

# OPEN SPACES

A Dutch design duo head to the magical Caribbean island of Bonaire to tackle the most demanding clients yet: themselves!

The daybed cushions are made with Sunbrella fabric. Opposite: The sofa is by Paola Navone. The ceiling fan is by Boffi, and the floor lamp is by Philippe Starck for Flos.



by BRIELLE M. FERREIRA  
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**T**HERE ARE FEW TASKS MORE DIFFICULT FOR A DESIGNER than creating a home of his or her own. For one, how do you build something special enough to hold your interest when your job is constantly pushing your creative limits—exposing you to newer, bigger, and better every day? Happily, though, when Dutch designer Piet Boon and his business partner, Karin Meyn, decided to build a piece of paradise on the island of Bonaire, they were able to shut out all other influences and focus on just one thing: the inherent beauty of the waterfront site. After that, their task was easy. They would dream up a home that was breathtaking in its simplicity, with classic lines and plenty of open spaces inside and out. In many ways, they weren’t so much designing a house as they were drafting a love letter to the ocean.

“We wanted to make optimum use of the stunning vistas,” says Boon, “and also to respect the local architectural vernacular and landscape as much as possible.” Drawing inspiration from the cunucu dwellings prevalent on the island, he sketched a plan for a sprawling villa that would make use of natural ventilation and provide uninterrupted views of the Caribbean. Then he set about bringing it to life, using a short list of materials—namely, concrete and red cedar. “The floors and walls are made of concrete because it’s easy to clean and extremely durable,” Boon explains. “It’s a hallmark of most of the homes we design because it’s as beautiful as it is low-maintenance.”

Against those heavy, solid expanses, the red cedar soars. Boon used long wooden planks for the cathedral ceilings and oversize shutters, introducing texture and drama to the interiors. “We wanted to create the kind of luxury we love,” he says, “so the house



**Clockwise from above: The dining table is by Moooi; the chairs are by Paola Lenti. The home’s mostly white and natural accents, with touches of muted blue and purple, come from all over the world. On Bonaire’s shore, which is studded with sharp coral, the house has unique access to the water via stairs leading to a soft, sandy sea bed.**





Boon and Meyn designated the home's lower level for bedrooms and baths; indirect sunlight and shutters that open to create cross breezes keep the spaces cool. Gauzy canopies and white linens soften the concrete surfaces. Opposite: The outdoor furniture is by Piet Boon Studio. The fabric is by Sunbrella.



had to have this pleasant feeling of surprise: It had to feel so effortless that it takes people a moment to realize that we've actually given a lot of thought to everything."

Because the designers wanted to keep the focus on the architecture and the views, they kept things spare in the interior spaces. Each piece they brought in had to work double duty—every table, chair, sofa, and bed had to be highly functional but also almost sculptural in their good looks. They were also exacting when introducing color to the all-white spaces. "We like to work with a subdued base and then add in well-considered accents," explains Boon. "This allows for an easy change of atmosphere when desired." A festive blue and rich brown appear in the living room pillows; bright green dresses up cushions and echoes the palm trees outside by the pool. The other colorful touches are reserved for the artwork displayed throughout the house.

With the project complete, Boon and Meyn are quick to sing its praises: "It reflects our personalities, and it showcases our passion for beautiful materials and subtlety," he says. But an even better vote of confidence in the home's seductive power is the feeling of stretching out on plush cushions inside the gazebo, which is perched at the far edge of the property overlooking the water. "Smelling the sea and feeling the wind here is a privilege," says Boon. "This is one of the most peaceful places imaginable." 🇧🇷

For more information, see Sources, page 114.

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AND PLENTY OF OPEN SPACES