ERIC KUSTER®

INTERIOR DESIGN

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INTRODUCTION

Dutch interior designer Eric Kuster's own label lives under the banner of "Metropolitan Luxury". There could not be two words better suited to sit side-by-side and describe his inimitable style. For over two decades, he has been delighting clients in his native country of the Netherlands and across the globe with his unrivaled talent for striking the perfect balance between classic and contemporary styles. The projects in this book alone stretch from the Caribbean to London, and on to Thailand. Kuster has developed numerous collections of textiles and furniture, as well as standalone interior concepts. As his label's mark suggests, these have all been designed with opulence and urbanity at their heart.

Each of the concepts featured in this book—from an extravagant custom-built yacht in Mauritius to a lakeside family home in Geneva—was executed by Kuster and his team through a creative process of research, sourcing and consultation. Every Eric Kuster project starts with three main ingredients. First, the architecture of the building is considered, its age and form in particular. Second, there is its location—both in the world and in terms of its direct surroundings. The third ingredient is the client—who they are and how they'll be living, working or playing in the space.

This final point explains why Kuster believes that his client relationships are so vital to successful design concepts. "Sometimes a project will take two or three years," he explains. "So you have to get really close to your client. If there's no connection, it won't work." Perhaps this is the reason that he has been trusted to design the homes, yachts, planes and businesses of high-profile—and inevitably high maintenance—individuals, from footballers and DJs to models and musicians. They understand when they employ Kuster that they will get something unique, much like a couture dress or tailored suit. "I don't do copy and paste," he says.

As well as private residences and pleasure pads, Kuster is also responsible for the design of numerous high-end commercial projects. Two of the most noteworthy of these are the players' lounge at Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium and renowned Amsterdam nightclub Jimmy Woo's. Kuster was particularly excited by the latter, which has established a new glamorous party paradigm for nightlife in the Dutch city. For Kuster, it reaffirmed design's power to transform not only the lifestyles of individuals, but also the personality and atmosphere of entire urban environments. Again, the ethos of 'Metropolitan Luxury' is pervasive in both aesthetic and ethos.

Within this book, that continues at pace with his most recent projects, which maintain his signature fusion of big, high-impact ideas and meticulous attention to detail. As he says himself: "With every interior, it's all about finding perfect combinations. The mix of master plan and final execution are equally important."

For the master plan, his inspirational references are diverse, but instantly recognizable. For example, Kuster cites James Bond films from the 1960s and 70s as a consistent muse; in many of the spaces featured within these pages, one can easily imagine a beautiful lounging seductress or maniacal genius villain. He is also obsessed with internet research and hunting down that single perfect image for moodboards and presentations. He believes it is vital to invite clients into the studio, not just to see his ideas, but also feel and experience them in their imaginations.

When it comes to the details, for Kuster it's all about tactility, layering, structural contrasts and sourcing ideal accessories, furniture pieces and materials, both from a trusted network of suppliers and the designer's own travels. Perpetually finding himself in a different time zone, he loves nothing more than to trawl exotic markets for artifacts and accessories. He is also a passionate collector of beautiful books; his own home in Monaco is piled high with various tomes, which he then passes on to his clients. The books almost become a metaphor for Kuster's ability to create interiors that go deeper than the surface beauty and high-gloss veneer of the initial impact.

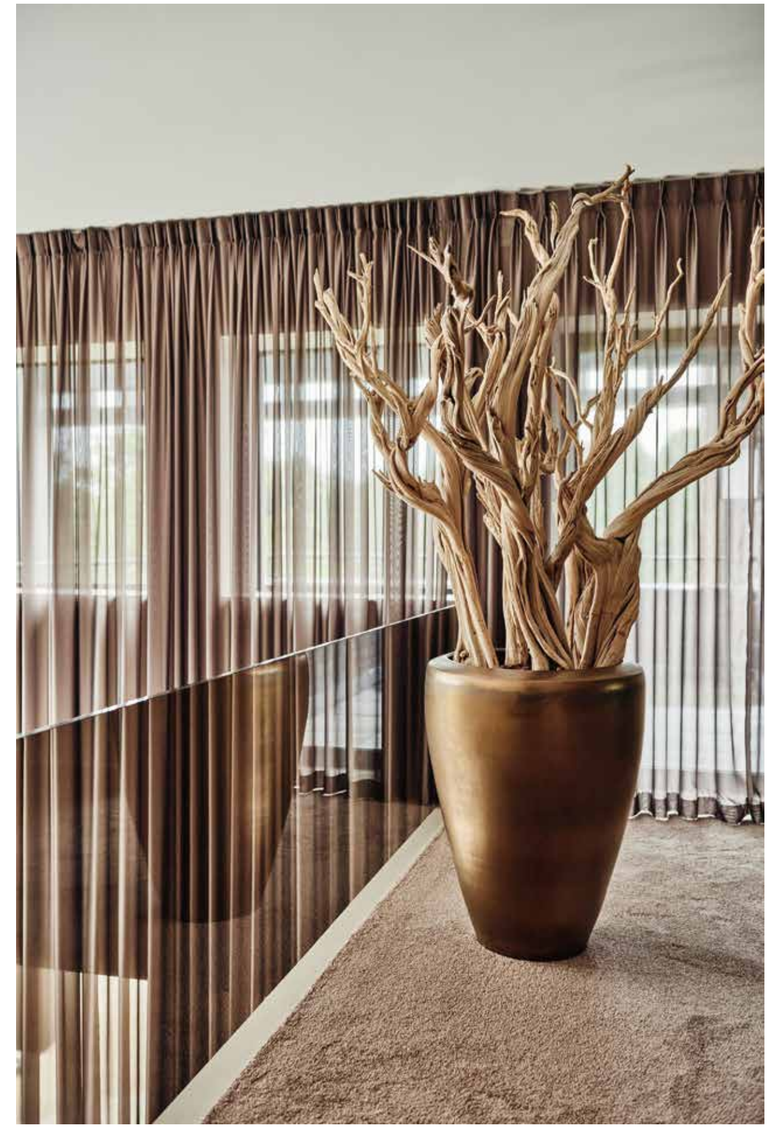
When it comes to textiles, Kuster has a truly expert eye. Having spent ten years at textiles and wallpaper design company Chivasso before setting up his own business, the designer understands the importance of fabrics and materials. His signature of layering multiple, varied textiles for contrast, comfort and warmth makes anyone who enters one of his rooms want to walk around, stroke and experience every texture. Kuster keeps color palettes subtle, masculine and mostly neutral, allowing every texture and detail to speak for itself.

