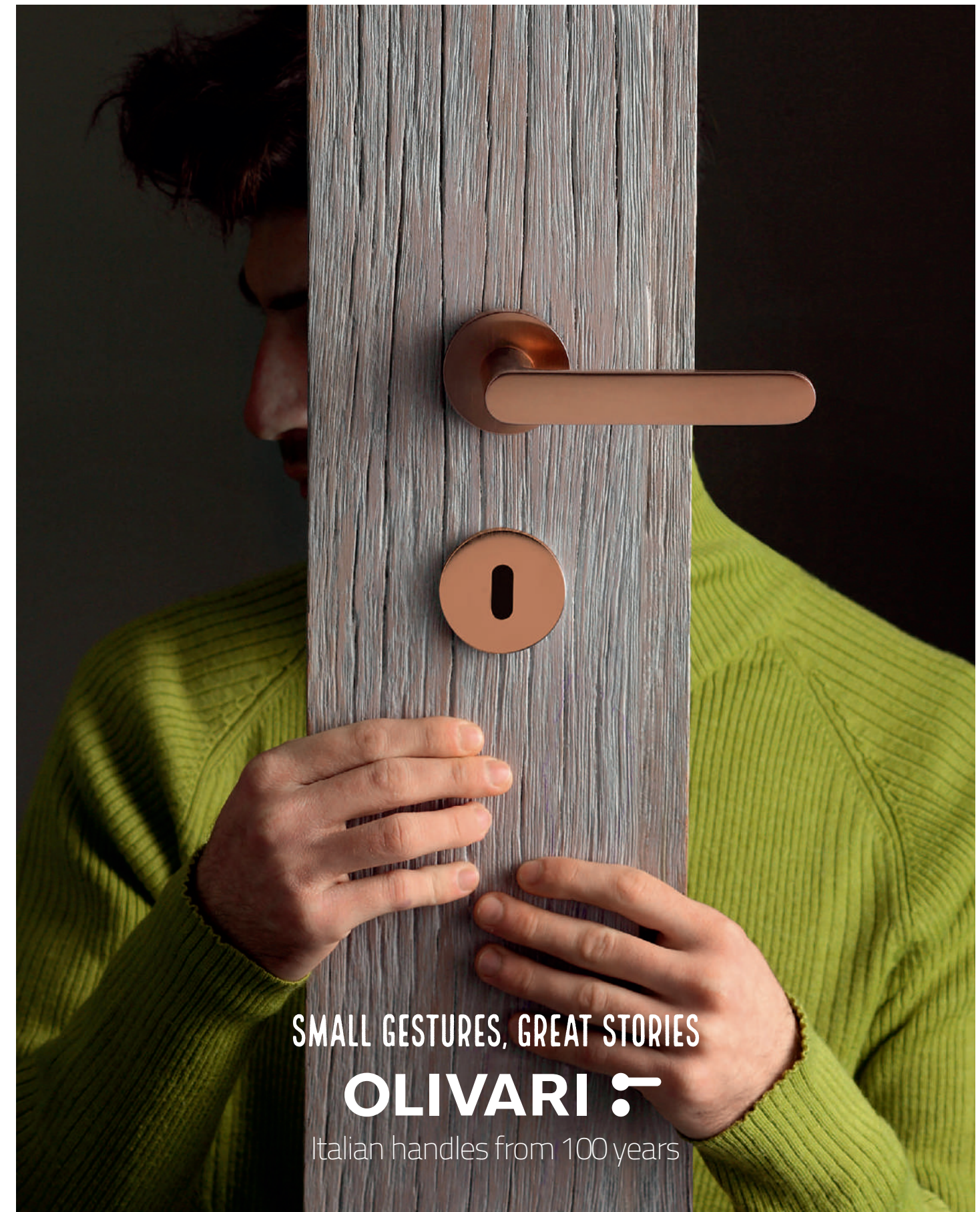
## DESIGN TRENDS



### THE PANAMA COLLECTION

Talenti's Panama Collection, designed by Ludovica & Roberto Palomba, is a terrace must-have. The collection has just been enriched with new elements such as an elegant stool and a fresh coffee table, which complete a set comprising chairs, lounges, sun beds, ottomans and sofas. Our favourite piece is the hammock, pictured above. Unlike other hammocks that are often unwieldy, this is light and easy to move around. The collection is characterised by wide shapes in which the lines of the woven ropes, crossed by the rays of the sun, play on lights and shadows.

