



Mediterranean architecture has been a site of innovation and experimentation for centuries. Today—whether in careful restorations of traditional homes, reinterpretations of the local vernacular, or exciting new contemporary spaces—that tradition is alive and well.

A New Look at an Old Way of Life

Ask someone to describe the Mediterranean and they will invariably speak of glittering waters that lap gently against pristine, sandy beaches, perhaps with a quaint village of traditional houses in the background. Yet the reality of life in the Mediterranean basin is far richer and more complex than this picture-postcard vision suggests. This is a region that stretches some 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers) from the fertile shores of the Middle East to the Strait of Gibraltar in the west—a narrow stretch of water that separates Europe from Africa and where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic. Despite the temperate climate and tranquil seas that the Mediterranean has become synonymous with, it can be inhospitable: the arid deserts of North Africa, for example, or high mountain ranges that quickly rise up from the shore, as with the Maritime Alps or the Cyclades. And it is not all picturesque villages of whitewashed houses and terra-cotta roofs; there are bustling

urban spaces, industrial centers, and deep-water ports serving vast modern container ships.

Perhaps such diversity should be expected, though. After all, this is an area that is defined by the world's largest inland sea and home to some 500 million people. Yet, although the Mediterranean basin spans three continents and 23 countries, the sea is a constant thread that runs through this patchwork of interconnected cultures. The climate, landscape, and shared history have informed a way of life and, in turn, the places where people live.

This book aims to provide a window into the architecture and interiors that have developed along the shores of this great sea by looking at some of the most interesting modern homes, as well as by exploring in detail the area's varied vernacular architecture, the influence of modernism and post-modernism, the interior spaces, and the landscape that continues to inspire new ideas.