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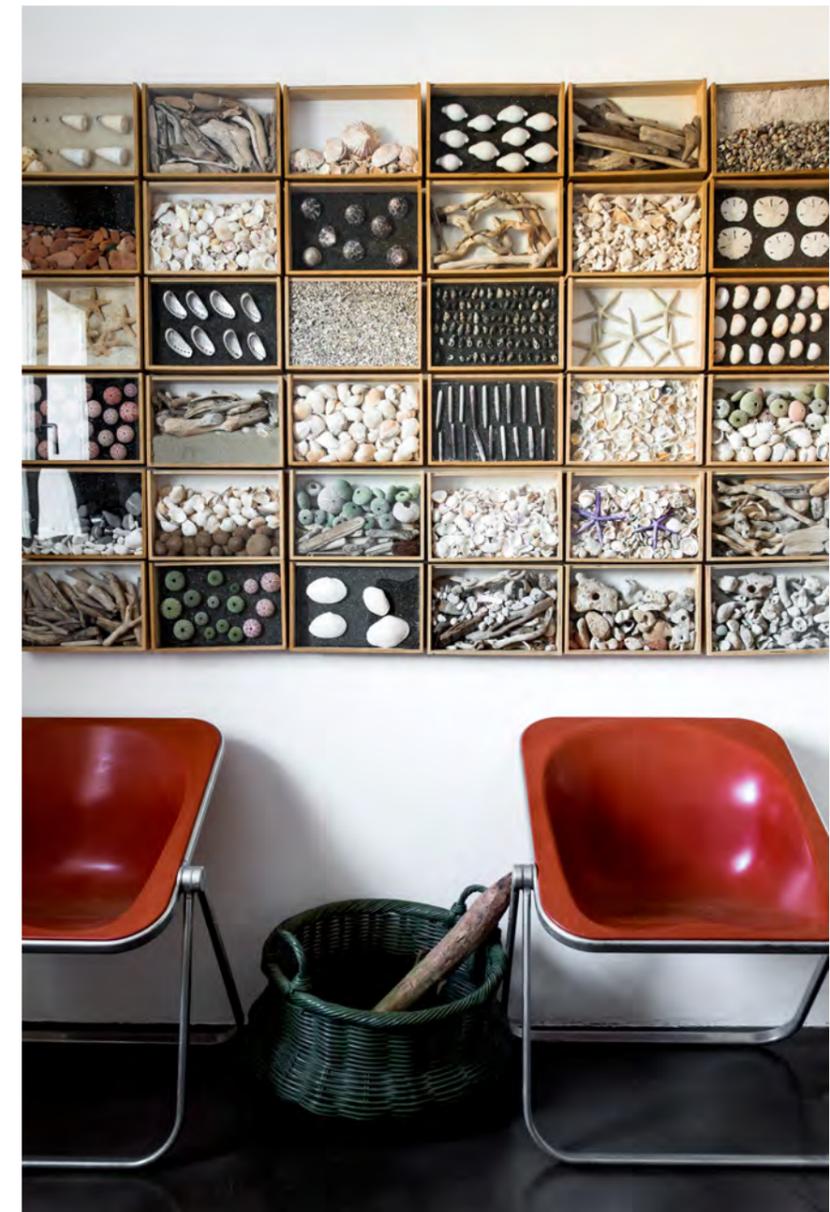
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BEACH COMBER



Using honest materials, the owner of this villa in southern Italy has created a calming retreat that draws deeply on the coastline's natural beauty

Words **JACKIE DALY** Production **KERSTIN ROSE** Photography **CHRISTIAN SCHAULIN**



Outside Sandy beaches meet the Ionian Sea along this coastline, which is just over a mile from the estate. **Details** The couple like to collect shells on the beach, which they display in simple frames. The base of the seating area is plastered with varnished lime cement. The owner made the artwork above it from leftover building materials



Iwanted to create a modern holiday house that blended harmoniously with its natural surroundings,' says Bologna-based architect Luca Zanaroli of the coastal villa that he has built on his farmstead in Puglia, Italy – a region that forms part of the heel of the country's boot-shape peninsula. Standing in two-and-a-half acres of outstanding natural beauty, Luca's rural estate has a landscape that is typical of the region, which is known locally as 'the kingdom of drought and stones'.