This love of textiles is what led Kuster to extend his reach with collections of fabrics, wall coverings, carpets and accessories, adding home fragrances to complete the sensory circle. In recent years, he has gone further still by creating a holistic lifestyle brand that stretches beyond the man himself. He has developed a number of limited edition collections, both in-house and in collaboration with big brands. These include leather jackets for luxury fashion label DNA, his own range of Metro sneakers, a special edition Mercedes Benz A-Class and a stylish LED-TV for Samsung. As you can see from this list, Kuster is passionate about design in all its forms.

It is with these Eric Kuster brand extensions, alongside bi-annual design and lifestyle magazine *Entourage*—which has a manifesto to celebrate design in all its forms, from jewelry to architecture—that Kuster is truly broadening his horizons for the future of his business. He is also expanding into new markets with showrooms in New York, Moscow and Dubai, as well as Amsterdam, and monobrand stores in Ibiza and Antwerp. He also has plans to open a studio in London in the near future, from which he plans to "conquer the world."

With all this, Kuster is creating a holistic lifestyle proposition, ensuring that his brand is one that will live on even after he retires. However, there seems little danger of that happening anytime soon, as Kuster remains as driven and passionate as ever: "I work around 18 hour days," he says. "It would be impossible without passion. If I stopped enjoying what I do, I would give up tomorrow."

