

# Living

**TOBIAS REHBERGER**

*Paradoxes of an artist house*

**INTERNO GIORNO**

*Modules, equipped walls and*

**FULL PINK**

*In Portugal, a plain-coloured villa foregoes decoration to enhance the plastic volumes of the architecture*

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The absolute protagonist of Casa Carlita is the yellow sandstone. The traditional material reinterpreted by Studio Gum composes an architecture with geometric volumes immersed in the Val di Noto. At the entrance, the work of Sergio

Fiorentino, Benjamin suspension by Frandsen and Officina table, Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Magis. Of the Cavallo brothers of Syracuse the craftsmanship of the stone; fixtures by Secco Sistemi.



ALBUM

# SICILIA

*A land a stone's throw from Noto, lots of wind and lots of sun. Studio Gum did the rest: a fluid villa in yellow sandstone, with earthenware and cement tiles. Here is Casa Carlita: tradition sets you free*

# PURRE

TEXT SUSANNA LEGRENZI  
PHOTO FILIPPO BAMBERGHI



In the living room, Ghost sofa by Paola Navone for Gervasoni and Ozz floor lamp by Paolo Cappello, Miniforms. N2 oak seating, by Ethnicraft like the Oak Mikado table in the background. Afternoon chairs by Menu and suspensions by Frandsen. On the ground, handcrafted cement tiles by Pavimenti Sansone and earthenware by Guglielmino Cooperativa (in this photo). For the dining room,

teak table by HK living, chairs by Menu and Bolt suspensions by Anton De Groof for Tonone. Custom sideboard with Kerakoll finish. Above, ceramics by Alessandro Iudici and canvas by Giovanna Brogna (opposite page, top).

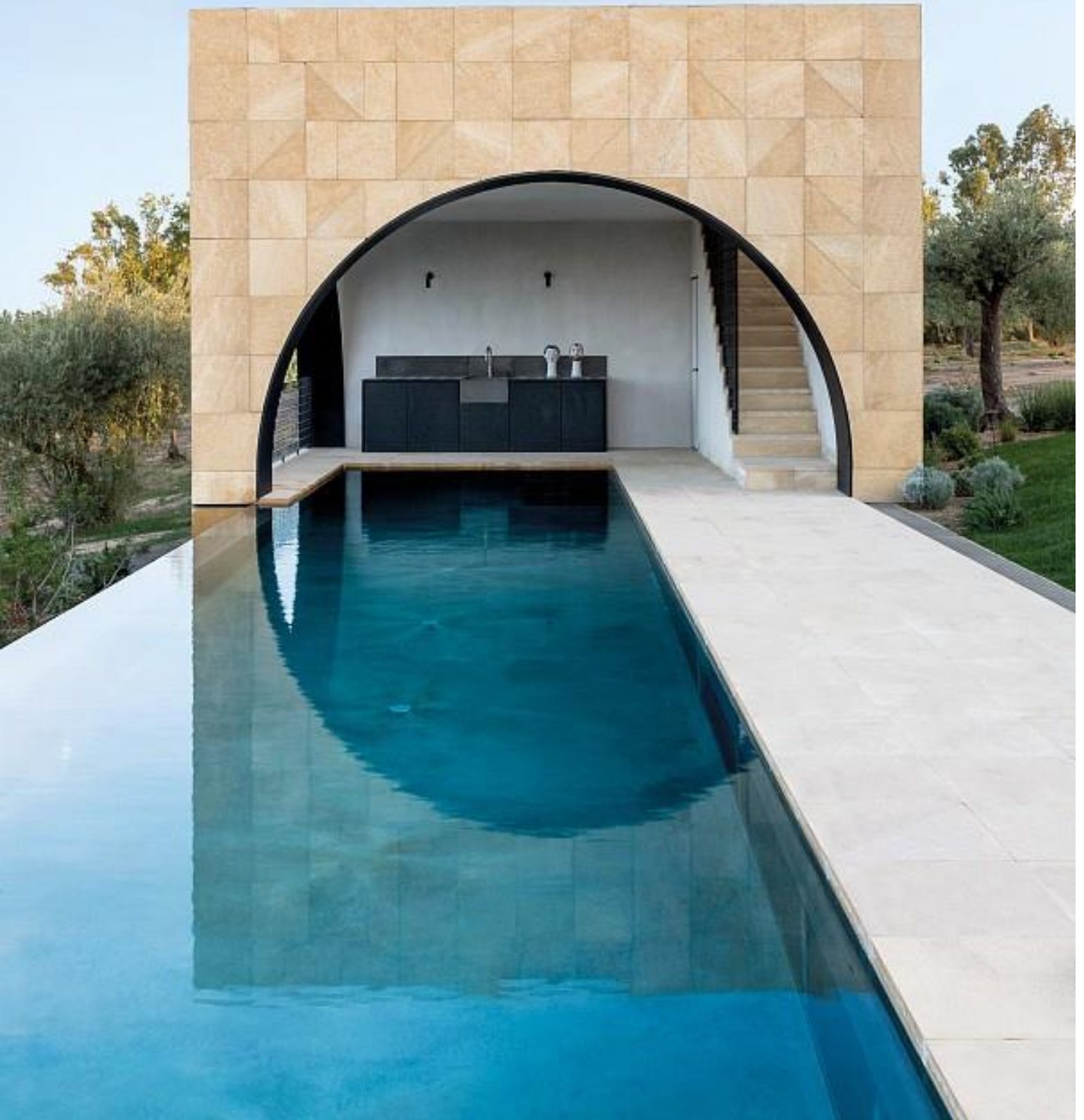
You can tell from the pool the sense of the project: a comb-shaped plan with three courtyards open to the trees (opposite page, bottom).





