

Everything is so beautiful here.

A residential complex and luxury resort hybrid: With their “Sabina” construction project, three entrepreneurs in Ibiza want to reinvent the idea of the holiday home.

Text by Esther Strerath. Photos by Ana Lui for Sabina

“About 32 feet! So roughly ten meters,” explains the good-humoured man as he stretches out his arms on both sides. “That’s the optimal panoramic distance.” The man, property developer Anton Bilton, is one of the founders of Sabina, his latest project on southwestern Ibiza. Here, not far from the bay of Cala Tarida, the entrepreneurial trio of Anton Bilton, Glyn Hirsch, and Agustín del Pino are redefining the idea of what the holiday home can be: a hybrid of a residential complex and a luxury resort. Around 50 villas are spread over 17 hectares. All are available for purchase and, depending on the wishes of their new owner, can also be rented out. “Each villa enchants you with its breathtaking panoramic view of the Balearic Sea,” enthusiastically announces Bilton, “which on a good day extends to the mainland, about 100 kilometers away.” According to Bilton, this is achieved thanks to a “topographical masterwork. The Ibizan architect Jordi Carreño invented a level system based on the original terraced structure of the area—the cornerstone of the master plan, along with some 32 feet of magic that local, regional, and international architects have splendidly packaged.

The concept is to be implemented in four phases of construction. Phases one and two one, involving 13 villas, is complete, and phase two has just begun. Sabina Estates was able to sign David Chipperfield, John Pawson, and Marcio Kogan for phases three and four. The blueprints can be admired in the entrance of the Sabina clubhouse as models and suggest the opulence of the overall idea of the project. Those curious can also take a buggy into the middle of the wild and woody nature, where high stands sit on the roughly marked plots of land and evoke the feeling of this place, with its scent of the forest, wind, and of course its views. A total of 14 architects and designers are responsible for the look of the resort. What unites them is the requirement to do justice to Ibiza. They all refer to its lush nature, playing with the idea of blurring the boundary between outside and inside. John Pawson, for example, states: “Normally you have the sea or the mountains—here you have both. The feeling of being out in the wild is exhilarating, and I always knew that I wanted to capture some of that feeling in an experience of livable architecture.”

LOCAL CULTURE

The original construction of the island, whose oldest fincas are about 500 years old, influences all of the designs—sometimes strongly, sometimes more subtly. Who would have thought that ancient, traditional farmhouse architecture, with its famous cubes, could serve as a blueprint for contemporary luxury villas? “The Romanesque style, based on Greek roots, refers to the simple farmhouses—our philosophy hasn’t changed in 50 years,” says architect Rolf Blakstad, son of the famous Canadian architect Rolph Blakstad, who started working in Ibiza in 1956 and strongly influenced the origins of Mediterranean living culture and its finca style.

FILLED WITH A LUST FOR LIFE

“When I look at the houses my father built in the 1960s and 1970s, they are much closer to ours today than, say, the 1980s, with their super-minimalist glass boxes.” Rolf Blakstad, who built Sabina’s first villas alongside Ibizan architects Jordi Carreño and Jaime Romano, is carrying local culture into the future. He also believes the clubhouse he designed looks as if it “could also be 2,500 years old.” It combines the typical arches and porches, as the spacious verandas of the fincas are called, and on which carrots, figs, or herbs used to be dried. Here culminates another idea, one on which Anton Bilton’s master plan is based.

Page 114 photo caption: CHILLING BY THE POOL. The clubhouse, designed by architect Rolf Blakstad and interior designer Lázaro Rosa-Violán, has quickly become one of the island’s new hotspots.

“Ibiza is the place on earth with the most interesting people per square metre.” – Anton Bilton

Page 115 photo caption: CAN COCOTERO. The villa celebrates—like all houses, the merging of outside and inside. The studio Tara Bernerd & Partners combined Scandinavian and Mediterranean styles.

Page 116 photo caption: THE STYLISH CENTER of the clubhouse is its bar, where ex-Noma chef Shahar Tamir chiefly offers local delicacies; the amphitheater lies in the adjoining gardens.

Page 117 photo caption: UNDER THE AMPHITHEATRE lies the round temple building, into which the sun throws glistening cones of light; adjoining the spa, with its whirlpool and exceptional list of treatments, which offers, among other things, respiratory therapies.

“In the temple, people should be able to enjoy a moment of reflection.” – Anton Bilton

It has something to do with the spirit. “If you rent a holiday home, after three days the children say, ‘We’ve seen everything, so actually we’d rather be with our friends.’” Bilton goes on to describe an idea: “So you end up scouring the area for ten days to find entertainment for them, even though you thought the villa—and its beautiful location—was entertainment enough. But kids don’t want nice surroundings. They want community and fun,” says the father of five. “When I first went to Careyes in Mexico and stayed in a rented villa, we got loads of invitations from locals who thought it might be interesting to meet people who had traveled so far. So, I put my British bias to one side and accepted the invitations. I had the best time of my life.”

FILLED WITH A LUST FOR LIFE

This same sense of community is also to be found on Ibiza. One is constantly invited into peoples’ private homes, which is why the number of holiday residences and complexes on the island is so high compared to the number of hotels. Bilton is confident that “Ibiza is the place on earth with the most interesting people per square metre.” “The wonderful thing about the

island is that you go here for lunch or dinner and suddenly you're sitting next to an artist or a hedge fund manager. All that matters is that you're entertaining." Accordingly, at Sabina you will find not only a bowling alley for kids, but also a club for teenagers and an extremely casual club with a bar for private parties. Of course, there is also a spa. Bilton even wished for a temple: "People should be able to have a moment of silence and reflection there." Crystals lie buried under the stone floor of the light-domed building, and shamans were invited to its initiation. "When people, filled with a lust for life, dance to the beats of a DJ under a starry sky, then God smiles down on us."

Celebrate, outdoors and indoors, in solitude or in the company of others. Sabina is almost an island within an island, consisting of others. It's already a bit magical there. Bilton is certain that his "three boys will get their first kiss here."