COUNTRY HOUSE

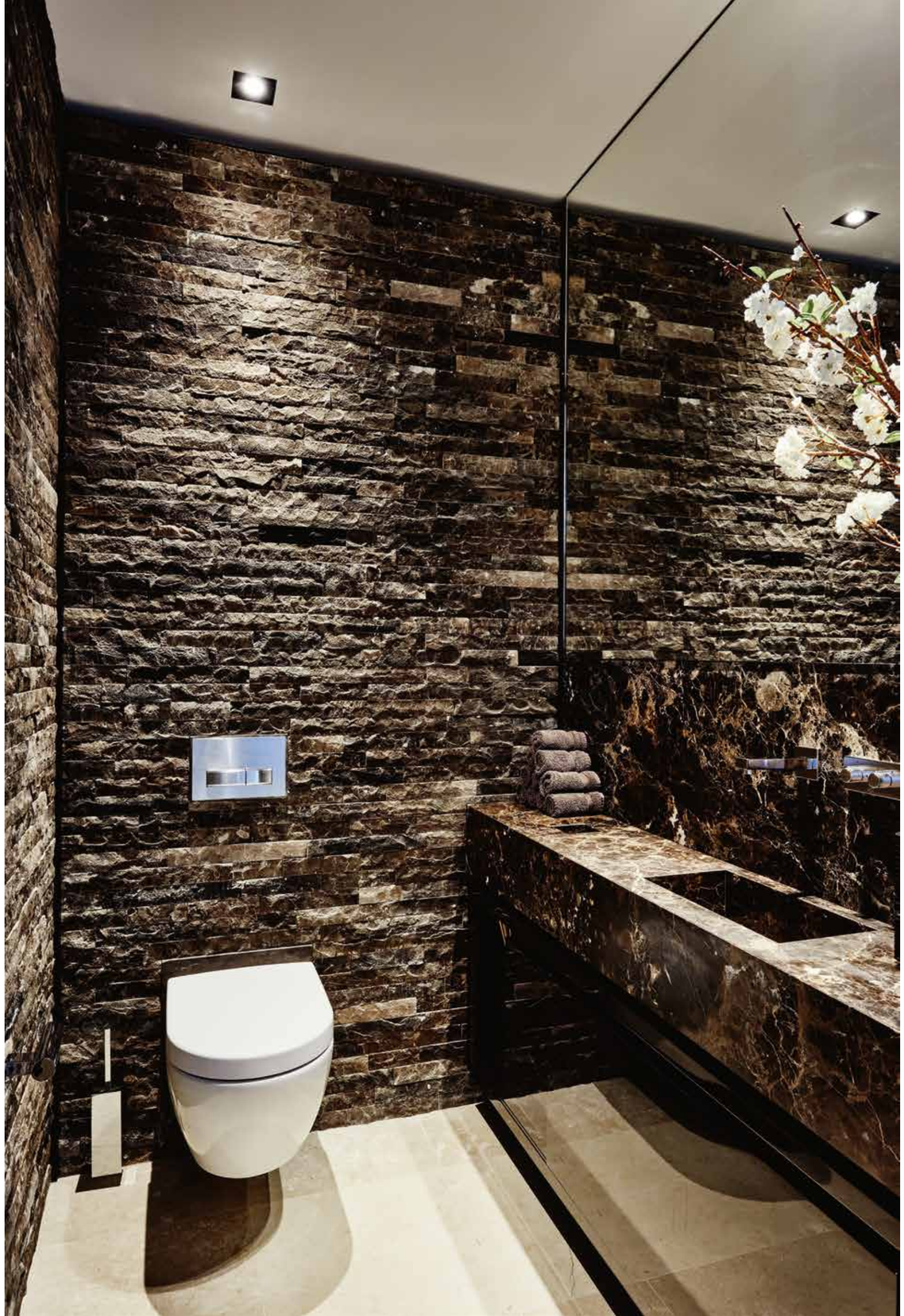


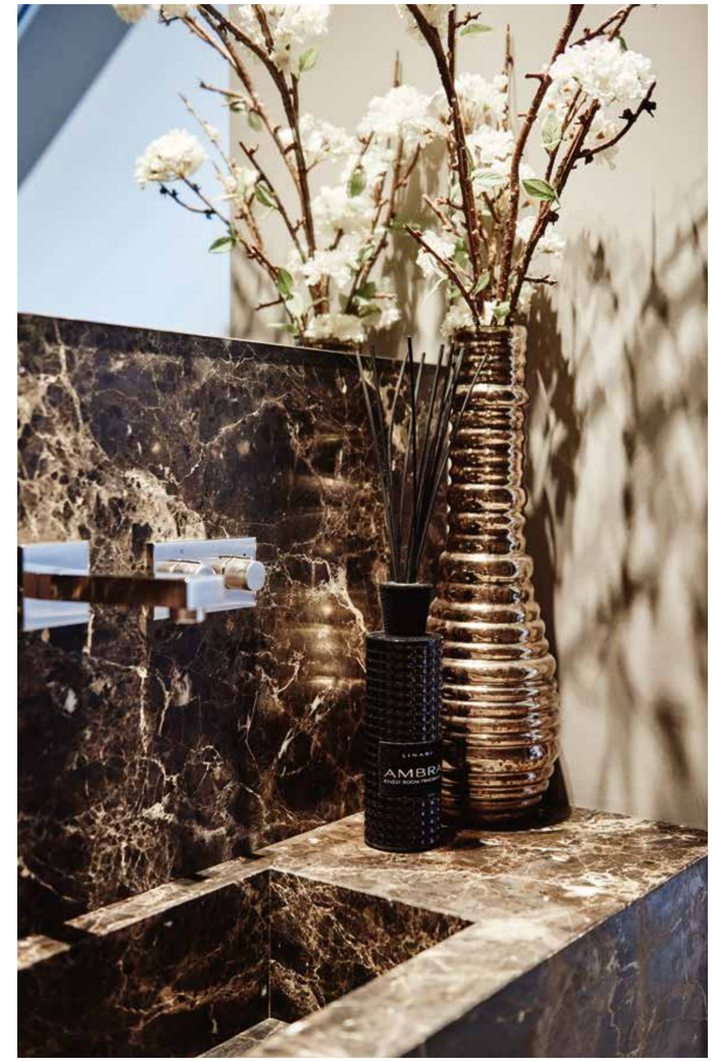
HELMUT NEWTON

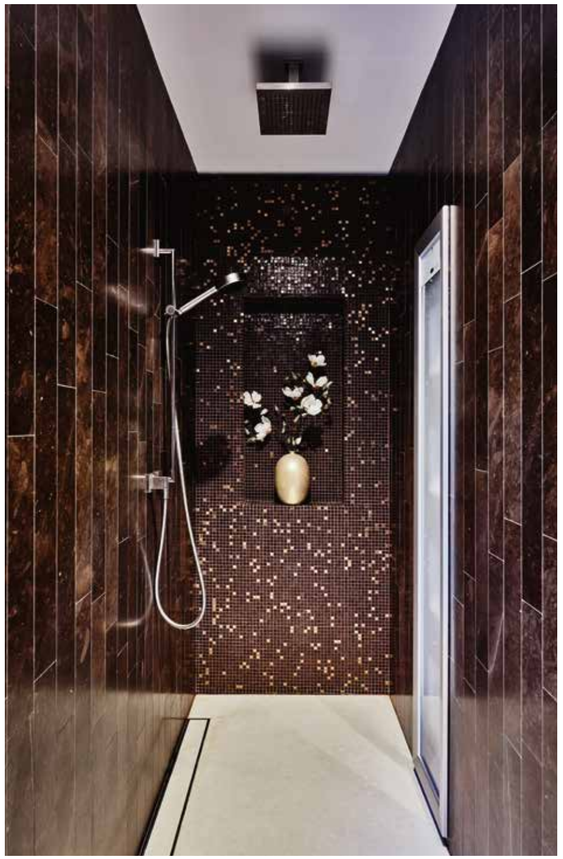
PIET BOON
wolterinck's world OUT IN

ERIC KUSTER
METROPOLITAN LUXURY

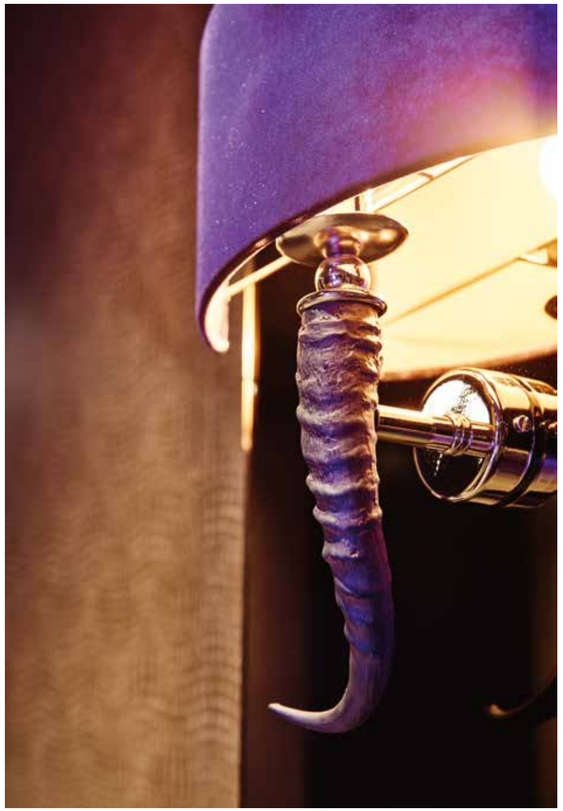
TOM
FORD




AMBR



LINARI
OPALE



Lying in the verdant Dutch countryside, this family home is as original as it is beautiful. In contrast to the historic farmhouses that litter the landscape of the northern Netherlands, this villa offers the kind of luxury accommodation that is more regularly associated with international five-star hotels. The holistic resort-style concept was achieved by Kuster in collaboration with a team of top architectural and design experts, and includes a pool with poolhouse and a nightclub, as well as more traditional living spaces. Every element of the design was carefully considered in order to fuse bucolic charm with a more metropolitan sense of glamor.