«We liked the idea of a tower with a portal, which houses part of the swimming pool - explain Valentina Giampiccolo and Giuseppe Minaldi of Studio Gum - giving a shaded area, protected from the wind» (in this

photo). For the made-to-measure kitchen, a stone snack table La Nera lava from Nerosicilia. Cast suspensions by Menu and Officina stools, design Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Magis (opposite page).









Custom cement tiles for the long corridor equipped with retractable wardrobes where they overlook the rooms; wall lamp Chapeau! by Toscot (above, right). In the bathroom, handcrafted Cotto Etrusco coverings, sink of Flaminia ceramics, Cea Design faucets and shower box Zen by Megius (above, left). The room with opus signinum

Custom cement tiles for the long corridor equipped with retractable wardrobes where they overlook the rooms; wall lamp Chapeau! by Toscot (above, right). In the bathroom, handcrafted Cotto Etrusco coverings, sink of Flaminia ceramics, Cea Design faucets and shower box Zen by Megius (above, left). The room with opus signinum floor.

The studio is in Ragusa, in the historic centre, among its churches and its eighteenth-century palaces, where Marcello Mastroianni and Stefania Sandrelli exchanged the forbidden glances of Italian Divorce. And it is no coincidence, because all the works of Studio Gum have roots there, in the Val di Noto, even when they are elsewhere.

Casa Carlita is no exception, although it is the first project in which Valentina Giampiccolo and Giuseppe Minaldi, two of two in life and work, have designed everything: from the architectural box, imagined as a fluid house courting olive, carob and almond trees, to the direction of the gaze that runs far, to the sea, the extreme one, pushed southeast towards Africa. "The project it was born from scratch: the client made available to us a land a stone's throw from Noto, lots of wind and lots of sun. Then, there were these wonderful trees..." says Valentina. «At first we built four different proposals to finally choose a plan that looks like a comb with three courtyards open to the trees, the pivot on which we designed everything». Before Casa Carlita, Studio Gum undertook numerous restoration works in a corner of Sicily that has best preserved its DNA, from the hyperbole of the Baroque Unesco Heritage to the rural houses that still today subtly punctuate the landscape. With Casa Carlita, a contemporary reinterpretation of tradition, Valentina and Giuseppe have made a synthesis of these experiences, starting from the choice of materials. For the external perimeter of the villa, a large 'C' typical of Sicilian country houses, yellow sandstone won, a traditional material entirely reinterpreted.

«To make the stone even more material, we had it scratched. We also chose to cut it into square modules measuring 50 x 50 cm, which in turn were cut, in some cases, into a triangle, to create a game of joints that reinterpreted the classic masonry with regular ashlars». The yellow of the sandstone, always in the exteriors, is flanked by the white plastering of the spaces inside the courtyards and the light fixtures in painted iron. And then again, in the interiors, in a continuum with tradition, the cocciopesto floors and a long flight of Salento cement tiles which, from the kitchen, cuts the length of the house. «Cocciopesto is an extraordinary material. Thanks to a Sicilian craftsman we were able to experiment with new colours, from powder pink to greys», adds Valentina. For the furnishings, much has been created to design, such as the kitchen, sewn on some elements that have already been purchased, such as the large stone bucket. Finally, the swimming pool, one with a small tower, designed as a viewpoint over the landscape. «We liked the idea of leaving a sign, a tower with a portal, which in fact then welcomed part of the swimming pool, giving a shaded area, protected from the wind». All around is pure Sicily. «In recent years we have been very committed to the restoration of the architectural heritage, rich in specificities and traditions. It is our response to the overbuilding that threatens one of the most beautiful regions in Italy», says Studio Gum. «We dealt with villas, hotels and showrooms. In Sicily there is such a large decommissioned potential that we could go on for decades. We approached Casa Carlita with the same sensitivity. There's something. What do you want to add, let's ask Valentina? «Yes, the owners are keen to remind you that the name of this villa, Casa Carlita, is a tribute to the Sicilian mother of the landlady». A thin red thread that reminds us of who we are, what we carry inside, that every trip to the cradle of the Mediterranean is ultimately a return. Sometimes even in the choices of designing a house, which embraces rows of trees, which embrace the sea.



## TO MAKE THE STONE EVEN MORE MATERIAL WE HAD IT SCRATCHED AND CUT INTO A TRIANGLE

*Studio Gum*



A couple in work and in life, Valentina Giampiccolo, born in 1977, and Giuseppe Minaldi, 1973, are the founders of Studio Gum. True Sicilians, they pose with their team on

The back of the yellow sandstone belvedere tower. From left: Elena Biazzo, Marzia Iacono, Claudia Galfano, Roberta Battaglia and Stefano Brugaletta.

