

DISTANT SHORES

The Greek island is tiny and remote and the landscape is rugged and windswept, but once Milan-based designers Simone Ciarmoli and Miguel Queda discovered Folégandros, they knew there was no better place for their vacation home

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OPPOSITE: Milan-based designers Miguel Queda, left, and Simone Ciarmoli at the vacation home they built on the Greek island of Folégandros. **THIS PAGE:** In the living room, Meridiani sofas are covered in a fabric by Dominique Kieffer, the Charlotte Perriand cocktail table was found at a Paris flea market, and the flooring is Karystos stone; the artwork over the sofa is by Marco Basta, and the two small oil paintings were found at flea markets in Milan and Athens. For details, see Resources.



When they are at home in Milan, Simone Ciarmoli and Miguel Queda lead busy lives. Their design practice, Ciarmoli Queda Studio, is in demand for the sumptuous yet understated interiors they create for houses, apartments, and yachts. The pair, who worked in the fashion world before turning to design, also conjure store interiors and displays for such luxury brands as Tod's and Jimmy Choo.

And when these two cosmopolitan, well-traveled men want to get away from it all, they really get away—to the tiny island of Folégandros, in Greece's southern Cyclades. "One of the reasons we chose it," says Ciarmoli, "is that it's difficult to get there. There's no airport." Indeed, the island, which measures a mere twelve-and-a-half square miles, can be reached only by ferry, and even that's an expedition: It's a three-and-a-half-hour ride from Athens in the summer, and much longer off-season. Ciarmoli loves the island's rugged landscape, or what he calls its "primitive elegance," and recalls that when he and his partner first visited in 2006 (on the recommendation of an equally sophisticated globe-trotting friend), he said to Queda, "We're going to get a house here."

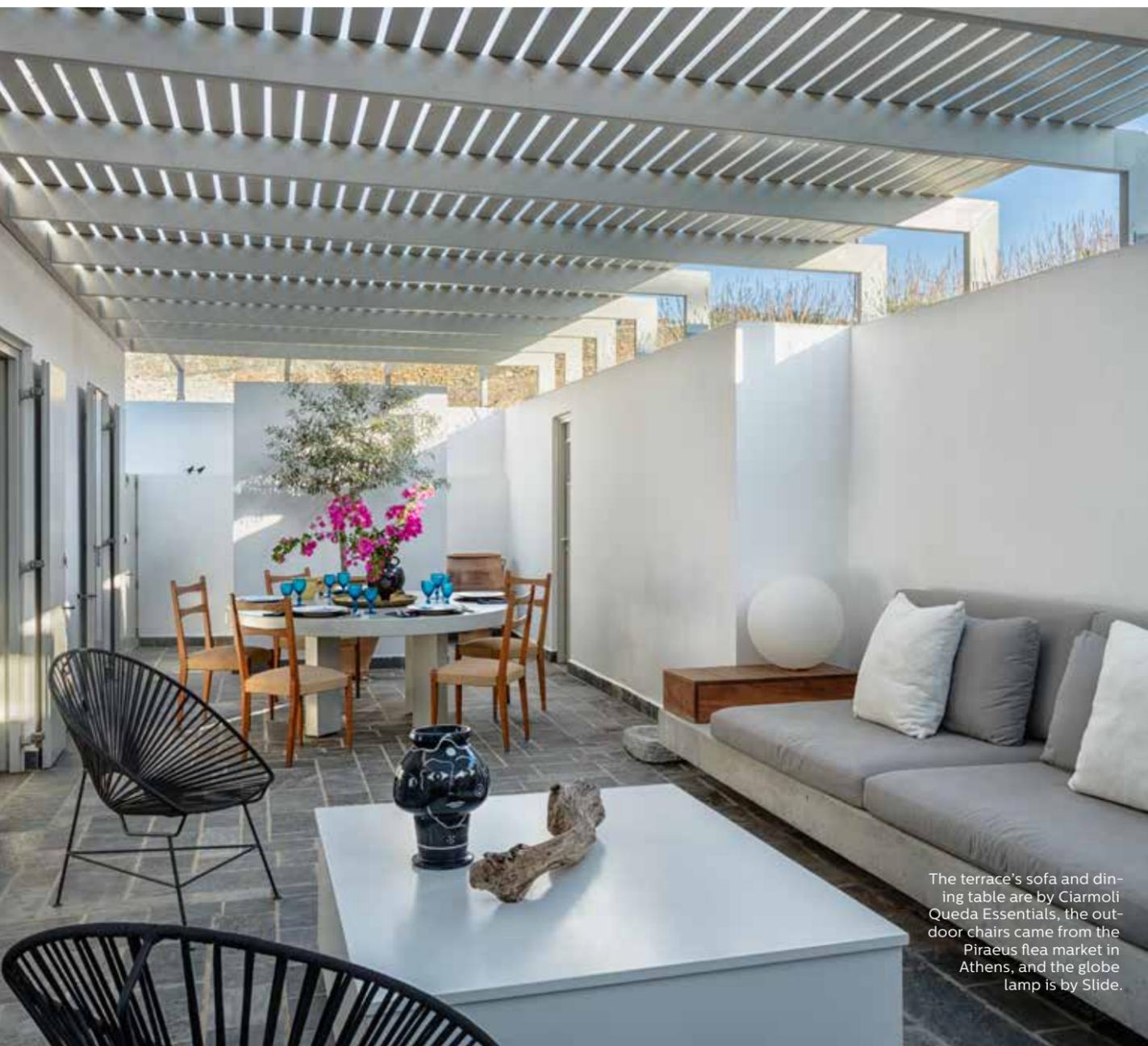
In fact, they eventually designed and built one, on a piece of land they purchased from the local butcher. The terraced site, with its travel-poster views, looks "like a work by Hiroshi Sugimoto, where there is a clear line between land, sky, and sea," Ciarmoli says. The architecture consists of Cubist forms and whitewashed, nearly two-foot-deep masonry walls covered in stucco that insulate the interiors from summer's heat—a