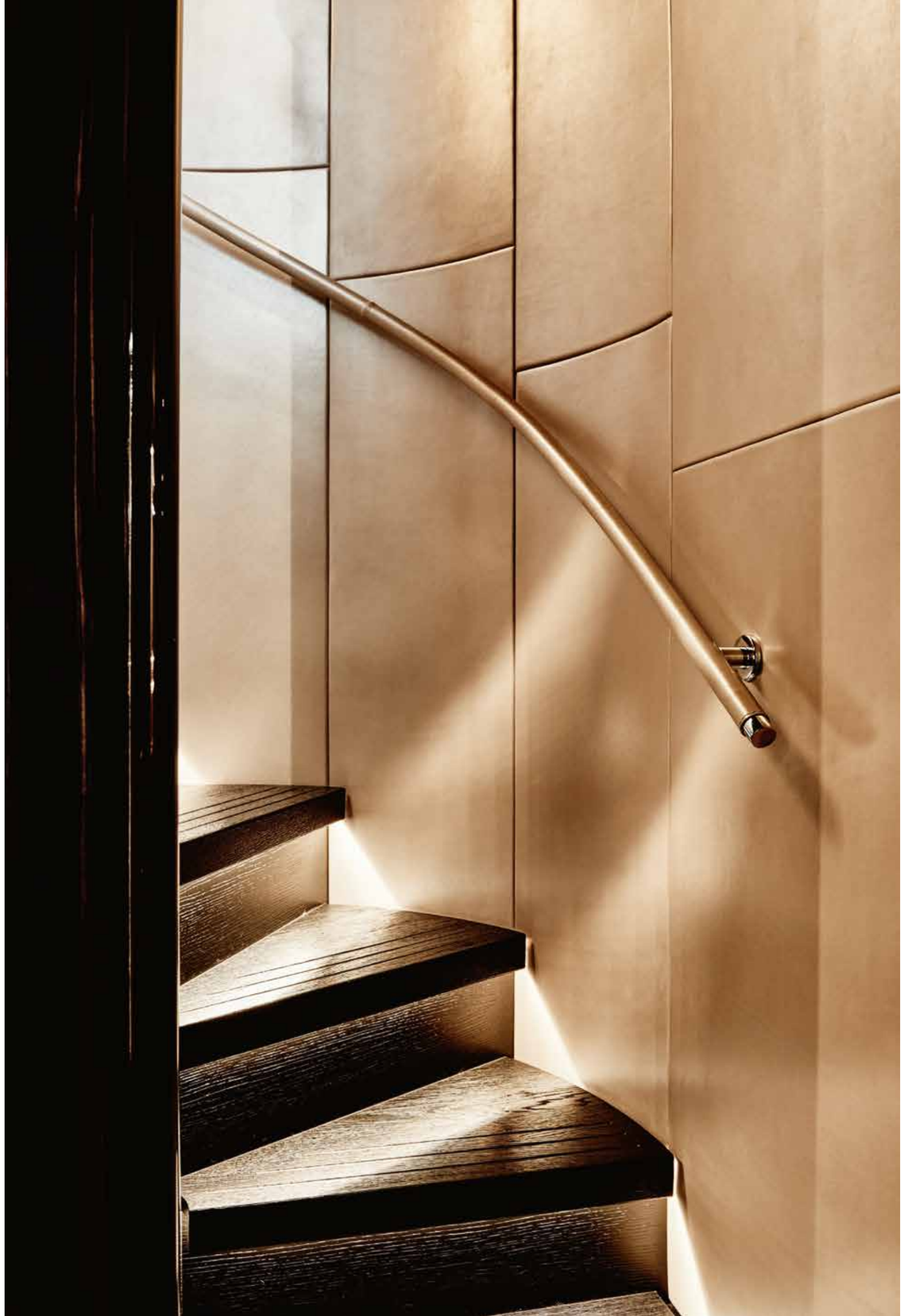
The villa's architecture, with its high ceilings and vast windows, aims to bring the outdoors in by bathing it in light and offering unparalleled views of the countryside beyond its borders. Sensitive to this, Kuster has used natural materials and a pale natural palette throughout. Textural linen curtains in the bedrooms, a stone-clad wall in the bathroom, and incredible objects from the natural world that have been transformed into decorative works of art adorn the space. This nature-inspired glamor continues to the pool house, offering the ideal hangout for warmer months.