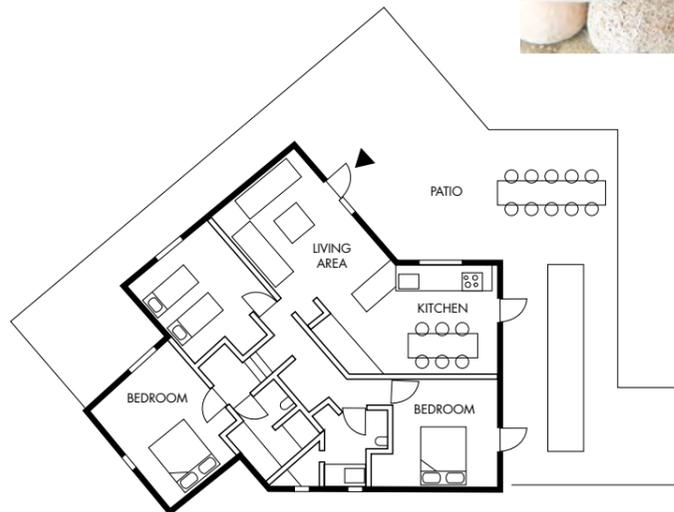
He bought the plot in order to renovate its existing 300-year-old farmhouse, where he holidays with his wife, Silvia, and their two teenage children. However, Luca found it difficult to remain idle during the family's summer breaks and the discovery of an old stove in the grounds of the property – the last remnants of an ancient dwelling that, over time, had been reduced to a pile of boulders – sparked his imagination, inspiring him to begin creating a new three-bedroom villa on the site. Designed to merge sensitively with its idyllic setting, the building references the look of local drywall structures and is clad entirely in stone that Luca found on the property's grounds.

By steering clear of the predictable rectangular rooms and picture windows that are common in new-builds – instead incorporating ad-hoc corners and diagonal walls – Luca has created the impression of a house with history, one that has been built in stages over decades. He does not distinguish between architecture and interior design in his work. 'For me there is no dividing line between the two: each is connected to the other and forms part of an organic process,' he says. Consequently, every detail of the house, from the seating area in the living room to the freestanding island in the kitchen, was drafted on the initial blueprints and built as the bones of the building took shape. These pieces are plastered in brown lime cement. The flooring and the burnished-metal dividing doors in the kitchen echo this patinated effect.

