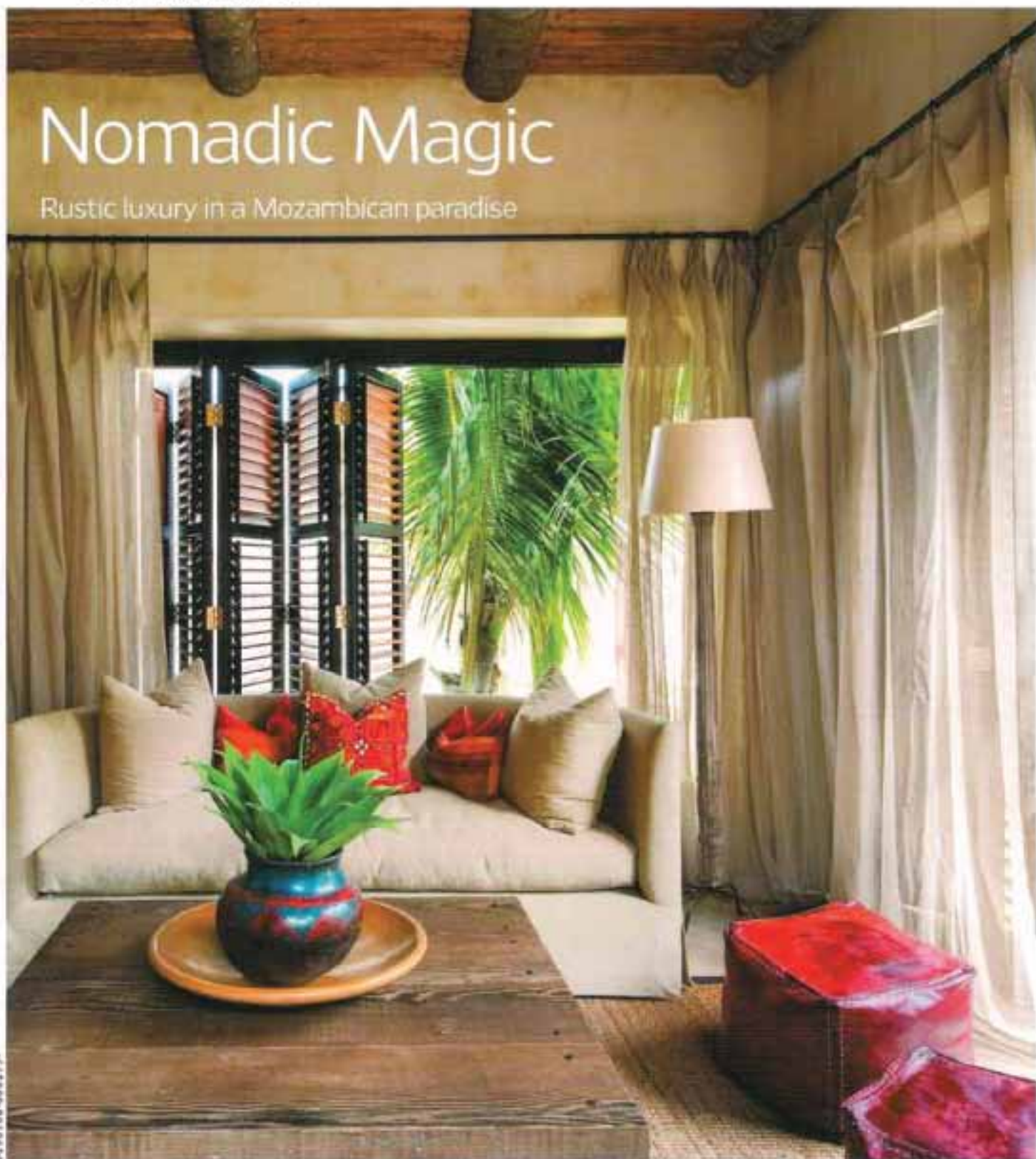


InsideOut

ISSUE 79 August 2010 Dh15

Nomadic Magic

Rustic luxury in a Mozambican paradise



Trade Centre Residences

Saving Bastakiya

Freehold Buyers Guide



Benguerra, one of Mozambique's islands, is possibly as close to paradise as any of the exclusive, remote, rich yet understated exotic locales of the world.

Surrounded by blue and fringed by white sandy beaches, its rich, unspoiled nature boasts a range of flora and fauna. The over 100 species of birds among other wildlife had the island declared a national park.

Imagine then, having your very own personal piece of paradise here. To own a home on land that befits the phrase 'heaven on earth'. As you arrive, via boat or helicopter, the sound of waves on the beach, the birds and the palm trees instantly bathe you in a blanket of tranquillity, the atmosphere intended to magically and swiftly slow the most stressed of heartbeats. Designer Lucy Eaton Corder had the great fortune of being part of this dream home building process when she was

The ceiling in the TV room is beautifully detailed with tree trunks while sheer linen drapes cascade down creating a romantic island atmosphere.



