



THE WELL



Sea,
Light,
quiet

Designer Lorenzo Castillo crafts an
enchanted seaside retreat in Spain's
Menorca for himself and his partner

INTERIOR DESIGN BY *Lorenzo Castillo*
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[opening image] Lorenzo Castillo bought a seventeenth-century house on the Spanish island of Menorca and transformed the lower-level's cave-like areas into rooms for entertaining. Prior page: A hallway is furnished with an oak and marble-topped Louis XVI console dating from the eighteenth century and a pair of velvet-covered French benches. Below: A tabletop is adorned with a nineteenth-century jar made into a lamp, blue-and-white 1920s-era pieces from Granada, and a pair of Majolica holders from the 1960s. Right: A Directoire-style daybed is upholstered with Jim Thompson fabric.







A new Teka stove and oven figure into a kitchen featuring Artesanía Sevilla's handmade tiles glazed in deep green. Original eighteenth-century terracotta tiles cover the floor. Right: A 1940s Maison Baguès rock-crystal chandelier casts a glow over a nineteenth-century Louis Philippe-style walnut dining table; the chairs are designed by Lorenzo Castillo. A pair of bronze Art Deco sconces balance a plaster bust.





Above: The dining area of the designer's sister's bedroom features a table covered with a striped Ralph Lauren fabric, edged in a white trim from El Galón. A collection of Spanish Art Deco silhouettes is displayed on walls. Right: Beams and doors in a guest room are painted with Farrow & Ball's Green Blue, while the walls use the brand's All White. The embroidered canopy fabric is from Mexico. Bedspread and bed custom are from GP & J Baker.





Above: A view from the master bedroom's walk-in closet into the shower area. The lacquer and gilded wood Art Deco Imperio-style bench is upholstered in fabric from Lee Jofa. Right: In the master bedroom, an Arts & Crafts oak, ebony, and bone English low wardrobe dates from the late nineteenth century. The bed is custom-designed by Castillo, and the room's beams and doors are defined by Farrow & Ball's Pitch Blue. The painting over the bed is by Spanish master Manuel Ángeles Ortiz (1895–1984).



WHEN LORENZO CASTILLO traveled to Menorca for the first time, he knew he'd find the serenity he needed to finish writing his book—a monograph of his work published by Rizzoli in 2018. "I wanted some quiet time, so I went there to stay as a guest at the home of a friend," says the interior designer whose primary dwelling is in his native Madrid. What he didn't expect was how smitten he would be with Mahón, the capital city of Menorca (also spelled *Minorca*), one of the Balearic Islands situated off the eastern coast of Spain.

"I was shocked by its beauty, its rich history and mix of cultures," says Castillo, who is also a seasoned antiquarian and historian. "In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Menorca was occupied by Arabs of North Africa and later was ruled by the Crown of Aragon as part of Catalonia. Later still, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, France, England, and Spain fought to control it—and its architecture reflects all these influences. I fell in love with the city, and especially a street in the oldest part of town facing the harbor and containing only palaces. As I walked along it, I thought I would love to have a house here."

Days later, he found a six-story townhouse for sale on that very street and bought it. "When in love, why wait?" reasoned Castillo, who expressed his excitement about the setting and property to his longtime life and business partner, Alfonso Reyero, who trusted Castillo's instincts and urged him to go ahead with the purchase without seeing it himself. "The potential was major, so he didn't want me to miss the opportunity," Castillo says.

While the dwelling was in need of repair, Castillo was sure it would make a perfect getaway for the couple, who often entertain at home in Madrid, as well as in their retreat in Asturias in northern Spain. The centuries-old Menorca residence also presented an ideal canvas upon which the pair could express their tastes in fresh and personal ways. "It isn't a typical Spanish house," explains Castillo. "It's more like a Georgian house, built in the seventeenth century and later restructured during the English occupation. It has large windows and doors, an amazing staircase, and high ceilings, yet is very discreet without a lot of decoration."

Unlike the luxe hotels and high-rise condos that pepper Majorca and Ibiza, the glitzier sister islands of the Balearic archipelago, Menorca remains largely unsullied by development. So, as Castillo undertook the process of

transforming his structure into an inviting harborside haven, one of his aims was to craft a paean to the past. "The inspiration was, in fact, the history of Menorca with its layers and layers of structures and styles," says the designer. Yet he also wanted the home to support a relaxed and thoroughly modern lifestyle. "All our houses are not just for us but also for our family and friends—often every room is full with guests."

Castillo began by shoring up the structure—changing out and painting the ceiling beams in sea-inspired shades of blue and green and replacing floors with antique terracotta tiles. To cope with tricky floor plans divvied up over six stories, he opted to convert the lower levels into guest apartments and saved the top floor with the best view of the harbor for himself and Reyero and their dachshund, Tana. "The sea is magical, the most beautiful shade of turquoise blue," says Castillo, noting its influence on the palette of the overall decor.

With a portion of the structure built into a cliff, Castillo added a kitchen at the base and converted the lowest levels into spaces for entertaining. "I wanted it to feel like a nightclub in Marbella or the French Riviera in the 1960s or '70s," says the designer, who left the sandstone walls exposed and warmed the cavelike rooms with cane and bamboo furnishings. "But the heart of the home is on the main level where the ceilings are highest." Here, Castillo installed another kitchen wrapped in tiles glazed green "like the flag of Andalusia" and fitted it out with custom cabinets trimmed with a whimsical cornice of carved kissing fish. "Rather than hidden away, I wanted the kitchen to be one of the structure's main attractions, since we love to cook and have family visiting all summer."

A backdrop of neutral walls allows Castillo's masterful compositions of antiques, art, and accents to take center stage. "All of the furnishings were chosen specifically for this house and acquired on travels or from houses of noble families through auctions or galleries." As pedigreed as many of the antiques and objects may be, Castillo doesn't think of them as precious and insists that every beautiful piece be used. "Most important is comfort. It's as essential as beauty." And he sees his newest home as a reflection of that mantra. "Now that the home is finished, I realize I belong to this place more than I imagined. I'm in love with the house—and the land." ■

"When I design for myself, I can do whatever I want," says the Spanish interior designer Lorenzo Castillo.

“You can mix different styles and periods, as long as you follow a sense of harmony and balance.”

—Lorenzo Castillo

