



**POOL AREA**  
‘Multiple lounge spaces were layered throughout the garden and pool area, designed to suit every mood. Since we host often in the summer, there’s something for everyone here,’ says Cari, the designer and owner.

**Outdoor furniture, pillows and cushions,** all Cari Giannoulas Design; made by Furniture Gallery and Nino Tailor-Made

# LONG HOT Summer

There's a simple ease to this luxurious Greek home that makes keeping cool a breeze

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Helen Cathcart

**STYLING** Sania Pell

**WORDS** Karine Monié



‘This is my favourite place on Earth,’ says Cari Giannoulis, of the very personal property in Crete that she shaped down to the smallest detail.

The gently sloped stone residence appears as if it is a continuation of the surrounding rocky landscape and was designed by Scope Architects, with the exterior areas by Fytron Landscapes.

Residing most of the year in Chicago, where her eponymous design studio is based, Cari thinks of Greece as her special place. ‘My husband’s parents are from Greece,’ she says. ‘He spent his summers travelling around the country, but Chania [in Crete] was always home. When he introduced me to the city, I quickly fell in love. We were married there, baptised our children there and every summer visited his yiayia [grandmother] in her home. After a few years, we decided to spend more time here and began searching for land to build.’

The couple found a plot in the quiet and rural area close to the town – and moved to Greece during Covid to oversee construction, while managing their three children’s remote schooling. ‘When starting the creative process, I drew inspiration from village homes, noting their construction with the simplest materials and the warm, welcoming feeling they evoked,’ remembers Cari. ‘I aspired to make our house feel this way, filling it with items meaningful to our family.’

Designed in a Pi-shape layout with references to the vernacular architecture and guided by an indoor/outdoor living concept, the house has a central Mediterranean garden – with several seating areas and spots to relax – that is the core around which interior spaces are organised. Large openings with minimal frames unify the inside with the outside, which comprises a swimming pool, vegetable gardens and even a small olive grove.

‘The home’s neutral interior is meant to create a sense of calm and slow living,’ says Cari. She used natural materials, custom-made fixtures, handmade finishing and wabi-sabi aesthetics to create the desired ambience. ‘Simplicity and luxury harmoniously coexist in this modern version of the traditional Cretan house.’ Authenticity was at the heart of every decision: ‘Each piece was chiselled by hand according to a traditional technique used by tradesmen for centuries.’ Cari also decided that the all-natural Greek material patiti [cement mortar] should be hand-applied to make the walls appear as if they had been there for years.

‘This project was transformative, grounding me in unexpected ways and rekindling my appreciation for meaningful connections,’ says Cari. ‘Here, I read more, tend to the garden, immerse myself in history and art and reconnect with the simple pleasures of life. For now, while our children are still in school, we live full-time in the US and visit Greece every summer. Maybe one day we’ll spend even more time here. The Greek lifestyle truly speaks to me.’

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



DINING SPACE

‘In Greece, gathering around the dinner table is at the heart of the culture,’ says Cari.

**Table**, Cari Giannoulis Design; made by Nino Tailor Made.  
**Chairs**, Enka Moisiadis.  
**Plates**, Einav Price.  
**Pendants**, Honoré

## OUTDOOR LIVING AREA

'Living in the city most of the year, I missed the connection with nature. By blending my indoor and outdoor living rooms, I was able to restore that bond,' says Cari.

**Outdoor furniture**, all designed by Cari Giannoulis Design; made by Furniture Gallery and Nino Tailor Made. **Pouf**, Janus et Cie **Table lamp**, Plust. Outdoor **pillows and cushions**, Cari Giannoulis Design; made by Nino Tailor Made. Outdoor **fabrics**, Sunbrella and Perennials. **Sconce**, Honoré





LIVING ROOM

'Crafted from glass and steel, the entry door offers a dramatic first impression,' says Cari. 'It was always our intention to incorporate classical Greek design by constructing this archway and anchoring it with old chestnut beams.'

