

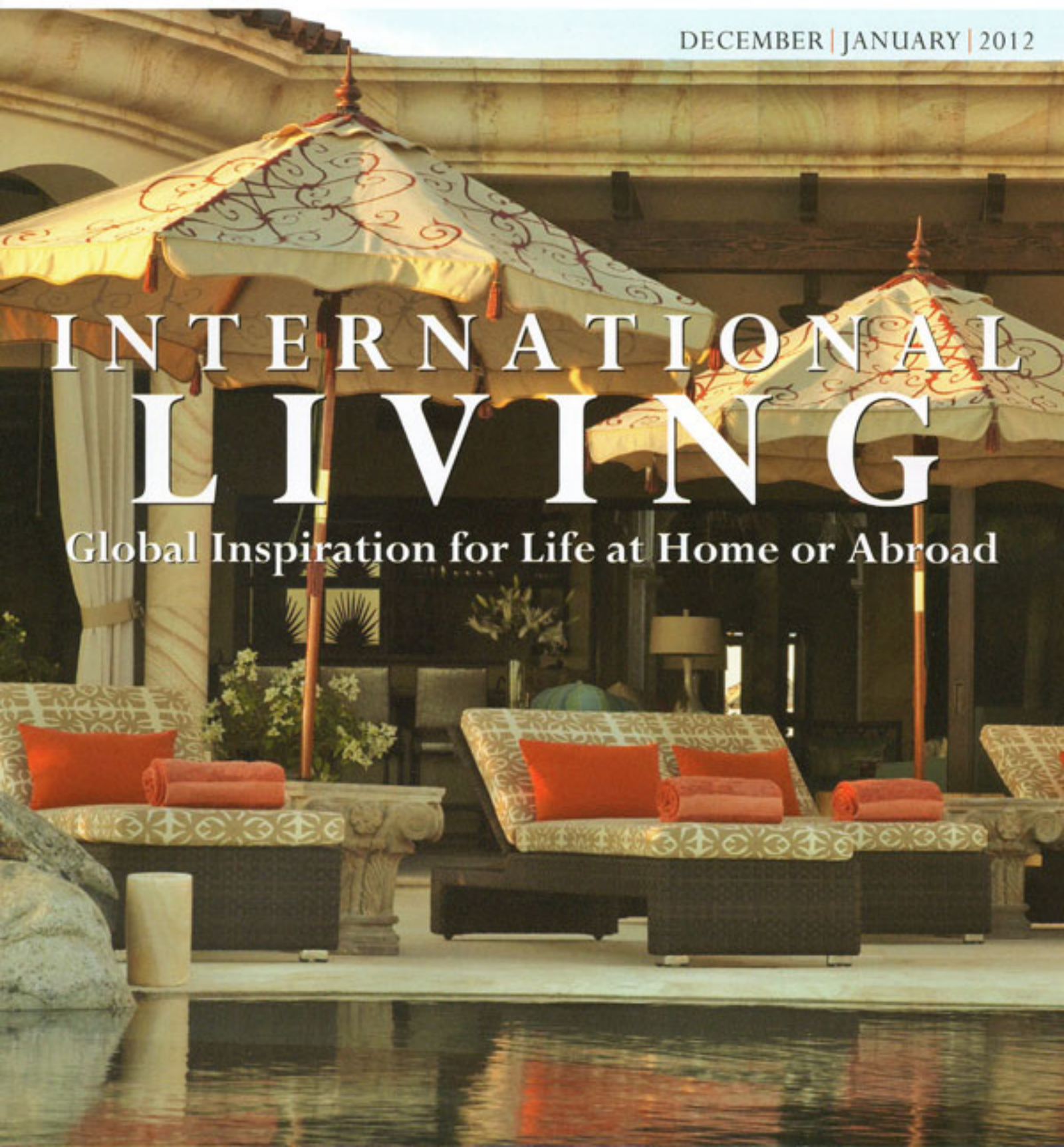
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{SAN JOSÉ DEL CABO}

THE GREAT ESCAPE



A Second Home Becomes a Glorious Haven Infused with Distinctive Decor

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THIS PAGE: Banana-leaf chairs situated inside the pool create an exotic spot to cool down. The zero-edge pool blends with the ocean beyond. OPPOSITE: A fire pit adds architectural interest to the outdoor space. A palm frond roof (or palapa) covers the bar area of the terrace.

