

SUMMER

A S P I R E DESIGN AND HOME



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ARCHITECTURE
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ARCHETYPES
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ON THE MARKET: LOS ANGELES | MANHATTAN

40 Years Later, Fagnola Returns to Sardinia

BreezeWays

CUSTOM-DESIGNED CORTEN STEEL DOOR

TEXT THERESA KEEGAN PHOTOGRAPHY PINO DELL'AQUILA

ARCHITECTURE

ITALY is a country steeped in history and densely built, so it makes sense that renovation projects are common here. But getting a younger generation of architects to partner with an original architect is a unique opportunity. And the results have been breathtaking: on the beautiful island of Sardinia, unique villas have been transformed, paying homage to the original 1970s design by Ferdinando Fagnola and the innovation of architects at PAT. architetti associati.

FAÇADE CLADDING AND DECK IN IROKO PLANKS | BY LUALDI
BASALT FLOORING | BY F.LLI CATELLA

“This is an architecture that is rooted in the place,” comments Andrea Veglia, one of the founding architects with PAT. who oversaw the project. “It was the possibility to remake houses that were destroyed by those who owned them – who betrayed the original vision for the villas.”

Designed to blend into the landscape, almost disappearing into the horizon, the villas’ exteriors were constructed of brutalist concrete to complement the rocky landscape with exposed steel beams, that oxidize and transform with the environment. The original project has nine villas, but each was ultimately owned by people with different design aesthetics. Rather than becoming a unified project, through the decades the villas at Sardinia became disparate. As Fagnola notes, “The relationship between the landscape and the buildings, over the years, had become more polished, more akin to a traditional decorative garden. Originally it was intended as a place where nature would regain her space, her prevalence, her predominance.”

When he was contacted about overseeing a renovation on two of the villas in 2011, he saw an opportunity to bring his older work into a new era. Fagnola contracted with PAT., with whom he’d done other projects.

Veglia recalls the excitement in the studio upon hearing the firm had been selected. “We were too busy with the champagne bottles to worry about the challenges of working on an island.” But reality soon set in, as seasonal demands affected construction (no construction in summer); skilled laborers and material had to be brought in; and the initial uses of Villas One and Two shifted to reflect the needs of the current owners – a family with five children.

Villa One became the center of the project, with its indoor and outdoor living areas, kitchen and master bedrooms, while Villa Two became the main recreation area, with guest bedrooms, spa, relaxation area and pools. The unit essentially was split apart, resulting in three different areas.

“I think that the remaking of Villa 2, which really had been massacred, was the biggest challenge and what gave us the greatest satisfaction, although the final result is something quite different from the original plans,” explains Veglia. “But we had the possibility to discuss and check every detail with the original architect as we were renovating.”

Not only did the structures need to blend into the



land, but each room – and each opening – was positioned toward a specific view, just as it was when Fagnola originally built the project and a neighbor would drop in during construction, pointing out the best sites and views on the property. When Villa Three became available for purchase in 2017, it was transformed into guest bedrooms and a teaching workshop for children.

Throughout the renovation natural materials – many of which have an island tradition – are used. Basalt stone, cork floors and iroko decks highlight special uses. Brightly-colored walls and retractable windows demarcate living areas. The renovations also incorporate drought-tolerant native plantings, even on the roofs, to reduce water consumption and the earthen cooling system is maximized for reduced energy. Linking pathways between the villas and incorporating sculptural elements made the three villas become one large property.

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