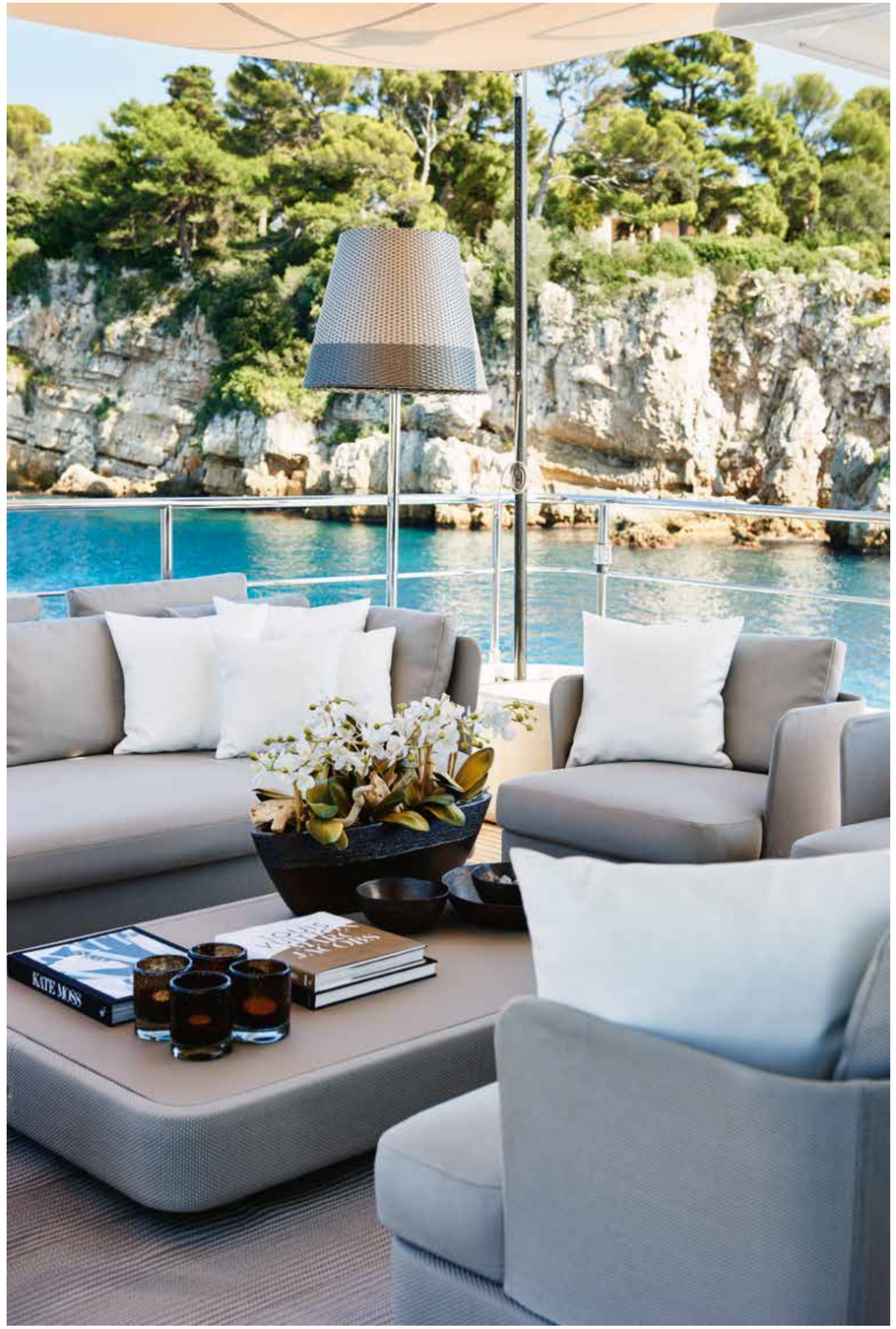
SEA LIFE

This custom-built yacht—a first for Kuster—was designed in partnership with luxury yacht building firm Ferretti. The initial difference between boat and building that struck Kuster as he conceived the design was how much more luxurious every finish could be on a boat. Whereas on land, walls might be plastered and painted, here the designer was able to contrast high-gloss plastics with liberal dashes of leather, stone, woods and metals.

As the main living room of a pleasure cruiser like this one is the deck, attention was focused on making this open-air space as plush and comfortable as possible. This carries through to the adjoining indoor lounge, which maintains the brightness of the deck with its pale palette, only accented by bronze accessories. These in turn, reference the masculine palette that extends downstairs into the master bedroom. And the ambience gets moodier still as you continue to the bar area, where purple velvets collide with backlit onyx to create the perfect afterhours den.

Dior
The Perfumes
LOUIS VUITTON
MARC JACOBS




KATE MOSS

TOWN HOUSE

TOM FORD

At this historic London townhouse, Kuster's blend of contemporary furniture and textiles combines with period architectural features to reflect the mix of old and new that is so key to London's style and personality. The original ceiling moldings and antique fireplaces were central to the concept. It was vital to not only maintain these heritage details, but bring them into sharp focus and enhance them with sympathetic interior design.

This was achieved by keeping the palette neutral and concentrating on building depth through tone-on-tone texture. Greys and silvers with accents of sepia and bronze create the sense of stepping into the glamor of a black-and-white photography. The cosmopolitan nature of London is injected through objects from far-flung destinations, such as the handmade pendant lampshades and engraved golden tables from Morocco that frame the sumptuous bed in the master bedroom. Here, artisanal craft and Kuster's signature 'metropolitan luxury' unite to maximum effect.

