

SHADES OF MEXICO



OBSTACLES ARE EXACTLY THE REASON A SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT WAS WORTH ALL THE EFFORT IN HINDSIGHT. SO DO NOT LET THE FINAL PRODUCT WE PRESENT HERE MAKE YOU THINK THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENED BY ITSELF, BECAUSE BEHIND THESE FACADES LIE COUNTLESS HOURS OF HARD WORK. THIS ASSIGNMENT IN MEXICO ALLOWED THEM TO DELVE INTO WHAT THEY LOVE MOST: GIVING SOMETHING INTANGIBLE A PHYSICAL FORM.



Bart van Seggelen and Valérie Boerma are the faces behind Barde vanVoltt. Their home base is Amsterdam, although that does not prevent them from regularly descending elsewhere. Even another continent appears to be no problem, as Casa Mezcal is the duo's recent project in Mexico. With their global focus on luxury residences and their own initiatives within property development, they are always up to something. This commission came from a Dutch client with whom they had already established a pleasant history and who was moving to the southern country with his wife. Originally, the property in question was in a dismal state, but the designers' vision was fortunately able to puncture that. Indeed, the soul was fully intact and still clearly hinted at the building's charm. After a caring and sweeping journey, they and their team worked together to complete an impressive design that fully met the clients' requirements with ease. At the same time, they consistently came up with surprising results. The couple has therefore made it their expertise to put together spaces that amaze and inspire. They consider themselves translators of sorts, rendering the story of a place in a style full of benevolent contrasts. In their portfolio, the unexpected leads to something rare. Here in Condesa, they blended craftsmanship, local design treasures, and structural alterations to create a memorable property that welcomes you too.





THERE WILL BE LIGHT

When your clients themselves start putting into words how great your dedication is, you know your work transcends the word 'good'. More than that: working with Barde vanVollt is an ongoing quest that they do not cease until perfection is within reach. 'They go to extremes for you; to find that extra detail, that one colour you have not seen before, or that special piece that makes it completely yours,' says one. 'I give them the freedom to create and every time they amaze me,' says the other. Positive reactions all around, and that is nothing short of deserved. For this private home, they naturally went about it with the same fervour. Besides their admirable passion, the duo has naturally arrived at a signature style over the years. They themselves declare that their designs are each time rooted in certain contrasts. Minimalism gets a rough edge, while calmness is always accompanied

An air- and light-rich concept that intensively engages the outdoor space

by a deliberate rhythm. At the start of a project, they first try to isolate a special element of the architecture. This is often a striking aspect that sets the tone for the entire home. The next phase revolves mainly around defining shape, colour, and texture. Each time, the history of the building is a decisive factor for this, as are the surroundings and the offerings of local artists. To give each design a unique touch, the duo makes it their priority to find one-of-a-kind pieces that automatically take an interior to the next level. At the same time, this promotes authenticity by leaps and bounds. Finally, at the intersection of all these choices and efforts, you will find a result that relies on originality, substance, and the ability to merge stories and spaces.



There is no shortage of history at Casa Mezcal. Since they started work on an old property, there was only limited light. This is more often the case with such houses and is partly the result of a restrictive floor plan and non-optimal layout. Therefore, one of the main objectives was to let in more daylight. The old roof gave way to sliding glass panels, more specifically above the area where, among other things, the kitchen is located. This alone completely changed the feel of the interior and immediately made the layout much more open. A second benefit was that it gave the place the

feel of an indoor garden, so the team decided to enhance that even more. A Japanese walnut tree up to five metres high was planted there, which irrevocably began to mix indoors and outdoors. The bedrooms on the second floor overlook this, giving an almost realistic impression that you really are in the open air. This idea is also reinforced by the shadows cast by the tree on the walls and floor. Another crucial element of the floor plan is the focus on air circulation. Given the hot Mexican climate, it seemed no luxury to be able to

easily cool the temperature inside. Thanks to the open layout, this is possible, and oxygen can move around quickly. The layout of the rooms was not drastically changed, other than the fact that most areas were made more spacious. The master bedroom was fitted with an ensuite. As a result, here you will find an alluring retreat complete with a double shower and bathtub. At the very top, on the roof terrace, the designers provided another special place where you can hide away from the city life all around for a while. Shade, a pool, and plenty of privacy await you there.

ROOTS IN CULTURE

During the design process, you must be able to imagine the daily life of the residents. Following that, van Seggelen and Boerma drew inspiration from the house's previous life. Namely, it once served as a venue for tastings of a local Mezcal brand. To honour that, they added a bar where residents can spend time with friends and family. Furthermore, the team took on the challenge of immersing themselves in the local culture and making the best things from it part of this residence. Thus, collaborations with

contemporary artists and artisans emerged. Personal input is essential, and art is an ideal tool to achieve this. Various sculptures, wall works and objects were therefore reduced to a careful selection. Not only does this add substance and character to the spaces, but it also gives visibility to a number of Mexican talents. On top of that, several original elements were restored to their former glory. With original tiles and a handmade wooden front door, they managed to beautifully restore the original monumental facade. Inside, the Art Deco windows were given the attention they deserve, and there was no other acceptable option than to carefully preserve the architectural arches. The latter were even extended to the back of the house. This created an additional dialogue between the different zones. Such a strong connection between interior and exterior was also important, so they collaborated with a landscape designer who helped develop a continuous flow.

In the colour selection, the couple again saw an opportunity to include national qualities and elements. Overall, they exclusively chose earthy tones. Think moss green as a reference to the natural location; light terracotta referring to Mexican soil, and several shades of white. Grey concrete also made it into the selection. The intention behind this was to give a place to the rough and unpolished character of the national design style. Some of this continues in the choice of materials. For the floors, they decided to use natural stone, and the walls were finished with plaster. Wood

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The soul was still intact and clearly hinted at the building's charm

and steel were the preferred choice for the doors, window frames, and custom-made elements. Above all, it was essential that the final palette be timeless, durable, and natural. Tata Mosaicos' handmade bricks meet all three of those criteria. Made from Mexican soil and dried in the sun, they help build an eco-friendly standard and were given a place here in the stairs, bathroom, and outdoor areas. Such encounters make the end result truly a coming together of different cultures. They found the vast majority of materials and suppliers locally. Yet it was not always easy

for the Dutch duo. Without being fluent in the language, they had to communicate their ideas correctly and discuss changes when necessary. In the end, this turned out to be a valuable learning opportunity that at the same time introduced them to a close-knit network of professionals.

With Casa Mezcal, interior designers Barde vanVollt provide us with lasting proof of their talents and insights. They gave this private home a much-needed update and made adjustments that unlocked its full potential. The existing floor plan gave way to an air- and light-rich concept that intensively engages the outdoor space. Inviting cosiness coexists here with a continuous idea of freedom. In addition, local craftsmanship takes on the important task of providing the home with unique artworks and objects. More

than a project that scores high in terms of understanding architecture and the power of renovation, the studio dishes up a home that truly comes up with something new and has few equals. On top of that, the controlled but vibrant combination of colours gives the rooms an extra dimension. With several projects currently in development, a sequel to this high-flyer is guaranteed. Until then, we wish the studio every success and are grateful for the exceptional work they bring to us with commitment, imagination, and daring.

(Text: Cara Jacobs)

Photography by Alejandro Ramirez Orozco



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