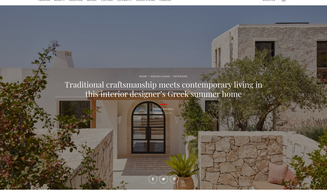

Traditional craftsmanship meets contemporary living in this interior designer's Greek summer home

A stunning family home in Crete that pays homage to the craftsmanship of ancient civilisations. Photography by Helen Cathcart. Styling by Sara Pell. Produced by Karina Hessel.

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It's not hard to find like you're walking up amongst the gods when you're in Greece this is, after all, a place that has been in existence since the Neolithic era and the Minoan civilisation. Not up to date on your ancient history? That's worth learn more ago.

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It makes perfect sense, then, that life feels authentic and magical in Chania, on the northwest side of the island of Crete. Built on the site of ancient Kydonia, one of the most important cities according to Homer, the town is both brimming with history and surrounded by nature. "Chania is my favourite place in Greece, it's so beautiful and the people are so lovely," says interior designer Christina Grange, who recently completed her family's holiday home there. "Both of my husband's parents are from Greece," she continues, "and when he introduced me to Chania, I quickly fell in love. It's pure magic: the people, the beaches, the city, the food—we drink life here."

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"The landscape surrounding our home shaped not only the aesthetic but also the energy of the space," she says. "Our home feels like an extension of the local environment: the architecture follows the contours of the land, with crisp, open spaces that allow the breeze and sunlight to flow through. Every window frames a piece of the island's untouched beauty."

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"When starting the creative process, I drew inspiration from village homes: constructed using the simplest materials and evoking a warm, welcoming feeling," Giannoulias continues. She opted for sand, stone and earthy hues, custom-made fixtures and natural textures to reflect the landscape; wooden pergolas, natural materials and furnishings bring a calming, refined sensibility.

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Even in ceiling windows mean the exterior always remains the focal point, and the home features many embedded arches, which are not true arches but a series of bricks set stones that gradually approach each other to form the shape of an arch. "This technique showcases the craftsmanship of the past. The stone structures of the past were built to endure, and this home carries forward that legacy of strength while speaking of with the openness and elegance of modern design."

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Respect for ancient Greek architecture is one thing. Building in modern day Greece is another. Contemporary Greek design is a mix of old and new, with a focus on sustainability and on creating a living "nest," notes Giannoulias. "In the US, materials are abundant and options are endless," she explains. "The island has limited resources: the responsibility falls on you as a designer to creatively combine what is available."

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Instead of selecting stone colours and textures at a showroom, Giannoulias travelled to the mountain region, for instance, while an all-natural Greek material called 'petiti' was applied by hand to give the walls a more weathered, time-honoured finish.

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"Another challenge was adapting to the cultural differences in construction practices and materials: as with any country, you must navigate local building regulations and legal nuances," she continues. Giannoulias worked with Scope Architects, T & C Development and Fotios Landscapes on the build: "Each professional contributed their expertise, ensuring the custom and collaborating on sustainable architecture that honoured comfort and environmental responsibility—a process that ultimately enhances the home's connection to the landscape."

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With its abundance of space and stunning architecture, you might be surprised to learn that Giannoulias favourite space is the outdoor breakfast area—the smallest seating area in the home. "It's where my husband and I connect over coffee in the morning, where we watch the kids playing in the pool or gather with friends for a cocktail during our Mamba get-together," she explains. And indeed, it makes sense that a high-activity area for friends and family is her most cherished spot.

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"This project was transformative for me, grounding me in unexpected ways and refinding my appreciation for the simplicity of living and meaningful connections," Giannoulias continues. "A city on an island comes together and built on a modern version of a traditional Cretan home: a beautiful home that we will have to our family for generations."

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The pool area.

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The outdoor entertaining area.

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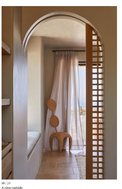
The outdoor lounge area.

14 / 17

A cosy corner.

04 / 27
A bedroom.



05 / 27
A view outside.

07 / 27
A bedroom.

08 / 27
A bathroom.

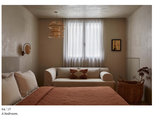
09 / 27
A bathroom.

10 / 27
Another view of the living area.

11 / 27
Another view of the living area.

12 / 27
A lounge area.

13 / 27
A shower.



14 / 27
A bedroom.

15 / 27
A view of the staircase.

16 / 27
Another lounge area.

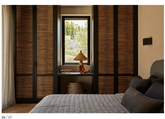
17 / 27
Another view of a lounge area.

18 / 27
A bathroom.

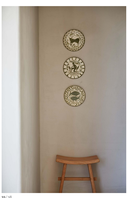
01 / 17
A staircase.

02 / 17
A bathroom.

03 / 17
A bathroom.



04 / 17
A bathroom.



05 / 17
A detail.

06 / 17
Another detail.

07 / 17
A view of the garden.

08 / 17
Another view of the pool area.

09 / 17
An outdoor lounge area.

10 / 17
Another view of the pool.

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