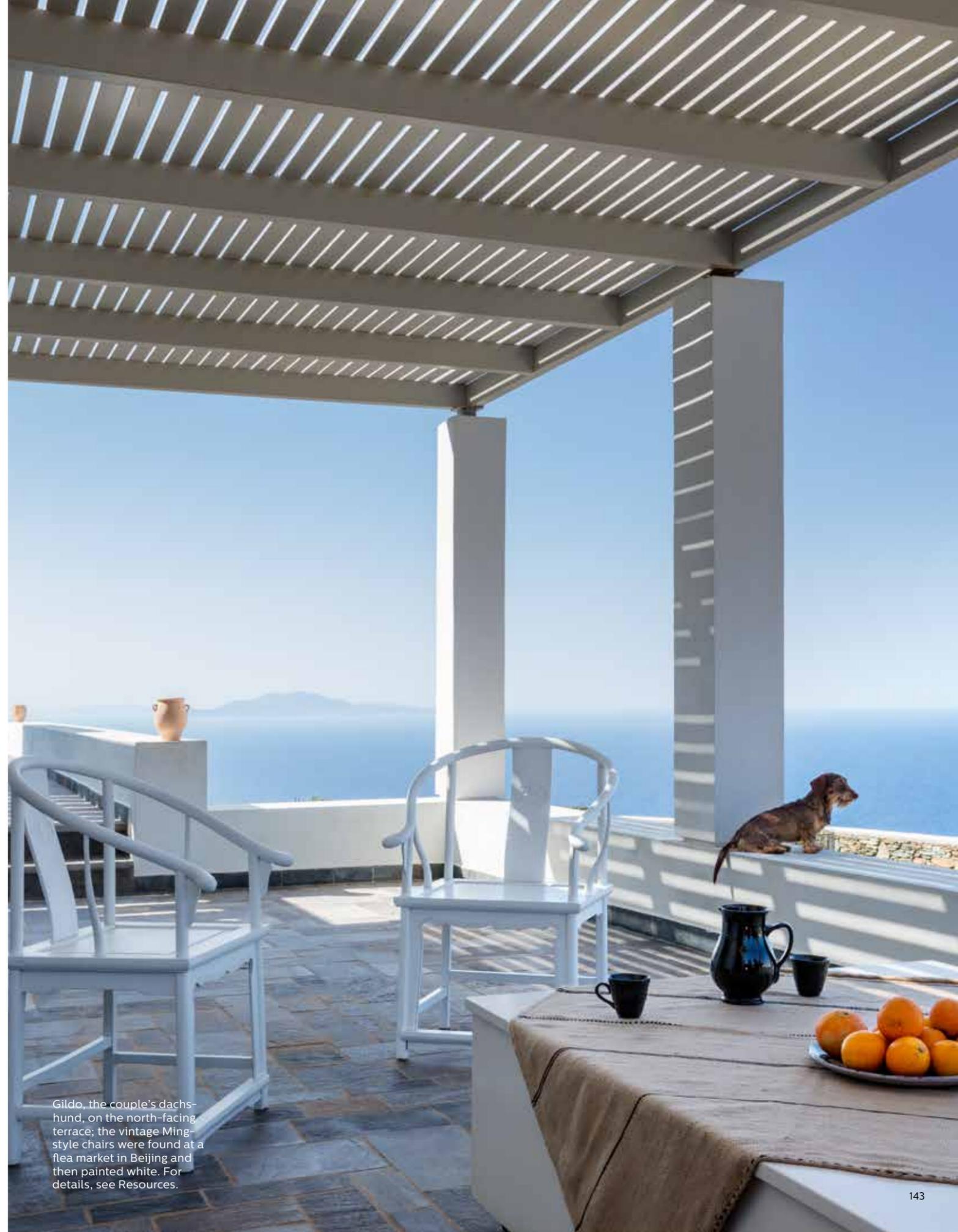
In the courtyard, plantings of lavender and aloe are framed by paths in Karystos stone, the over-size planter is by Slide, and a semi-circular structure built of local stone provides shade and shelter.



