



A Sunny Disposition

Three continents, 23 countries, and a rich history of cultural exchange and trade going back millennia, the influence of the Mediterranean region is felt globally—and the home is no exception. When it comes to the interiors inspired by this part of the world, the storied history of the Mediterranean is evident.

There's a pervading idea that life is good in the Mediterranean. That it is all sea, sun, and siestas, plump olives and good wine. A place many of us only experience when we are on holiday. But there is more to it than that. This is a place with a way of life that is defined by its dramatic landscapes, a rich history, and a glorious climate.

Homes situated on this slice of the earth are designed to make the most of their surroundings. Stone, marble, and terracotta are extracted from the landscape and expertly shaped to suit everyday needs. Living spaces spread seamlessly between indoors and out. The terrace is critical. Furniture, woven from natural materials, is designed to be lower and longer, inviting the sitter to kick back and relax.

As Dimitris Karampatakis of architectural practice K-Studio says on page 149, at the heart of the Mediterranean aesthetic is a sense of craft- edness. The unrushed nature imbued in handmade objects. The imperfections and truthfulness that are visible in the materials. Craft has been part of the cultural heritage of this region for thousands of years, with woven baskets, rustic textiles, and pottery connecting spaces to the ancient civilizations that were here before.

This is a story that is no longer limited to a single geography. In fact, many projects in this book are thousands of miles from the Med: in southern locations such as Australia, California, and Brazil, but also in places like New York and Copenhagen. The Mediterranean sensibility echoes itself in these locales through a variety of reasons, be it former colonial influences, a similar

sunny climate, or simply an appreciation for the Mediterranean way of life.

Much of the Mediterranean aesthetic's widespread influence is down to our hyper-connected world. Sarah Ellison, a furniture designer profiled on pages 74–79, found inspiration underfoot on a holiday in Italy. She returned to Australia with a camera roll full of what she referred to as “tile moments.” Recognizing the similarity in coastal lifestyles, her own beachy collection of tiles echoes the sun-drenched palette she saw in Italy, but expressed with her own Australian spin. Her rattan consoles and linen armchairs feel as at home in her native Byron Bay as they would on a Greek Island.

After years of stark minimalist interiors, *The New Mediterranean* asks, why not bring that joyful sense of warmth and a slower pace of life into our everyday? Why not create spaces that remind us of summer vacation—of long, languid days that stretch late into the night? It is a good question. Why not? In our increasingly digital world and the machine-cut precision of the objects that surround us, these spaces evoke salty air and sandy toes. In our high-octane urban lifestyles, *The New Mediterranean* can teach us a thing or two about slowing down—no matter where in the world we might be.