

The verandah runs around two sides of the house. Alice relaid the floor using flat white river stones set into white cement, and lightened the colour of the beams supporting the balcony with a grey-green stain. Wooden shutters were painted in a Mediterranean sage green. The bamboo armchair was left by the previous owners, along with the vintage cane seat and chairs. The pair of temple oil lights are Goan, as are the antique brass plant pots.

A fusion of East & West

Years spent in India have had a colourful impact on Alice von Baum's approach to life in Mallorca, where she favours traditional decoration with a fresh twist

FEATURE AMANDA HARLING PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Pieces from Alice's travels create a colourful display in the living room. An elm-wood Chinese red desk, bought from The General Trading Company in London's Sloane Street, is a reminder of times past. 'I remember that it wasn't a bargain, but nothing at GTC was. It has travelled far and wide with me and I love it, so it was worth every penny.' The turned wooden temple pot is Burmese and the Indian teak armchair is upholstered in a vintage suzani embroidered throw; detail showing various decorative items from Alice's travels throughout India and China, ranging from vintage bronze peacocks to colourful kelim hats; the winter garden or conservatory is furnished with comfort in mind.

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even years ago, having lived in India for some 20 years, Alice von Baum decided it was time for a change.

'I love India,' she says, explaining that initially she had gone there to have a range of clothes made for her boutiques in London and Munich. Later on, as her career expanded to include designing homes and boutique hotels for clients, Goa became her base. Her decision to move was prompted by an approach from a potential buyer, she explains. 'A new start had its attractions, and I realised I could still spend time in India, overseeing the printing of the block-printed fabrics that are the backbone of my collections.' Alice's career began in couture fashion in Munich and her collections reflect that background with the emphasis on the quality of the fabric and the attention to detail. 'The ethos of doing things properly was ingrained in me at an early age. Whether I'm designing a house or a garment, it has to be perfect.'

Alice narrowed her search for a new home to the island of Mallorca. 'After India, I couldn't live in a country where there isn't sun, so Germany was out of the question. If one avoids the larger coastal resorts, Mallorca is beautiful and, as everybody I met there said they wouldn't dream of living anywhere else, I decided this was the place.'

It took some time, but Alice eventually found just what she wanted. 'I crisscrossed the island viewing endless properties, which was interesting, as I learnt so much.' Originally a very small, very old *casita* or sheep shelter, the house had been extended into a comfortable and solid space. 'The rural location was lovely, with far-reaching views across fields of almond trees towards the mountains, with grazing sheep and tinkling bells, plus a swimming pool! Knowing I could make improvements, I didn't hesitate.'

Just as in India where Alice used the traditional skills of local craftsmen in fresh, contemporary ways, here she has incorporated vernacular details into her new home in an innovative manner. In the entrance hall, she laid out the floor herself setting flat white river stones into white cement. 'The idea is based on the floors in traditional finca estates, but making it white transformed the space,' says Alice. 'It is such a pleasure during the warm weather walking in bare feet on the smooth but slightly uneven surface.'

For the floor in the living room and the adjacent conservatory or winter garden, as she refers to it, Alice approached the long-established Mallorcan company Huguet, with a request for elongated

diamond-shaped tiles in a mix of four colours. 'Bespoke handmade cement tiles and floors are one of the signature features in all my projects,' she explains. 'Here they are laid in a random format, which is not the usual way, but I like the less formal look it creates.' To give the house a lighter feel, other traditional features such as the dark-stained beams supporting the verandah roof were lightened with a grey-green wash. Similarly, terracotta ceiling tiles and supporting dark timber beams in the bedrooms were painted off-white, creating the light, airy look that Alice wanted. 'Only two beams remain unpainted and both are part of the original structure.'

Alice's most recent enterprise is the result of a collaboration with Mel Paton, an English filmmaker. 'Mel and I have a shop in Santa Maria, long known for its textiles and Sunday market. In our latest collection, Mel's outline drawings of Mediterranean plants have been superimposed onto the block prints of my homeware and clothes collections. I see it as a fusion of my lifelong passion for India and the East, blended with elements of the Mediterranean, which sums up how I think of my new home.' ■

@alicevonbaum

BELOW Alice von Baum in her garden, which is filled with ancient yuccas and almond trees.





In the dining room, two etched-glass hurricane lamps sit on either side of a stainless steel Indian water bowl, used as a vase.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A pair of huge vintage ships' lights hang over the dining table, which is surrounded by a set of Art Deco chairs. Alice had the chic loose white linen covers with black piping made specially. The wooden candlesticks on the console table behind were bought in Cochin on Alice's first trip to India. As she says, 'My taste hasn't changed...'; Alice fell in love with this Gujarati wedding chest; she repainted the louvered doors of the existing kitchen units the darkest shade of green and added new stainless-steel appliances and a terrazzo work surface made by Huguet to create a sleek functional look; antique ceramics, useful everyday china and glasses are displayed on practical open shelves.





A group of colourful traditional reverse-glass paintings hang on the upstairs landing with an unusual one showing a European gentleman and his dog.



TOP LEFT The adjoining bathroom was completely refitted with a custom-made pale blue terrazzo basin made by Huguet, supported on a base with open shelves for towels and decorative objects. A trio of Art Deco Rajasthani mirrors, along with a decorative cabinet with a mirrored interior, add to the character, along with a vintage Chinese ladder used as a towel rail. **ABOVE** A quilted floral canopy by Brigitte Singh adds to the decorative aspect of the white-painted main bedroom. The whitewashed four-poster bed was made in Goa to Alice's design. A delicate white quilt and pillows are enlivened with a colourful kantha throw and a block-printed butterfly cushion. Vintage reverse-glass paintings depict Mughal court ladies.

The guest bedroom was transformed by painting the walls a cool Scandinavian blue-grey, and the terracotta ceiling tiles and wooden beams off-white. The colourful collection on the bed features an embroidered suzani bedcover, block-printed red cushions, others made from vintage kantha bags, and an exquisite small beadwork pillow designed by Alice. The artwork on the wall is by German artist Kurt Kranz.

