



Moment in the Sun

Architecture is often the best barometer of a city's character, finds **SANHITA SINHA CHOWDHURY** on a tour of summer homes across the world



Summer homes are an escapist's route to living in harmony with the sun. While in India most of us seek refuge in the hills or take shelter behind firmly fastened doors and windows, with the air-conditioning on full blast, abroad summer is the time to embrace all that's al fresco. But when it comes to choosing from the colour wheel or picking fabrics and materials, homogeneity is observed, at least on the home front. These villas, some cradled in the hills, others skirting the sea, highlight country-bound distinctions and season-induced similarities and portray how their residents enjoy and make the most of these sunny months within their roost.





The study has a mix of pop-coloured furniture and art (above); the lobby leads to a spiral staircase (below)



ANTIBES, FRANCE

At its deserted best, the seaside town of Antibes in southern France was an inspiration to artistes like Picasso, Hemingway and Fitzgerald. Today, it is a summer playground for the well-heeled, with luxurious chateaus hiding behind tall pine trees.

For this eclectic villa, British designer Kelly Hoppen tweaked her trademark design vocabulary of straight lines, strict symmetries and neutral hues, to match the brief for a traditional home suffused with colour. "The owner wanted to treat her home like couture and asked me to create one which is pretty but not too feminine in its overall appeal."

Dramatic use of colour has been coordinated by the designer through the unique artwork and stunning bed linen

While designing a summer home, Hoppen strives to achieve a calm and relaxed mood. She swears by the unassuming taupe, ample proof of which is to be found throughout the estate. She started with a monochrome palette, as she does in most of her projects, and enhanced it with lively colours using fabrics and statement furniture and art pieces. Since her client's favourite colour is pink, she placed an eye-catching candy pink Moissonnier table at the centre of the entrance hall and flushed the edges of the ceiling to floor curtains with a brighter version of the same hue.

She also created an elegant outdoor dining space with wrought iron chairs upholstered in light linen surrounding a white Heveningham table. Ornate Guadarte chandeliers shine down from the wooden roof, on friends and family relishing the warm climate, and the breathtaking views that the town has to offer.

FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

The gated community of Vero Beach, Florida, adheres to the Caribbean colonial style of architecture, characterised by steeply pitched roofs, tall windows and generously-sized indoor and outdoor spaces. Paris-born designer, Robert Couturier toys with these rules to create this whimsical holiday home.

He uses aqua blue and milky white extensively to provide much needed respite from the warm and humid climate. The turquoise blue ceiling at the entrance contrasts with the white sun-washed walls creating an oasis of silence. The interiors are vertically aligned and bereft of colour, save the family's collection of artworks, antiques and boldly designed furniture. As a result, each piece gets some breathing space and is better appreciated.

The colour pairing spills outdoor with the bungalow's white stucco and wood exterior ending in a swimming pool. Checks dominate in this area, be it the criss-cross furniture, cantilevered shades or French doors.





JALISCO, MEXICO

This Mexican hacienda with rose pink exteriors is nestled amid cascading water bodies, colourful flower beds, and butterfly swarms. A smoke haloed volcano towers over the 15,000 acre property and puts on a light and sound show for its residents every night. “The inviting countryside and eternal spring-like weather makes it hard to stay locked up inside. Long walks, hunting or bird watching are an everyday activity here,” says Couturier who is based out of New York. Besides dedicating a chunk of the plot to landscaped gardens, he has provided a row of balconied French doors on the first floor.

The sepia toned walls glow in sunlight and are festooned with woven tapestries, paintings of wildlife and

The Spanish and Mexican colonial style living room is done up in Couturier’s favourite summer colour, yellow

wooden hangers with sombreros. Taking cues from the past glory and splendour of this 1870s bungalow, Couturier created palatial interiors and drenched the furnishings in cheerful tones on a Mexican paintbrush. “Colours in Mexico are strong and we wanted this project to be connected with its surroundings and culture,” he adds. Vintage candelabras, fireplaces lined with local ceramic tiles and ornate mirrors are common in this paean to the Wild West’s dramatic setting.

BODRUM, TURKEY

A port town in Turkey, Bodrum is a picturesque tableau of sugar cube houses heaped up on lush, green hills. One of the biggest houses of the quiet plateau is the villa of architect Hakan Habif. The three-storey structure on the banks of the idyllic Aegean Sea is loyal to the tradition of all generations dwelling under one roof. “The house plan is horizontal and designed to connect self-contained, private units with common spaces,” says Habif. Celebrating the gorgeous Mediterranean weather, the habitat is interspersed with shadowed open spaces which can be experienced differently according to the sun’s mood. “Outdoor space is an inseparable part of Bodrum homes since we don’t spend significant time indoors besides napping,” Habif adds. Simplicity is the dominant concept, evident in the use of earthy shades and natural materials such as stone, wood, soil and wicker. The house is a contemporary take on the conventional ones seen on the Aegean coast.



The children’s bedroom is in the lower most level of the home (above); a tented deck overlooks the gardens (below)





A shaded breezy dining area (above); the outdoor living room with bamboo furniture has an island flair (top above)

ROUND HILL, JAMAICA

Designer Meg Braff loves to paint. A self-confessed sun seeker, she heads to the seaside every summer, her watercolours and sketchbook in tow. For the Round Hill Jamaica home, she uncapped her summer shades—sunny yellows, delicate pinks, flattering corals and her favourite, blue, the colour of the sky and sea and splashed them on the upholstery and accent accessories, to brighten up the plain white interiors. Her paint box borrows these colours from the Caribbean island's landscape of palm fringed beaches, deep blue sea, and memorable sunsets.

The open air cottage is reminiscent of the mid-60s and has a casual, island feel. The New York-based designer believes that outdoor spaces are an extension of the indoors and it is essential to have an area where one can be close to nature, find shade yet be in the warm sun and enjoy the breeze. To make this transition seamless, she seeks help from organic materials, bright furnishings and simple silhouettes. "I love to use rattan, wicker, and straw to achieve the barefoot summer feel. Simple cotton fabrics and textures such as raffia and grass cloth on the walls are a lovely way to create such an ambience. Bamboo painted furniture and simple shapes are also welcome," Braff advises.

She uses shades of a single colour, primarily in floral motifs, against white in every room. Though pastel pinks make an appearance, blue, in its various shades, dominates. The white and blue Portuguese bedsheets are redolent of porcelain wares and have matching custom-made paper lampshades. This informal setup is followed outdoors too. Lightweight white chairs shaded by a retro chic pink umbrella are stationed on one end of the pool which invites you to take a dip. The beachy villa emulates Braff's fresh and elegant décor sensibilities.