The open dining space offers views of the ocean on one side and the tranquil courtyard on the other



The inspiration behind this architecture was Moroccan and East African, so the interiors needed to marry the bedouin style but in a comfortable five-star way

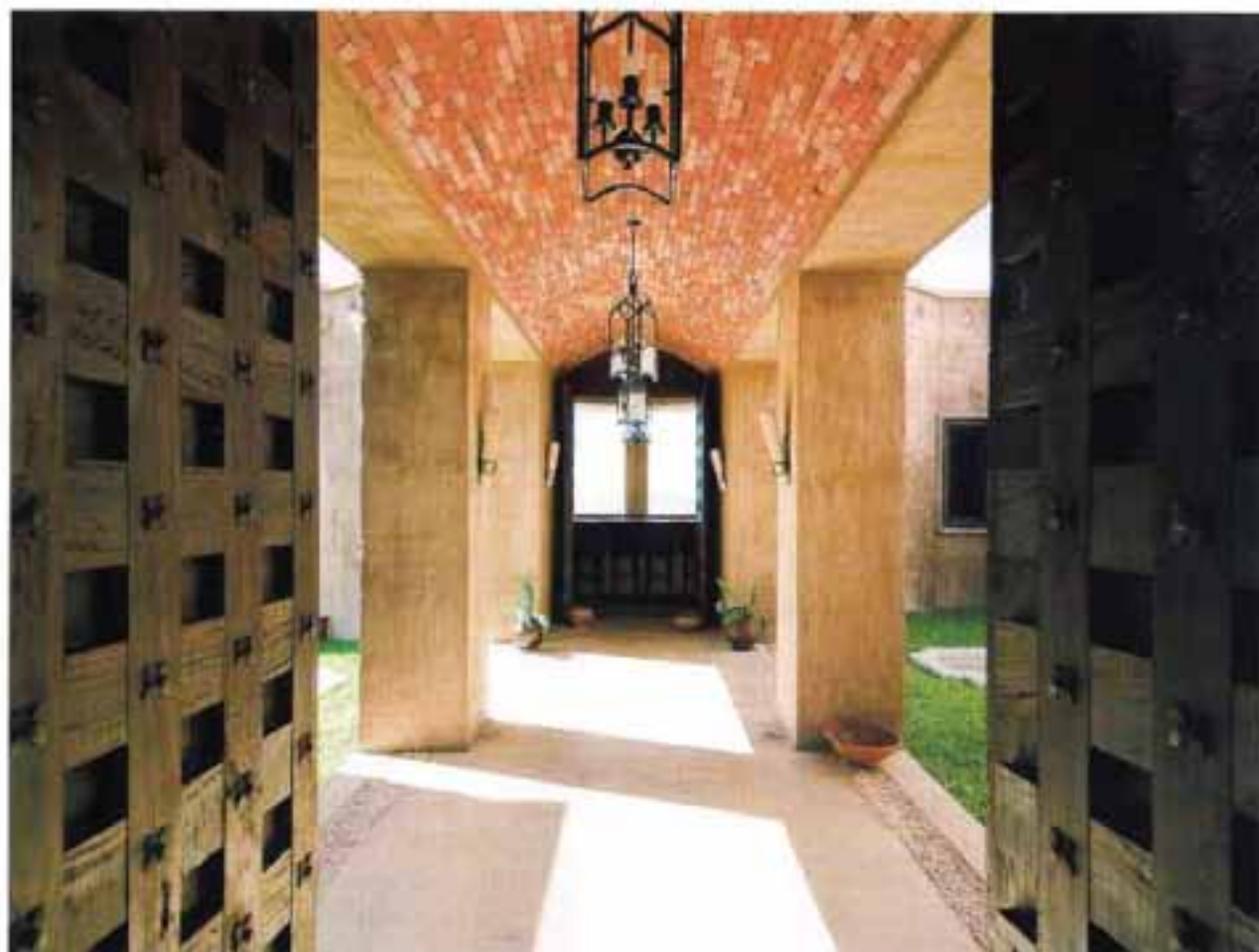




Above: Outdoor seating areas provide respite from the hot beach. **Right:** Big ensuite bathrooms have been luxuriously fitted out with modern amenities, the look still infused or eclectic, from freestanding copper bathtubs to outdoor showers with island mosaic.

"The style is a juxtaposition of classic nomadic – if that's possible," says Lucy. "We wanted to be true to that area, which is all about the spice trade." Drawing inspiration from Morocco and East Africa, rich 'spice' colours were combined with custom designed pieces and objects from India, Morocco and Zanzibar to achieve the perfect Bedouin luxury interior which, Lucy admits, was not easy. "A lot of the materials and textures of North Africa are rough and hard wearing, gorgeous to look at but not subtle to touch." These hurdles were successfully tackled and the nomadic interior remained eclectic yet luxuriant and immensely comfortable as well.