[talentisrl.com](http://talentisrl.com)



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## DESIGN TRENDS

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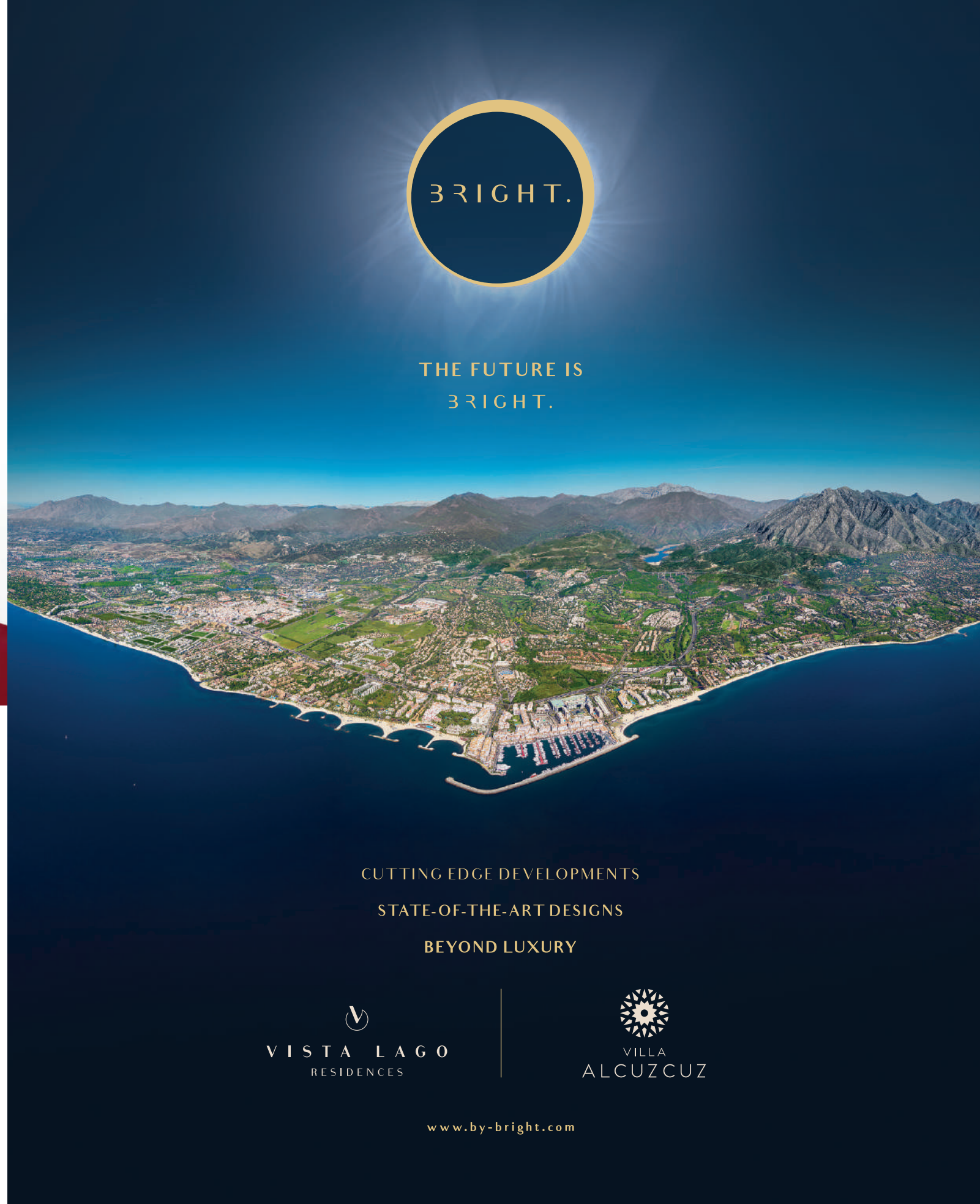




UD

## WHAT'S NEXT?

We talk to **Eero Aarnio**, the Finnish designer and innovator responsible for some of the most recognisable and best loved pieces of furniture of the last century, including the famous Bubble Chair. We delve into the universe of **Philippe Starck** and discover that he can design a chair in two minutes and a hotel in a day and a half. And finally, we peek into the colourful world of **Hannes D'Haese**, the Belgian artist who has just left his home country for the sunny shores of Marbella.



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