CURAÇAO
CABANA

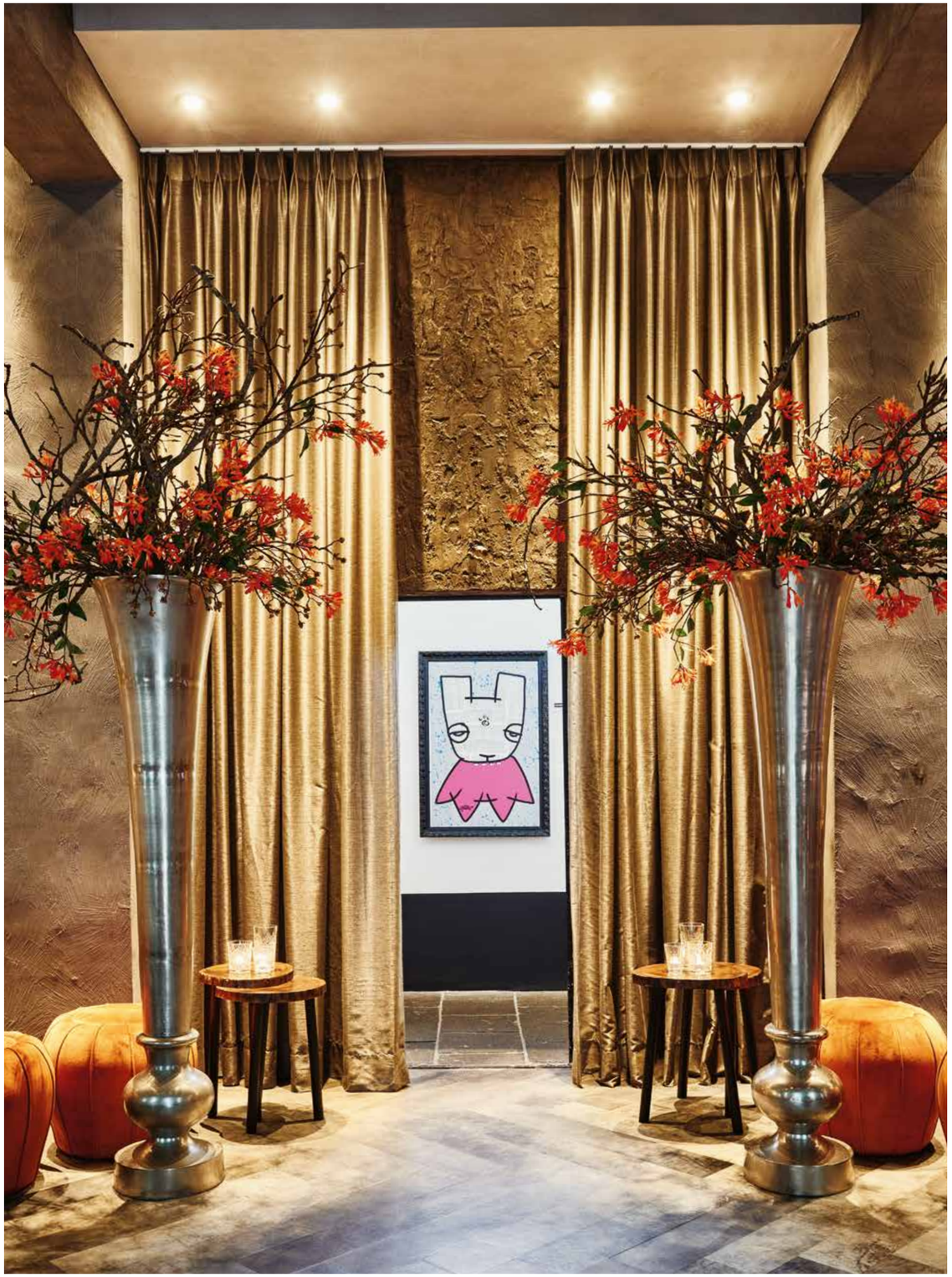
XIV

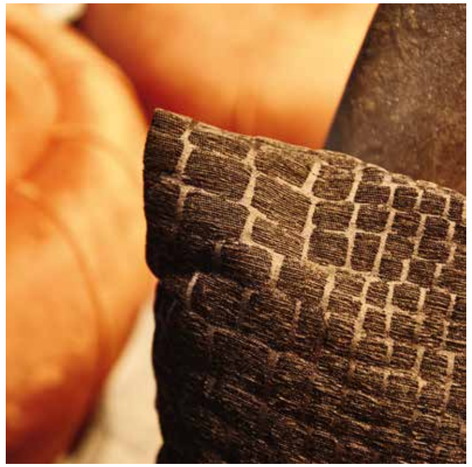
This traditional Caribbean home takes open plan living to the next level, with its lack of walls and seamless flow from indoors to outdoors, and from one room to the next. This sense of fluidity also extends beyond the boundaries of the house to its natural surroundings. Exquisite vistas of the sea and onto the mountains beyond create a spectacular ambience when combined with the geometry of the architecture and natural palette of the interiors.

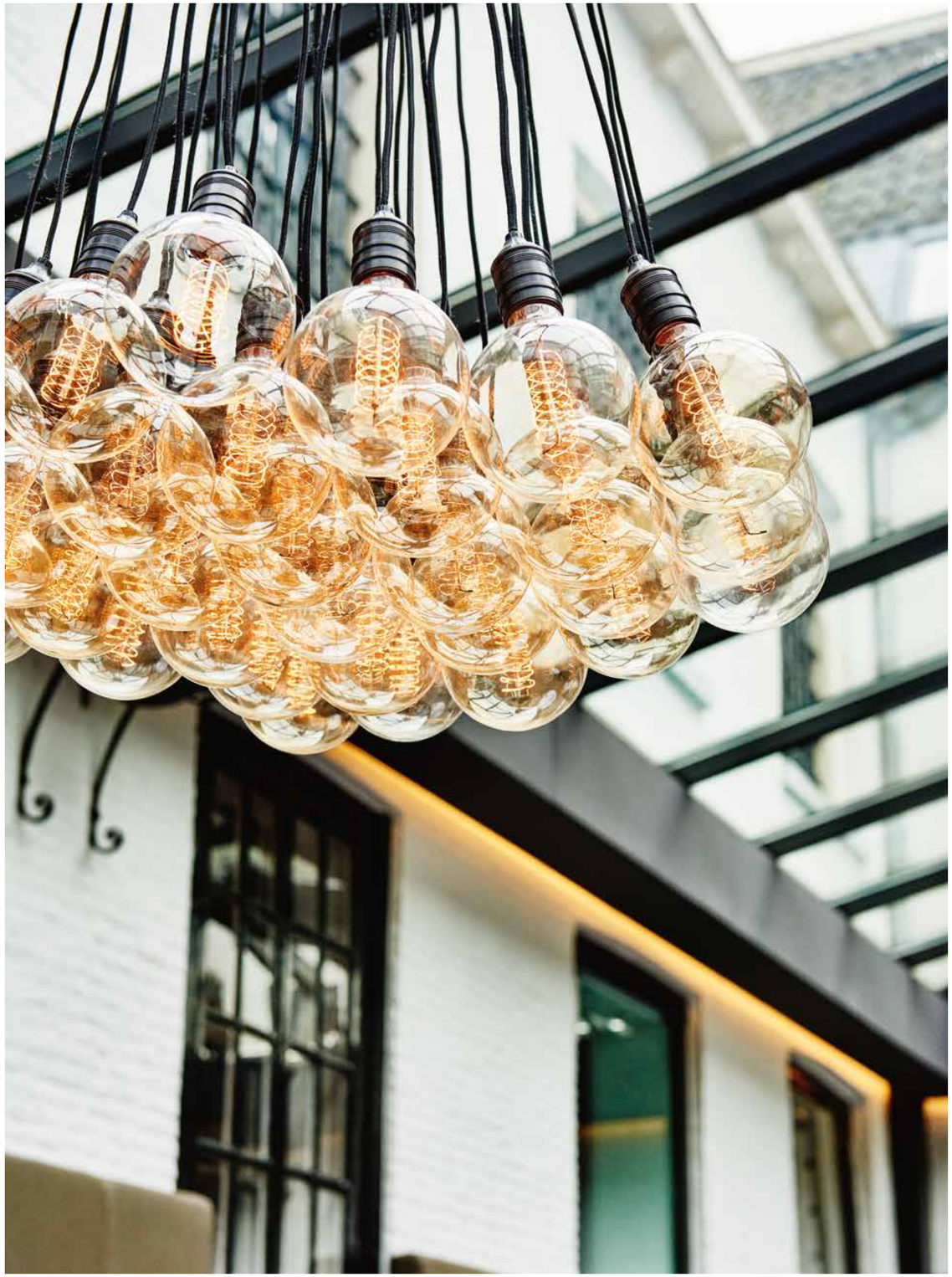
Here, where outdoor living is the norm, the pool becomes a focal point and the spaces around it need to balance function with beauty. Kuster has created a living room that frames the pool and views beyond with clean lines and a marine-inspired palette of blues, greys and taupes. Natural materials and the clients' collections of local objects, such as shells, corals and pieces of driftwood, enhance the sense that this home is at one with the surrounding landscape; stone floors contrast with raw woods throughout. Everything seems to almost levitate, creating the sense of floating out to sea.