Lucy was called on to the project at an early building stage, and so there was plenty of time to hunt for antique pieces and not rush into a



Above: Grand entrance doors at the back open into a tranquil courtyard dotted with fountains and embedded seating. A walkway leads into the home

colour is more powerful than style." Situated at the centre, the heart of the home, is the lounge cum bar with a Teppanyaki style hob for occasions that require cooking alongside entertaining. A beautiful handcrafted dome is the focal feature, reigning over a day bed – a perfect space for an afternoon nap. The dining room that shoots off this space also promotes this siesta air with full height folding doors on both sides facing the sea and the tranquil courtyard, respectively, allowing the breeze to cool the space for lazy midday lunches.

As if weaving through a Bedouin dream, the architecture leads us to the four bedrooms, with ensuite bathrooms, their earthen raw yet spatial quality truly impressive. Each room has a little lounge seating with Moroccan chairs, handmade rugs and side tables while the bathrooms boast beautiful freestanding copper baths and mosaic outdoor showers. ▶



This page: The interior spaces are decorated with found objects from India, Zanzibar and Morocco, which were handpicked on their travels



Above: Large folding doors on both sides allow the breeze to flow through the dining space keeping it cool - ideal for lazy afternoon lunches.



decor leave no doubt that behind these carved doors is a North African adventure waiting to unfold. The doors lead into a courtyard - a sanctuary of sorts with mosaic fountains and palm trees, the calming sounds of birds and running water.

To the right of the entrance walkway is the kitchen, and to the left, the TV room, which doubles as a fifth bedroom. The room has a charming atmosphere - a ceiling beautifully detailed with coconut tree trunks, sheer linen drapes cascading down plush pistachio sofas that fill the space.

"This room was an afterthought but proved to be a real success," says Lucy. "I love an eclectic interior - never staying entirely true to a period or a theme, but rather combining beautiful fabrics, furniture and objects within a colour scheme and seeing what you get. To me, ♪



offered the chance to do the interior design for a residence on this peaceful island. The house, part of the exclusive Benguerra Lodge, was to be the clients' holiday home and the clients came to Lucy with some basic ideas – something authentic but never compromising comfort. The overall look was to be eclectic and nomadic but comfortable.

"The clients were very hands-on with the design and I merely guided them," says Lucy. "The inspiration behind this architecture was Moroccan and East African, so the interiors needed to marry the Bedouin style, but in a

comfortable five-star way." The main entrance to the house is situated at the back; the architecture opens itself towards the front and out to the beach and blue beyond. "A lot of effort went into recreating the grand Moroccan entrance," says Lucy.

Hand-made terracotta tiles cover the steps and columns, and the roughly stripped timber roof over the front doors, allowing in dappled sunlight. Tall canvas drapes soften the columns on either side inviting you towards solid sandalwood double doors. The eclectic ambience and heavy Moroccan leanings to the



Moroccan furnishings
decorate the spatial
bedrooms. Lucy's love of
eclecticism and colours is
cleverly balanced with the
residents' need for comfort







expensive retail items. No designer brands were used, "Because we were trying to achieve a worn look," she says. "We used a lot of old decorative pieces found from various traders and spent generously on the important feature items, such as the handmade ceramic tiles, the columns and good quality beds and linen.

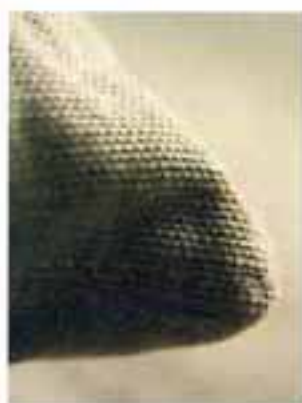
The interiors blend in nicely with their larger surrounds, the lodge and the island. The original Bengueria Lodge was destroyed by Cyclone Favio in 2007. Lucy was involved in its refurbishment and to maintain an even decor

theme, she was naturally the recommended designer for the villas. The home is complete on its own, as well as part of a bigger whole.

Walking through the home is an Arabian design adventure and throughout this beautiful journey, the outdoors dances around, occasionally teasing the interiors. While one side allows magnificent beach and sea views, the courtyard space peeks in from the other, showing potted bougainvilleas, built-in seating and trough-shaped ponds – an ideal retreat from the heat.



Above: The rooftop is inspired by a traditional Moroccan mallis. Built-in canvas seats offer panoramic views of Bengueria Island.



Pebbled steps lead to the rooftop, which was inspired by a traditional Moroccan mallis but with canvas seats and awnings. This is the spot that allows 360 degree views of the breathtaking island of Bengueria.

Lucy admits that, challenging as this project has been, it was one that she enjoyed the most, from start to finish. "I would say, this villa epitomises me, my style," she says.

"I love colour! It's what makes me tick. From constant sourcing, I'm exposed to such beautiful things that I surround myself with anything that has meaning to me, a reminder of somewhere I've been, something a trader gave as a gift.

"My own space is a magpie's nest of beautiful and meaningful stuff that makes me happy. A bit like this villa does for its owner."