

Deià dream believer

Designed for multi-generational celebrations, this Balearic home on a hillside makes the most of its spectacular setting

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Photography JAMES McDONALD

It might seem strange, but whenever Vicky Charles designs a holiday home, she imagines her client living there out of high season, directing as much energy towards creating cosy rooms as she does to spectacular poolside settings. In the case of this hillside residence in the coastal Mallorcan village of Deià, Vicky's firm Charles & Co was commissioned by a long-standing client (they had previously worked on a complete renovation of his canal house in Amsterdam) to create a base to gather his family – including two daughters, three grandchildren and his ex-wife – for celebrations.

The home had belonged to a Spanish family and hadn't been touched for at least 15 years, so needed updating from top to bottom. But the timeline was short – just a year – as the client wanted to host his daughter's 40th birthday party there. 'The whole place was repainted, with new kitchens and bathrooms. There's space for everybody: four bedrooms on the ground floor and a small guest bedroom upstairs with two bunk beds, plus the guest cabin.' The original floor plan was too open, so they closed off some spaces to make them feel more intimate, while painting dark beams white was an 'easy win' that brightened some rooms. The pale-pink marble flooring in the lounge from the 1990s was also retained.

Having designed Soho House locations around the world, famed for their 'home from home' atmosphere and cosy-cool aesthetic, Vicky had learnt that 'good hotel design has to keep that balance of location and familiarity', and the same principle applies to a second home. 'We expect our clients to arrive with just their clothes, and we will have done the coat-hangers, bathroom products, at least for them to stay there the first night,' she says. Admitting she's a 'compulsive shopper', she delights in sourcing everything from picture frames to wine glasses; even Scrabble and swimming goggles for the grandkids. That said, when Vicky's husband joined her towards the end of the project with their children and cooked the first meal for the client in the new kitchen, he gave her a list of what was missing – including a grater.

Squashy upholstery (all produced in Portugal) offers plenty of corners to curl up in on cool evenings, while the outdoor terraces and poolside area are provided with equally comfortable seating to make the most of the views of the sea, the hills and the lush gardens. 'The colour palettes are inspired by all the flowers and the painted houses in town,' Vicky says of her approach to the decor. 'It's hard to articulate because it happens intuitively – the spaces just evolved.' This is a designer who never wants to surprise her clients too much. She believes they should enter their finished home knowing roughly what to expect. However, while her client was keen to be involved in choosing tiles and fabrics, he was determined to keep away from the build in the final stages. 'He wanted that experience of walking into the house with the candles lit, the music... he was overwhelmed,' she recalls. In fact, Vicky's client has just sold his Amsterdam home and is now spending a large part of the year in Deià – a testament to her work. 'The sign of a successful second home is when you suddenly want to be there all the time!' she says, laughing. charlesandco.com ►



Terrace Vicky's team bought the 17th-century wrought-iron gate from an antiques dealer in Florence and the rattan chairs from local artisans. Vintage chairs and a table from the Palma antiques fair sit underneath the house's original wisteria-covered pergola



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Living room This airy space is grounded by jewel-toned upholstery, including a vintage sofa (re-covered in Zak + Fox's 'Sycomorus 02' fabric) and a Pinch armchair in mohair. The chandelier took hours of scrolling through websites to find. 'It's like a big treasure hunt,' says Vicky. 'You have to trust that it's out there. This one's from Morentz in Amsterdam' ➤



Dining room Vicky's favourite spot, this versatile space 'isn't just for dinner – you can take a Zoom call in there or have your morning coffee; if it's raining, it's cosy but bright,' she says. The De Le Cuona fabric for the walnut Luteca dining chairs reflects her client's love of Africa, where he worked as a safari guide in the 1970s. The black-walnut dining table is by Stillmade. Overhead hang 'Sfera' pendant lights by Maurizio Bernabei for Bottega Intreccio, while a custom Nanimarquina rug adds another layer of colour



Living room Seen from the other side, this area is home to vintage finds including a pair of bookshelves from Montage Millerton in New York and an Axel Einar Hjorth 'Birka' desk designed in 1935. There are also bespoke pieces by Charles & Co, such as the 'Tambour' cocktail cabinet made by Rupert Bevan. The artwork is all from the client's private collection

Garden All the planting around the house was done by Mallorcan firm Jardins Tramuntana. **Kitchen** Working with the history and architecture of the house, this space sticks to a simple material palette: custom oak cabinets by Rupert Bevan, handcrafted Moroccan zellige tiles by Zellij Gallery Inc for the splashback, Fior di Pesco marble from FMG Design Italy for the worktops and 17th-century floor tiles from Solar Antique Tiles in Tuscany on the floor. The bronze wall sconces are from Hector Finch and the plaster cone pendants are Rose Uniacke. The taps and farmhouse sink are by Waterworks and the custom range is by Officine Gullo. The walnut counter stool is by Luteca ➤





Bedroom A custom bed by Chelsea Upholstery features a headboard in Lewis & Wood's 'Palampore' linen in 'Earl Grey' with a Soho Home throw. The 'Reading Wall Light' is by Soane and the curtains are in 'Sultanat' linen by Casamance

Bathroom The cast-iron 'Tay' bathtub by Drummonds is surrounded by Fior di Pesco marble from FMG. Next to it stands a round 'Capri' table by Vaughan

Pool area Vicky and her team remodelled the pool area to make the most of the spectacular location, taking care to design extra-comfy, colourful loungers that swivel. 'If you can't get a sunbed right, you've got a problem!' she says. Her client swims a lot for his health, so there's an outdoor shower (see far left) in an area where the trees provide natural shade

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