XIV

NATURALLY DELICIOUS



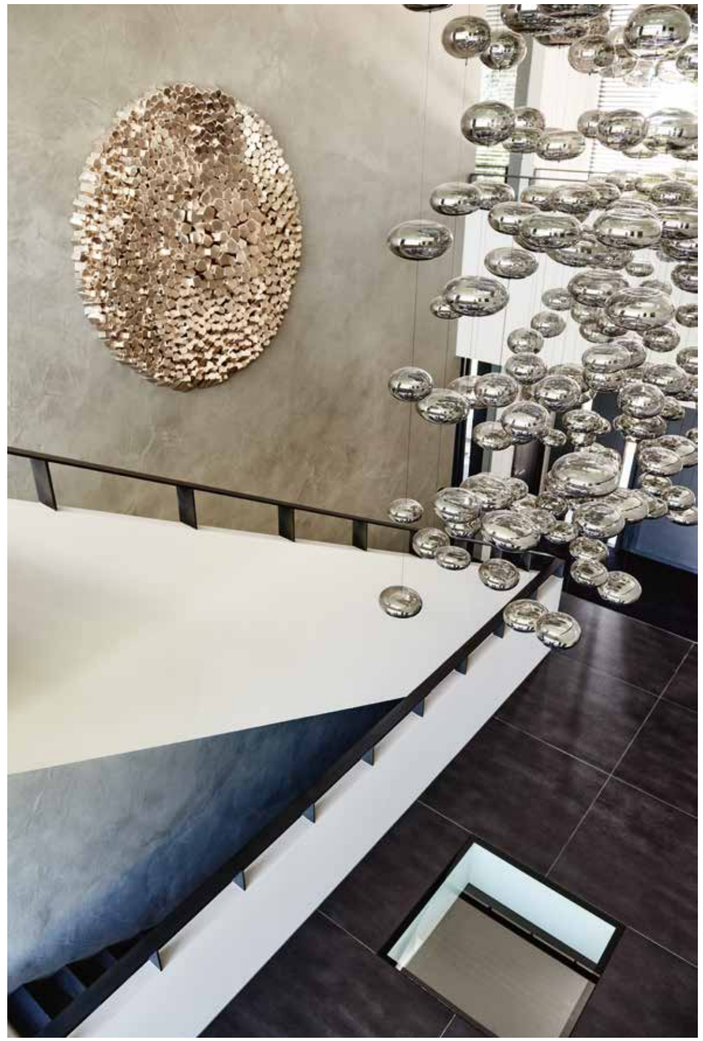




With its three Michelin stars, De Librije is one of the finest—if not the finest—restaurant in the Netherlands. It sets the bar high for food and ambience, offering a truly multi-sensory experience. Encompassing not only a restaurant, but also a hotel, De Librije is located within the walls of the old Zwolle City Prison. Kuster has sympathetically transformed this historic and somewhat austere setting into a high-end hospitality hotspot.

The main restaurant is situated in what was once the central open-air courtyard of the prison. The functional aesthetic has been maintained, but injected with contemporary beauty and style. A vast vaulted glass ceiling shelters the dining room from the elements, while velvet chairs, leather banquettes and a plush carpet add warmth to what was once an unfriendly place. The restaurant is entered through a lobby area where guests can sip cocktails immersed in a metallic palette, accented with sharp orange details. A sculptural wooden feature wall, tree stump side tables, towering plantlife and crocodile skin textiles add a taste of nature that echoes the natural ingredients that go into every De Librije dish.

