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HOME TURF A Designer's Nod to Nature in Barcelona

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DESIGN NOÉ PRADES STUDIO

The famed architect and master of Catalan modernism, Antoni Gaudí, once noted, “Anything created by humans already is in the great book of nature.”

Taking a page from the great master was Catalanian interior designer Noé Prades who used nature as a starting point for the renovation of a residential project in Barcelona. Located in the city’s storied street of Calle Mallorca, the two-bedroom apartment project ironically has a view of Sagrada Familia (the “Holy Family” Basilica designed by Gaudí in 1883). Prades named the complete renovation “The Forest,” which is symbolic of the “strength and the sensations” that define it. The overall design scheme is modern with touches of tradition. As the designer details, “The Noé Prades style always starts from a natural setting. In this case, we also had views of the park that surrounds the Basilica of the Sagrada Familia. That is why it is intended to transfer the essence and nature of the exterior to the inside. This is where the Forest idea was born.”

Embracing his roots, Prades made the Catalan vault a distinctive focal point. “The Catalan vault is a constructive method typical of Catalonia,” the twenty-nine-year-old designer explains of the detail, with its roots in the 19th century. “It is a construction that covers the roof with arches made of bricks and iron or wood beams. It is an important element and illuminated by the entire perimeter and lets you know the entrails of the structure and also plays architecturally with the Sagrada Familia.”

The removal of a master wall resulted in an open kitchen looking into the dining room. Designed to take advantage of the light and create in Prades’ words, “a clearer environment,” gray porcelain countertops with white veins and brass fixtures and hardware make a striking design element. “The stone effect is the protagonist. It is an open space that invites you to enjoy the living room, dining room and the views.” Perhaps through osmosis and/or good genes (his father was a furniture designer), Prades designed the “Element” shelving just off the kitchen along with the wooden cabinets. Based on the concept of the branches of the forest, it was designed “in a modular way, from cubes, inviting a visual game,” continues Prades. “My father was so dedicated to construction and it is a great reference to me. When I was little, he took me to his worksite and I played and imagined all kinds of spaces. I learned to observe, be thorough with work and above all critical.”



Noé Prades





Continuing the forest theme, Prades notes, “The color palette starts from green tones to ochre and neutral.” The game of contrasts is quite evident and thanks to the green we highlight, some elements – such as doors and brighter tones, such as brass – contrast to the gray tones.” The design of the bathrooms took their cues from Catalan elements such as the herringbone tiling and hydraulic and hexagonal floor tiles with water naturally being the main point of inspiration. “The suite bathroom symbolizes the hive inside the forest

with the tiles recreating the geometry of the hive.” Other decorative touches include furnishings from Italian brands such as Fantini, Utzon lamps, Ceramica Cielo sinks, Muuto mirrors, Nerd Bar stools and &Tradition Cloud sofa.

For a designer whose style repertoire moves from modern to classic and exotic to geometric; with a keen eye toward design that brings emotion and imagination to the forefront through statement pieces and objects, Gaudí would have been proud.



When in Barcelona...

From the Mediterranean coastal shoreline, Catalan architecture, historical landmarks and chic eateries and hotels, Barcelona – Spain’s second largest city – is experiencing a moment. Prades shares a few of his favorite places.

“**El Nacional** is a multi-gastronomic traditional food space designed by Lázaro (one of my greatest references at a national level). I recommend it because when you enter, it surprises you and transmits an infinity of sensations.”

“**Hotel Cotton House**, also designed by Lázaro, is the former Textil Algodonera Foundation. An emblematic building of the 19th-century neoclassical style that is a reference in the city of Barcelona.”

“**Hotel Brummell**, noted for its influence on other cultures, creates a new concept of casual luxury and tropical modernism. A magical combination of exotic elements and Nordic style.”

“**Marea Alta** is a new restaurant where you can eat very well, an old lookout post on the heights.”

“Visit and walk the area of **Montjuïc** where you can find a lot of nature in the middle of the city and part of the influence for the 1992 Olympics.”