

PHOTOS JAIME NAVARRO

TEXT JO BUIDENDACH

CONCRETE CALM

A BOUTIQUE HOTEL IN
MEXICO
IS ALL ABOUT ITS LUSH SURROUNDINGS,
STRIKING DESIGN AND MOMENTS
OF PEACEFUL
CONTEMPLATION.



The pivot front door of the home is concealed in the vertical cladding made of Lunawood Thermowood, a thermally modified Nordic pine product. The dark metal and simple, archetypal form of the

THE PORT TOWN

of Puerto Escondido is an escape. Travellers from all over the world disappear among its golden beaches and waves to walk, meditate and even help release turtles in local sanctuaries. On the southern point of the port town, Casa To has added an element of thoughtful luxury to this tiny utopia. Completed in August 2022, the hotel was designed by renowned architect Ludwig Godefroy. Working to a very succinct brief of “9 rooms, and lots of freedom”, he and his team have married tradition and the avant-garde in a unique structure, surrounded by this tranquil natural setting. Made largely of concrete, the materiality of the structure was of the utmost importance to Ludwig. “My search for simplicity has led me to create clean and abstract architecture, composed exclusively of mass materials, such as concrete, wood and stone. All these materials look better under the action of time”, he says.

Casa TO takes inspiration from a myriad sources including a Oaxacan temple, where the enclosed spaces create a sensory experience. There’s also a nod to the reticulated pattern of two historical hydraulic works: the 6th century AD Basilica Cistern in Istanbul and the Hornsey Wood Reservoir in Finsbury Park, London, built in the late 1800s. Of these references Ludwig says, his “architecture is willing to get rid of the unnecessary, to concentrate on the very essence of the structure of the building, offering a contemporary reinterpretation”. Without a doubt, the focal point of the building is the covered infinity pool and solarium. The former alludes to the vaulted volumes and signature style of iconic Swiss French architect Le Corbusier, with its rectilinear lines, exposed loadbearing walls, lightweight structures, and open-plan interiors. Sustainability is central to the hotel. There are solar panels to store energy, a zero-plastics policy and even a water treatment plant. They’re able to reuse water in irrigation, toilets and other types of non-drinking consumption, and then the biologically stabilized solids obtained from this process are used in compost.

The star of the show is the building’s smart design, but both the interiors and landscaping have been carefully considered too. The interiors were conjured by Casa TO co-founder Daniel Cinta, who looked to create a sense of luxury using simple and honest elements. The natural surroundings, in particular the pattern of a Madagascar Blue Bismarck palm tree that stood on the original site, was a major cue for these spaces. Daniel had furniture specially created by local artisans from Puebla, Guadalajara and Oaxaca regions and when it came to taps and fixtures, selected brushed stainless steel that would be lost among the tones of concrete. This inobtrusive element means that glassware and textiles in a range of yellow, green and blue tones stand out. Inside the building a mini jungle was created using the likes of banana and passion fruit trees and selected local plants.

Outside, the landscape was fashioned with the idea of a slow process of appropriation, where eventually the temple-like structure will be covered with vines and slowly disappear into the lush green forest.

NEED A BREAKER, IS A PLACE WHERE
GAIL COCOONED HERSELF, CREATING A DEEPLY
PERSONAL AND PRIVATE HAVEN.



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