HOMES

This Holiday Home in Mykonos Is the Epitome of Mediterranean Chic

Jeweller designer Diane Kordas's all-white summer home on the Greek island is a a blend of laidback rusticity and upscale style

By Jessica Doyle, Photography by Dylan Thomas

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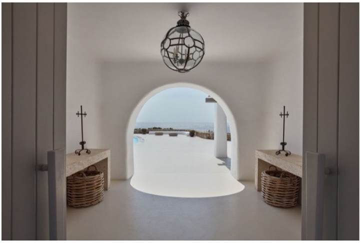
And this is exactly what happened to jewellery designer Diane Kordas. The first time she set foot on Mykonos was in the early 1980s; she had recently started dating the Greek-born man who would become her husband, and it was her first experience of the rugged, rustic landscape that is a essence of the island. She was instantly hooked: “It was so different and so far from anything I had experienced before, so raw and beautiful; it really spoke to me. I thought to myself at the time, ‘If we ever have kids, I’d love to have a holiday home in Mykonos to bring them to.’”

The glamorous and carefree spirit that characterises the island is perfectly suited to the designer’s own personal style and joie de vivre. Her designs blend a rock-chic aesthetic with precious stones and metals: for example, her Pop Art necklaces spelling out words such as ‘Queen’ and ‘Boom’ in coloured diamonds; rainbow woven bracelets; and her latest collection of sustainable cuffs, some made from vegan apple leather printed to look like snakeskin.

The crisp whitewashed walls and arched doorways of Diane Kordas’s Mykonos holiday home. Dylan Thomas



The infinity pool has sweeping sea views.

Entrance to the house.

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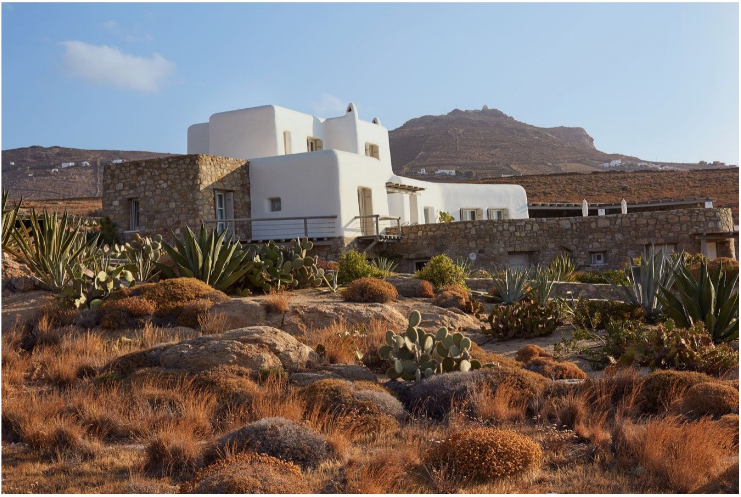
So, just over 20 years ago, when the couple, who are based in London, were looking for the ideal spot to build a summer holiday home for them and their two daughters, there was really only one option: “We’d tried visiting other Greek islands, but we always ended up back on Mykonos,” laughs Kordas. “Somehow, it was in our DNA.”

As luck would have it, her husband, Steve, heard about a plot of land that was for sale, “and I said to him, Go!” she recalls. “He got straight on a flight. I didn’t even need to see it.”



The house is built in the typical style of the area. Dylan Thomas,Dylan Thomas

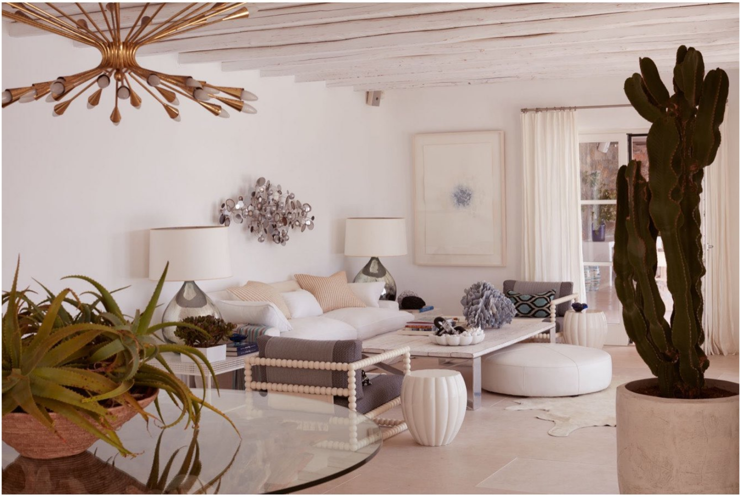
They hired a local architect to design the structure of the house for them: a whitewashed building with curved doorways, large windows and indoor/outdoor terraces that connect the interior with the outside world. It was, she says, a “dream project" for Steve, a "frustrated architect" who now works in finance but originally studied mechanical engineering, and collaborated on the design.

For the decoration, Kordas brought her friend, the interior designer Hubert Zandberg, on board. "He said, 'We have to do something that reflects the spirit of Greece. It has to be of the earth,'" she says. To achieve that grounded, natural aesthetic, he helped to source pieces such as the round table in the open-plan living area, with a base made from a section of tree trunk, and a mix of furniture and accessories in both fresh white and warm rattan and wood.

A vintage Sputnik pendant light hangs above a large round table made from a section of tree trunk topped with glass.

Behind it, two vintage zebra-skin chairs bought in Paris flank the fireplace and are combined with a locally woven rug and a petrified wood side table.

Animal motifs are a recurring feature of Kordas's work – her Animal Kingdom rings featuring animals such as lions, zebras, elephants are among her most popular pieces – and pops of animal print in the interior help to connect it further with the natural world. They also add a taste of the glamorous aesthetic that Kordas also wanted to be reflected in the house.



The lounge area has deep, comfortable seating for post-dinner relaxing.

“We love that 1960s, 1970s era when people like Jackie O and Sophia Loren used to visit the island,” she says. As a reference to that era, they bought a vintage Sputnik pendant light that hangs above the wooden table, and zebra-skin lounge chairs with shiny chrome frames, which they found in Paris. Elsewhere, there are rugs handwoven on the island and rustic petrified-wood tables, but also metallic wall sculptures, modern art and oversized mirrored lamp bases. It’s a juxtaposition of the rustic and the luxe which, says Kordas, “brings the house together. It’s a beautiful kind of glamour, because it’s so simple.”

Jewellery designer Diane Kordas in her Mykonos home.

The bedrooms are simply furnished, with crisp white walls and furniture, rustic mirrors and splashes of colour provided by Greek textiles.

Days are spent swimming near the house or at a nearby beach; hanging out with visiting friends, and eating the fresh produce of the island. Evenings involve relaxed drinks at home, or dressing up to go out. “We don’t have to think about anything when we’re here,” she says. “No one’s running out to work; it’s about us being together as a family. It’s our happy place.”

The outdoor terraces, furnished with comfortable rattan and wood furniture.

A space for long family lunches and dinners, evening drinks.

An outdoor dining area on the terrace overlooking the infinity pool.

A rustic feel in the outdoor terrace.