



The  
Artisans  
Issue

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# RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS



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A-list interior designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard boldly designed this home on the Pacific coast as an ode to Mexican culture and arts, making for a joyful family retreat



**T**HE CASA EL FARO PROJECT WAS IMMEDIATELY FASCINATING TO ME," remembers renowned Los Angeles-based designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard. "Once I found out about the location — the most spectacular spot perched high above the ocean in the luxurious Maravilla Los Cabos residential community [in Baja California] — I knew I had to design this house, and again experience working with Mexican craft-people and the burgeoning artistic community."

Every time Bullard works on a new project in Mexico, it enhances his love for the country and, in particular, the beauty and diversity of the land, the warm people, the delicious food and the "obligatory margaritas," according to the designer.

Overlooking Las Viudas beach, the property was designed by architect Juan Zapata to make the most of the exceptional views of the mountains, desert, Sea of Cortés and Pacific Ocean. At night, the house illuminates like a lighthouse ("faro" in Spanish), which inspired the project's name. The client, an entrepreneur and philanthropist, asked Bullard to reflect the soul of this one-of-a-kind place. "I wanted to create a home that was distinctly modern, but that cap-

tured the sense of place and honoured Mexican culture and the arts," the designer says. "To create that I added mid-century furniture from the greatest Mexican designers of that era, mixing them with deep over-scaled soft furnishings. Comfort is the number one directive of the Casa El Faro, but an homage to the cultural history and crafts of the local area are a prime and distinctive trademark of this property."

Organized into two levels — with the upper level as a sanctuary dedicated to the main suite with its spa, massage room, yoga and meditation deck, and oyster bar terrace with an outdoor hot tub, among other features — the house also comprises a cactus garden and a rooftop.

With its big pivoting glass doors and flooring with marble inlays, the majestic entrance invites dwellers and their guests to discover the interior spaces where grandeur and beach spirit combine. The ground floor has an open plan that includes the kitchen and dining-living room, which opens on three sides to the undulating pool and terraces, creating a 930 sq/m indoor-outdoor entertaining area with a tequila bar, a firepit and a retractable screen for watching movies.

"I wanted to reflect the colours of the local terrain in the interiors," Bullard says. "From the blue-green of the ocean and skies to the warm beiges, ochre and sand tones of the surrounding mountains



ABOVE: A gargantuan Mexican jute rope pendant makes a dramatic statement in the entry hall. OPPOSITE PAGE: The main bedroom features a hanging chair from Blackman Cruz. One wall opens up entirely to the loggia, which provides a shaded relaxation spot.

PREVIOUS PAGES: A Kerry Joyce performance fabric covers custom sofas in the living room. Vintage Jean Gillon armchairs.



ABOVE: An Apparatus light fixture hangs over the custom kitchen island with Dornbracht fittings.

OPPOSITE PAGE: On a terrace, local artist Daniela Medina painted a ceiling mural in Benjamin Moore's Philipsburg Blue. Armchairs by Martyn Lawrence Bullard for Harbour 1976 are dressed in an indoor/outdoor fabric by Holly Hunt. The tiled firepit is a bespoke design.

and gardens ... deep eggplant, burnt orange, saffron yellow, turquoise blue and terracotta red are all prevalent in the fabrics, and artworks are derived from the colours used in Mexican tribal textiles and traditional blankets from the 18th century onwards."

In addition, linen and cotton were used throughout. "I wanted to use materials that were indigenous to the area and felt historically correct — from woven basket ware, to hand-blown glass, coloured wall plaster and natural dyed leathers to give us a true Mexican flavour," Bullard says. "For added impact I chose exotic stones from Brazil and Italy along with local artists, using traditional Mexican colour pigments."