**Sofa**, Cari Giannoulis Design; made by Furniture Gallery.  
**Foyer table and side table**, Cari Giannoulis Design; made by Nino Tailor Made.  
**Chair**, Nino Tailor Made; painted by Mikaela Theofanopoulou. **Leaf light fixture**, Chelini Firenze



## The download

### THE OWNER/DESIGNER

This is the Greek holiday home of US-based interior designer Cari Giannoulis, her husband, George, and their three children, Alexandra, 16, and 14-year-old twins Anastasia and George Jr.

### THE PROPERTY

The five-bed, four-bath, three-level house features a main living space on the ground floor that flows into the outdoor areas, which include a pool, dining area, outdoor kitchen, conversation pit and sitting areas. The kitchen, cloakroom, children's bedrooms and bathroom are also on this floor. On the top floor is the main bedroom suite, while a guest bedroom and two guest bathrooms, plus cinema room and library are found on the lower ground floor.



## KITCHEN

'I let go of any preconceived notions about what a kitchen should be and instead asked myself, "How do I want it to feel?";' says Cari. 'The result is simple, unfussy and functional – yet, at its core, just another inviting room in the home.'

**Cabinets and table**, Cari Giannoulis Design; made by Nino Tailor Made.

**Worktop**, Mono Rocks.

**Chairs**, Almeco. **Light fixtures**, Cosydar-Deco.

BCW Figural **lamp**, Blackman Cruz. **Tap**, Cocoon. **Chopping boards**, Jayson Home

## LIBRARY

'A peaceful retreat from the rest of the house, this versatile space serves many purposes,' explains Cari. 'It's a place to read, work, play music and more.'

Cab **chair**, Mario Bellini for Cassina. **Table**, made by Furniture Gallery. **Bowl** (on table), LES Collection. **Rug**, Lemieux Et Cie by Momeni. White and terracotta **plate** (on shelf) by Alexandra Manousakis. Terracotta **vase** (on shelf), rrrres. **Lamp**, Marta Bonilla. **Side table**, CB2. **Shelves**, Cari Giannoulis Design



MY GUIDING PRINCIPLE? THERE ARE NO STRICT  
RULES - KEEP IT SIMPLE, MAKE IT INVITING AND  
FILL IT ONLY WITH THINGS YOU TRULY LOVE





## LIVING ROOM

'One side of this space invites rest and reading, but this side, organised around a deep corner sofa, naturally draws people in. It's where our best laid plans are made for the vacation,' says Cari.

Rattan **chair**, CB2. **Sofa** and **chairs**, Cari Giannoulas Design; made by Furniture Gallery. Large abstract **artwork**, Marchés Aux Puces, Paris. **Pendant**, Karman. **Side table**, Cari Giannoulas Design; made by Nino Tailor Made. Vintage 1960s **table lamp** by Georges Pelletier; similar, Pamono



**STAIRS**

**‘Sometimes construction pivots lead to the best design decisions. When I saw how dark this stairwell was becoming during the build, I opened up the ceiling and added a skylight, letting natural light filter down,’ says Cari.**

Palm vases, rres



**CLOAKROOM**

**‘From the very start of the design, I envisioned a large window with a tree outside. Paired with a thoughtful balance of modern and traditional elements, it’s what makes me love this space,’ says Cari.**

**Marble**, Mono Rocks.  
**Lighting**, Anna Charlesworth

**MAIN BEDROOM SUITE**

**‘Perched above the rest of the home, this suite offers breathtaking views of the city and ocean. Its intentionally simple design allows focus to remain on the surroundings and the natural light that fills the room.’**

Vintage **wall sconce**, Georges Pelletier; similar, 1stDibs. **Bed**, Cari Giannoulas Design; made by Furniture Gallery. **Bedding**, Parachute. **Nightstand**, Cari Giannoulas Design; made by Nino Tailor Made. **Bench**, Cari Giannoulas Design; made by Furniture Gallery