The kitchen table is by Ciarmoli Queda Essentials, the 1950s chairs are from an Athens flea market, the pendant light is by THPG, and the wall lamps are by FontanaArte.



The terrace's sofa and dining table are by Ciarmoli Queda Essentials, the outdoor chairs came from the Piraeus flea market in Athens, and the globe lamp is by Slide.



Gildo, the couple's dachshund, on the north-facing terrace; the vintage Ming-style chairs were found at a flea market in Beijing and then painted white. For details, see Resources.



contemporary take on the vernacular Cycladic dwellings that the modernist master Le Corbusier once admired for their purity.

Houses by the sea usually offer numerous spots in which to soak up the sun, and this one has terraces off the main living/dining area and guest room. Because the sun and wind can be strong in summer, the designers also made sure to include a walled “summer terrace” on the sheltered hill side of the house. All of the outdoor spaces are shaded with slatted-wood canopies that create graphic striped shadows on the walls and floors. “The striped thing is so modern,” Ciarmoli says. Windows in the living area line up on both sides, so that even from the summer terrace, you can see the water.

The house embodies a dialogue between the historic and the contemporary. The floors, of traditional Karystos stone used indoors and out, contrast with the ceilings of board-formed concrete, a signature material of modernist architecture. A simple teak dining table designed by Ciarmoli and Queda to look somewhat monastic is surrounded by a set of 1950s chairs that the designers found at a flea market and upholstered in burlap. A vintage wooden table by Charlotte Perriand sits between two deep blue upholstered sofas, accented by a framed still life on the bookshelf; a large artwork of flowers and plants, rendered in delicate lines on felt by the Milanese artist Marco Basta, hangs above one of the sofas. On the terrace outside the living area, two vintage Ming-style chairs that the designers found in

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Beijing are painted white, in a gesture Ciarmoli calls “a cultural mix. I thought they needed a new life.”

A rectangular block at one end of the house contains the master bedroom on the ground floor and a guest room, with a cozy alcove bed, on the second. And between the living area and the bedroom wing, a transitional room—painted a shade of blue that’s both bright and rich and furnished with both an Indian charpoy and a 19th-century French gilt mirror—offers a place to read, work, or just sit and think. Ciarmoli admits that while he and Queda revel in the luxury of their island solitude, it is modern technology that allows them to do so. “With the internet,” he jokes, “we can pretend to live as primitives.”

Judging by their current schedule, Ciarmoli and Queda may not have much downtime. Their upcoming projects include a retail concept for the Italian fashion and textiles house Agnona and two major events for the Milan furniture fair in April: an installation of the designers’ furnishings and an exhibition exploring what they call “unconventional visions of contemporary design” that includes rugs and furniture from their own line, Ciarmoli Queda Essentials, accompanied by a short film by director Matteo Garrone. It seems that the designers’ exposure to filmmaking has awakened a new passion. Asked if there was a dream project on their wish list, Ciarmoli replied, “The scenography for a movie would be amazing.” They certainly have the perfect island on which to set it. ■



In the lounge, the 1850 Indian charpoy was purchased at a flea market in New Delhi, the circa-1800 Empire mirror is from the St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat flea market in Provence, and the walls are painted in a blue by Oikos. **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP:** Terra-cotta vases from Crete by Michalis Houlakis rest on whitewashed, stuccoed masonry walls. The Aegean Sea is visible through a window in the master bedroom; the bed linens and side table are by Ciarmoli Queda Essentials, the lamp is by FontanaArte, and the artwork was painted directly on the wall by Ciarmoli. For details, see Resources.