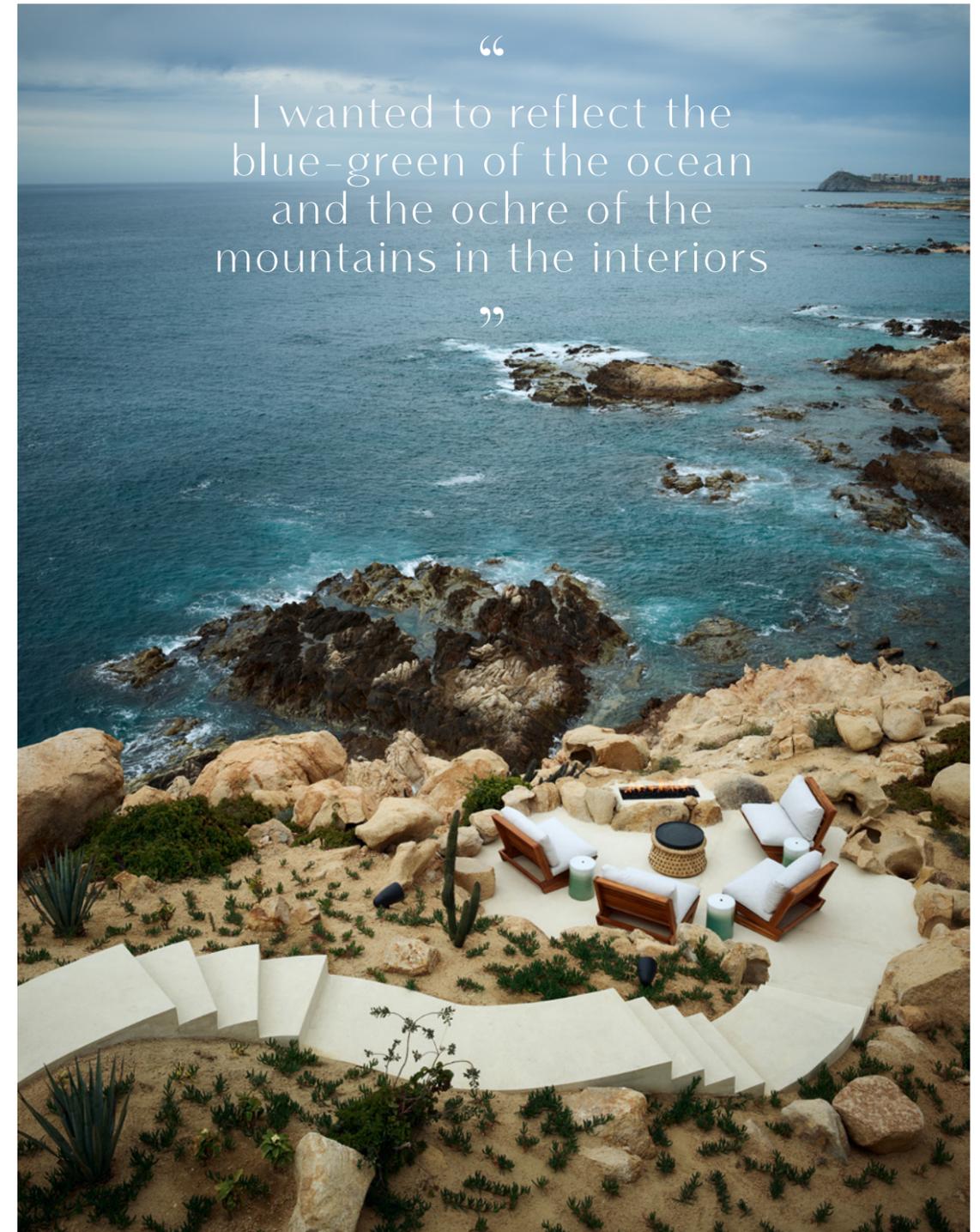
The designer travelled all over Mexico where he bought hand-painted ceramics in Guadalajara, artworks from Chic By Accident gallery in Mexico City, and locally made accessories in San Miguel de Allende. He commissioned rugs in Oaxaca to dress the walls of the guest rooms and corridors, and he worked with Luteca — a brand that specializes in Mexican design from the 20th century — to pick several chairs and tables.

"As a result, there is a perfect balance between old and new, tradition and modernity, and luxury and comfort," says Bullard, who enlisted Voila! Creative Studio (founded by Katrien Van der Schueren)

to create many of the custom artworks and sculptures throughout the house. "I have worked with Katrien for over 15 years. She was the perfect partner for this project as I needed art in vast proportions that would again honour the Mexican culture whilst feeling fresh, original and able to withstand the intense heat and oceanic air that is part of the atmospheric climate in Cabo."

Van der Schueren adds, "We make site-specific art, so the storytelling has to make sense for the function of the room as well. [In this project], we worked with film reels to make abstract art for the bathroom that leads to the cinema room, for example. Besides the figurative Frida Kahlo pieces and the collage that is taking these elements quite literally, you'll see most elements that refer to shapes you'd encounter in nature. Many sculptures were made out of concrete or plaster to pay homage to the materials most used by Mexican artists." Among Bullard's favourite pieces are Aztec-inspired paintings on parchment sheets that cover the walls of the powder room, while for Van der Schueren, it is the Dubuffet-referencing foam sculpture.

For Bullard, this aesthetically audacious project that offers sweeping panoramas at every moment is the perfect recipe for happiness: "It is fresh, unexpected, and extremely comfortable," he says. What else could you ask for? [www.martynlawrencebullard.com](http://www.martynlawrencebullard.com)



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ABOVE: Steps lead down to an ocean terrace with CB2 chairs gathered around a firepit and Luteca cocktail table.

OPPOSITE PAGE FROM TOP: In a guest bedroom, a Pierre Frey cotton stripe covers the bed. Lamps from Lawson-Fenning sit on side tables designed by Bullard. The bench is from Dana John and the rug is custom; the main suite bathroom features a custom tub and quartz-lined shower, both with Dornbracht fittings. Daybed by Martyn Lawrence Bullard.