Sandra Espinet—interior designer and owner of Interiors by Sandra Espinet, in Los Angeles, California, and Los Cabos, Mexico—approaches each project with a fresh point of view. Her philosophy is evident in the eclectic interiors of Casa Walker in San José del Cabo, Mexico, a 10,000-square-foot hideaway for a family based in Dallas, Texas.

Although her clients did not want the home to resemble their primary residence, they didn't want a typical Mexican home either. "They wanted a space their kids could play in, they could be comfortable in, and guests could relax in," Espinet says. "But they also wanted a space they could entertain in that had the elegance of their lifestyle. It was a fine line of mixing and matching, but that is an area I excel in. I love eclectic, and I love making a home look lived in."

The interiors combine hacienda style with updated beach colors and California comfort, while Espinet likens the Mexican hacienda architecture to an old American farmhouse with a twist in the form of a second floor. "I think architecture and design need to be intertwined," she says. "It's important that they work well together in order for a project to feel relaxed."

Architectural details include cantera stone columns, iron railings, and terra-cotta roof tiles. The interiors are casual but elegant, with the more formal living and dining rooms opening up to casual terraces and pool patios. "They are user-friendly enough for kids," Espinet says, "but formal enough for proper guests."

A U-shaped central courtyard provides a natural gathering spot for the family, as does the zero-edge pool that blends seamlessly with the ocean. The color palette takes its cue from the breathtaking setting. "It's a softer version of the existing nature," Espinet explains. "There are softer sands, aquas, and lighter blues than what exists in their view. Neutral creams are combined with teal, seafoam, and touches of coral."

Many items had to be custom-made to suit the scale of the home, such as the large table and the chandelier in the dining







CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: The grand dining room overlooks the ocean. In the living room, the fireplace is made from cantera stone; the aqua-colored upholstery offers a nod to the beach locale. A painting from Cuba is displayed in the powder bath, where the floor-to-ceiling mirror was cut to install the faucet. The home's cozy wine cellar includes a tasting table.





An iron table in the living room is one of the many pieces that were made in Mexico. Espinet mixed a variety of styles together to create a one-of-a-kind look.

Traveling to San José del Cabo

San José del Cabo is a popular destination for good reason. Unlike its sister town (the more lively Cabo San Lucas), San José del Cabo is low-key. Here are a few of the selling points:

- The stunning setting offers the perfect respite for those in need of some serious downtime.
- In addition to the pristine beaches, the weather is ideal. Espinet says there is no humidity and very little rain. "It only rains about twelve days out of the year," she says.
- Although there is enough to do in the form of restaurants and shopping, the culture encourages a leisurely lifestyle.
- The location is just a short flight from many major cities, including Dallas and Los Angeles.
- Perhaps it's the slow pace that keeps visitors coming back for more. It's the perfect place for vacationers to recharge before returning to reality.

room, which were both made in Puebla, Mexico. Because Cabo has limited resources, "everything had to be brought in from Los Angeles or Mexico City," Espinet explains. A number of pieces are from the designer's furniture collection.

The living room features a cantera stone fireplace mantel and a custom iron fireplace screen. A Persian-style rug contains soft teals and corals, hard-to-find hues for traditional area rugs. A custom sofa adorned with nail-heads joins an iron coffee table made in Mexico, which lends a handmade feel to the room, the designer says.

A chef's prep kitchen sits behind the main kitchen. The homeowners entertain indoors and out, so both settings have ample seating and eating areas. Two full-service guest rooms





CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT; The kitchen features a faux-painted hood with a stone mantel. Pocket doors in a guest room open to reveal a fountain on the outdoor patio. The master bath contains a custom vanity made from a piece of glass that appears to float in front of the mirror.

