

Seen from the road that leads to the property, the stunning **Villa E** mixes minimalism with exotic design features and colours

WONDERFUL

Located in the spectacular landscape of Marrakech, Villa E is a pared down and pure piece of architectural



MARRAKESH

haven exuding with relaxation and beauty. Discover this project by Karl Fournier and Olivier Marty

Words **MALDA SMADI** Photography **DAN GLASSER**

In the **dining room** the table and the hanging lights were produced by Studio KO. The walnut side chairs are by Normal Cherner
Opposite: The living room **terrace** exudes a sense of peace and relaxation





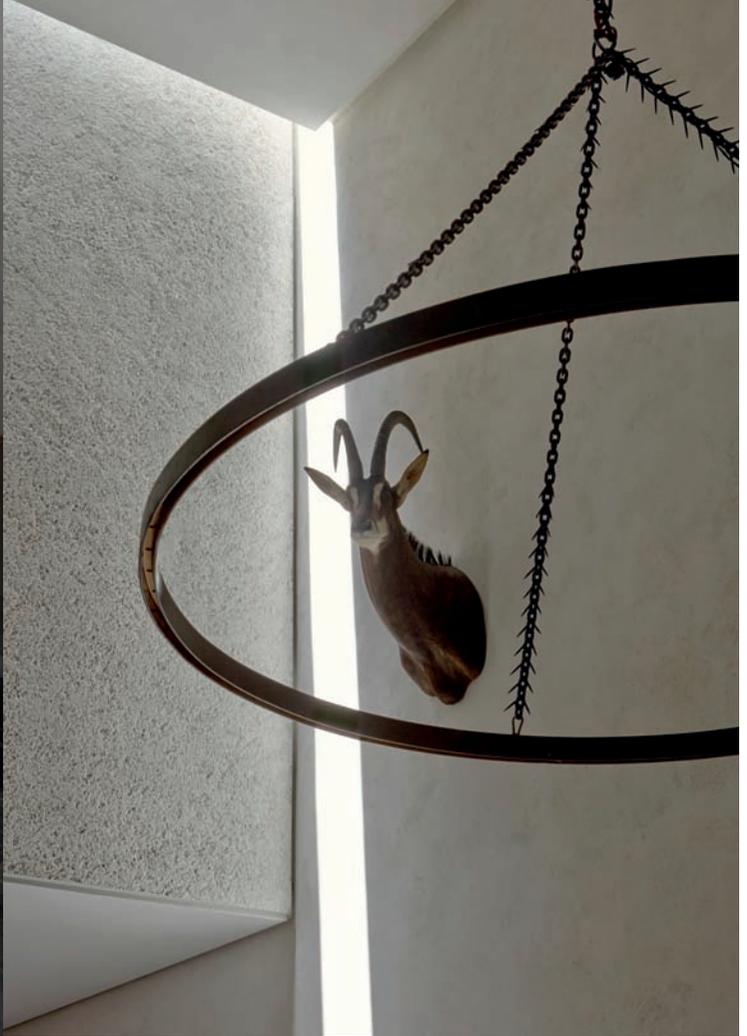
“The brief was simple: create a fun holiday house where the owners can spend time with their family and friends”

Sitting atop a hill in the outskirts of Marrakech, Morocco, is Villa E, an intriguing structure situated in the Ourika Valley and enjoying an altitude of over 1,050 metres. From afar, the villa’s northern façade appears as an isolated historical Kasbah tiled in imposing red stone. The holiday home is owned by a French-Monegasque businessman, and comes complete with an infinity pool and a stable designed by famed French architects Karl Fournier and Olivier Marty, the creative duo behind Studio KO. It is no surprise then to see that the structure’s exact geometry and tranquil interiors has all the hallmarks of the designers’ clean lines and minimalist approach to architecture. “The brief was simple,” the architects share, “to create a fun holiday house [where the owners can] spend time with their family and friends.” But that is not all that goes into planning a virtually non-existent house on a hill in the centre of the wilderness of the High Atlas.

The acclaimed architects at Studio KO consistently rely on a method that considers the overall context and environment in which the structure lies. They are inspired by the local building techniques and recognise the importance of being contemporary while respecting the history of the place as well as the traditional Berber people nearby. Other factors also came into play such as the temperature and sun exposure. “We had to protect the exterior spaces from the wind and ensure the villa was exposed to the sunlight throughout the day, whilst building it in such a way that it

wasn’t too hot during the summer months,” they explain. Keeping the breath-taking views in mind, they envisioned a V-shaped structure that faced the southeast and southwest allowing maximum levels of natural light to permeate the space with some rooms letting in the daylight through the ceiling and long vertical ridges. The biggest challenge Fournier and Marty faced was the non-accessibility of the location. Far away from civilisation, the Ourika Valley is located 30km away from the city of Marrakech, with neither electricity nor safe roads, extending the build to three years. “It was our first time building a house in the mountain. We resourced our own electricity while donkeys had to transport masses of stone to the top of the hill. It was a great challenge! Each element carries the notion of time. The time it took to collect each rock and the long hours the craftsmen methodically placed them one after the other. The house is in itself a manifesto.”

With 360° views of spectacular waterfalls and natural attractions, the team thought up big spaces, large bedrooms and living areas with wide windows to reflect the empty and clean interiors. “We created spaces that give a feeling of a house where one can breathe and rest,” they explain. Bespoke pieces such as the dining table, hanging lights and the sunbeds were designed in-house by Studio KO to complement the minimalist feel. In keeping with the open and environmental context, Studio KO also put considerable thought into constructing the villa with sustainable features that include rainwater-collection, natural ventilation, and a solar water heating system.



In the **kitchen** the counter top is by Beal and the pendant lamps and bulbs are by Zangra. The **entrance hall** is decorated with rustic elements like a brass hanging sculpture and embalmed wildlife. The fireplace is perfect for providing warmth in the cold desert nights. In the **TV lounge** the block contains the minibar, wardrobe and fire place clad in batten walnut



In the **master bedroom**
a side chair by Norman
Cherner stands on
natural white pine floors.
Playing with different
styles, the fireplace is
vintage, by Ergofocus,
and the rug is Moroccan

*The design of the house recognises the importance
of being contemporary while respecting
the traditional Berber people nearby*



The **guest bathroom** is a minimal masterpiece with walls and flooring clad in Mortex by Beal. The pipework is Triverde and the towel rail was designed by Studio KO

Invitingly
positioned by the
pool, crafted
braided sun beds
were bought on
the road that leads
to the house

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