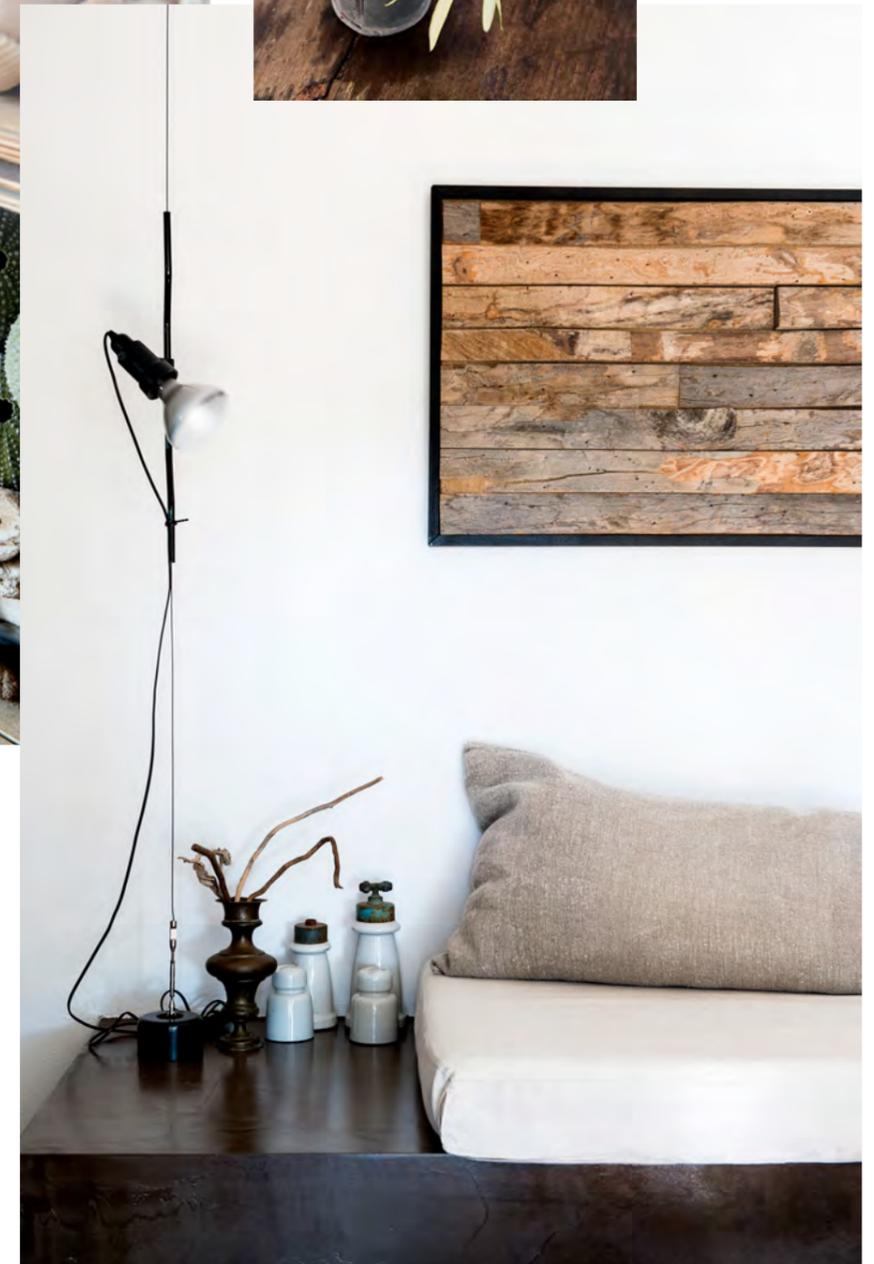
Luca and Silvia spend much of their holidays rambling along the coastline, foraging for treasures that can be used in the house. Some of their finds are decorative, such as the hollowed-out tree trunks that are filled with traditional farming tools – a nod to the area's agricultural heritage. Other salvaged gems are given new uses; a stone feeding trough has been repurposed as a bathroom washbasin, while an old wooden ladder now serves as a towel rail. 'I like to reuse things in unexpected ways,' says Luca. 'I mix these reclaimed elements with vintage pieces that I pick up at flea markets.'

Throughout the interior, these foraged finds are arranged in artful clusters. 'I deliberately draw attention to one particular thing,' says Luca. 'The windows, for example, have been designed to highlight a single vista rather than letting in sweeping panoramic views – we only have to step onto the patio for those.'

lucazanaroli.com ▶



The owner scours Puglia's picturesque coastline for pieces that can be used to decorate the villa



'I like to reuse things in unexpected ways and mix reclaimed elements with vintage pieces that I pick up at local flea markets'



Kitchen The owner designed the worktops and island, which are plastered with varnished lime cement to create a textural, seamless finish. Wood offcuts gathered when constructing an outdoor arbour were used to create the artwork on the wall. The pendant lamps, trestle table and benches were purchased locally ▶





‘I wanted to create a modern home that blended harmoniously with its surroundings’



MY COASTAL LIFE

I have been visiting Puglia since I was a child. My mother and I spent our holidays here so I feel a strong connection to the region.

My wife and I found this plot when we were walking nearby. We were searching for unspoiled farmland with olive trees.

Spending time here has made me more relaxed because I feel closer to nature.

I like how calm this area is – it’s still very rural and the people are so friendly.

I love the vintage markets in the small villages that are dotted nearby. I buy many secondhand pieces from them.

Visitors should head straight to the beach – the coastline here in Puglia is fantastic.

Bathroom The burnished walls and floors create a dramatic, cocooning space. The roughly hewn basin is an old stone feeding trough that was found on the estate

Bedroom The bedhead in the main bedroom was formerly an iron gate, now cleaned up and cut to size. The French windows open onto a patio that receives the morning sun **LD**