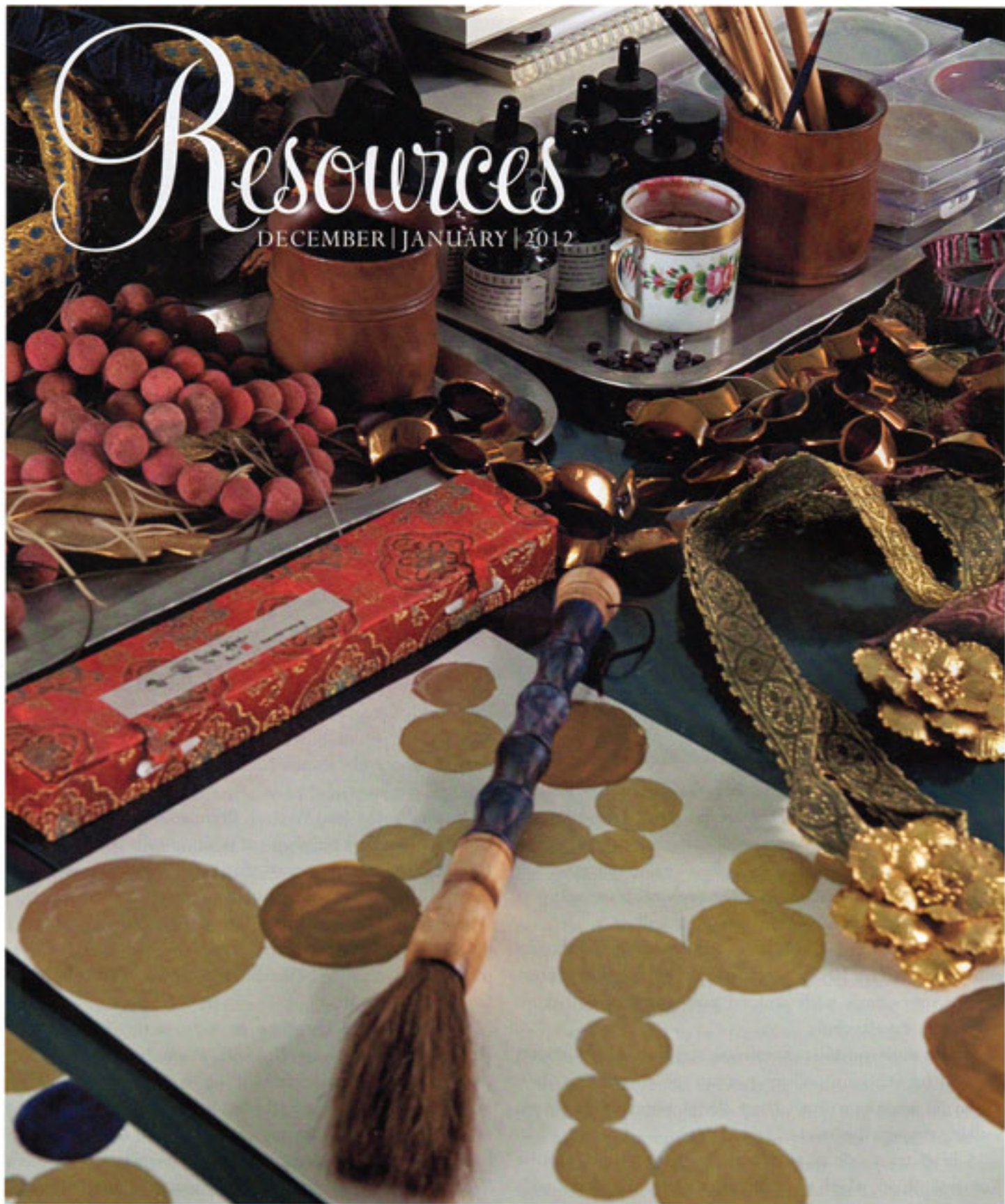
include private patios, spacious bathrooms, outdoor showers, and small kitchen and eating areas. "This way, guests have their own spaces and can come and go without feeling like they are intruding upon the family," Espinet says.

The enticing outdoor spaces get plenty of use. While benches and mirrors add formality to the interior courtyard terraces, the ones that overlook the ocean were kept casual with colorful outdoor fabrics. The main circular terrace off the living room features an antique Indonesian bench and a Moroccan coffee table.

Anyone can go to a furniture store, says Espinet. "But the art of mixing and matching unique pieces and custom-making large-scale furnishings for oversized rooms is quite different," she explains. "My designers and I try to make large spaces warm and usable so that the homeowners can truly relax and feel cocooned in their new homes. We work out our floor plans, make selections, and shop with the intention of making a space user-friendly and comfortable. Every detail down to the matching wood hangers and the perfect bed accessories is in the home when they arrive." ■

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