LAKESIDE LUXE



HELMUT
NEWTON
TASCHEN
MARTVISSER
1992-2012

ERIC KUSTER
ERIC KUSTER

TERRY O'NEILL
AMAZING Cartier
WONEN EXCLUSIEF
LUXURY HOUSES
THE CLASSIC CARS BOOK
Les Femmes
MARTVISSER
THE ASTON MARTIN BOOK
JAMES BOND ALL IN
THE BATHROOM BOOK
VALENTINO
Hollywood Dogs
THE FASHION BOOK
PATRICK DEMARCHELIER
SUPER YACHT BIBLE
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WOLTERINCK'S WORLD STYLE + LIFE
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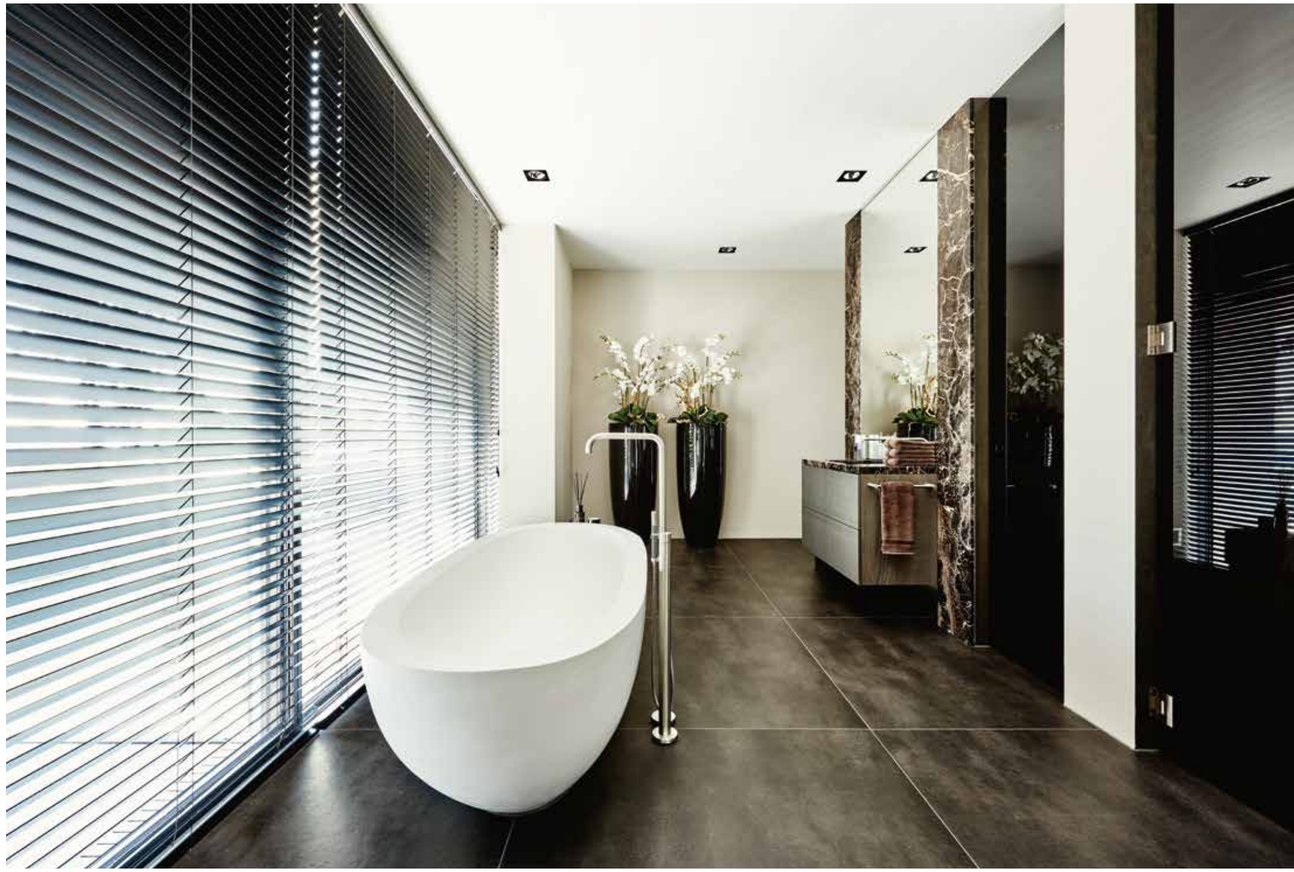
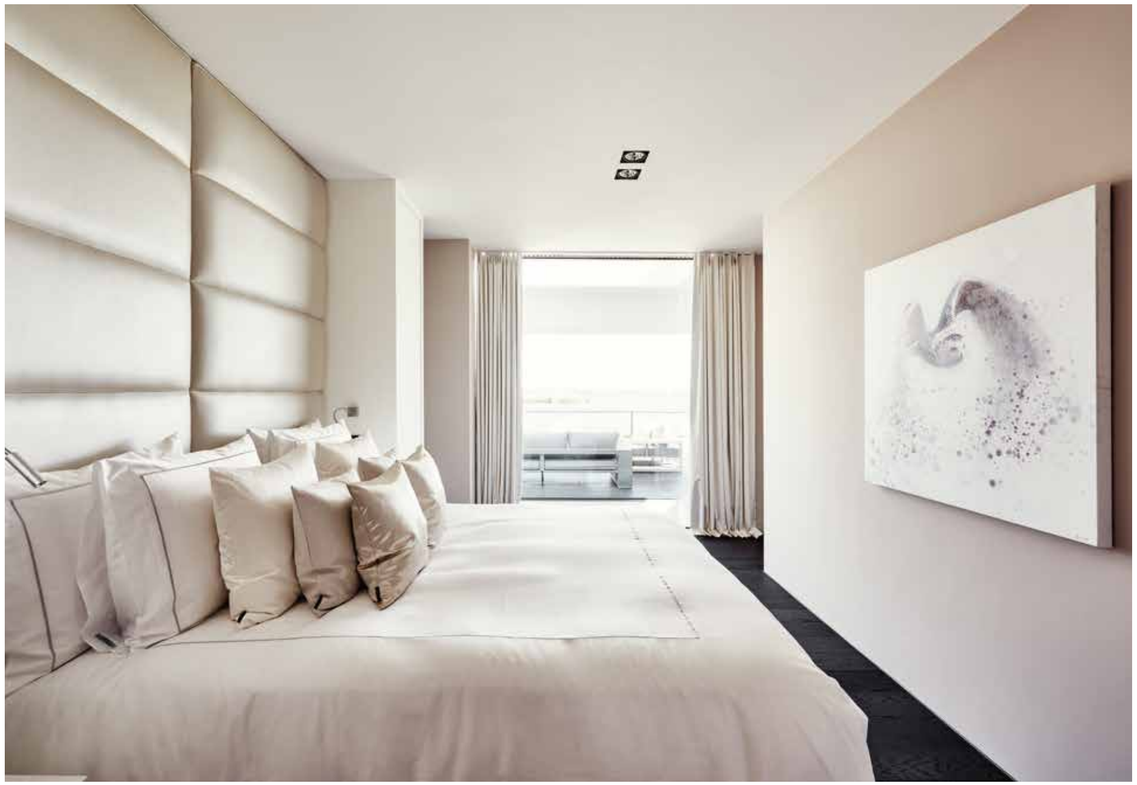
ATHENA
THE JAMES BOND ARCHIVES

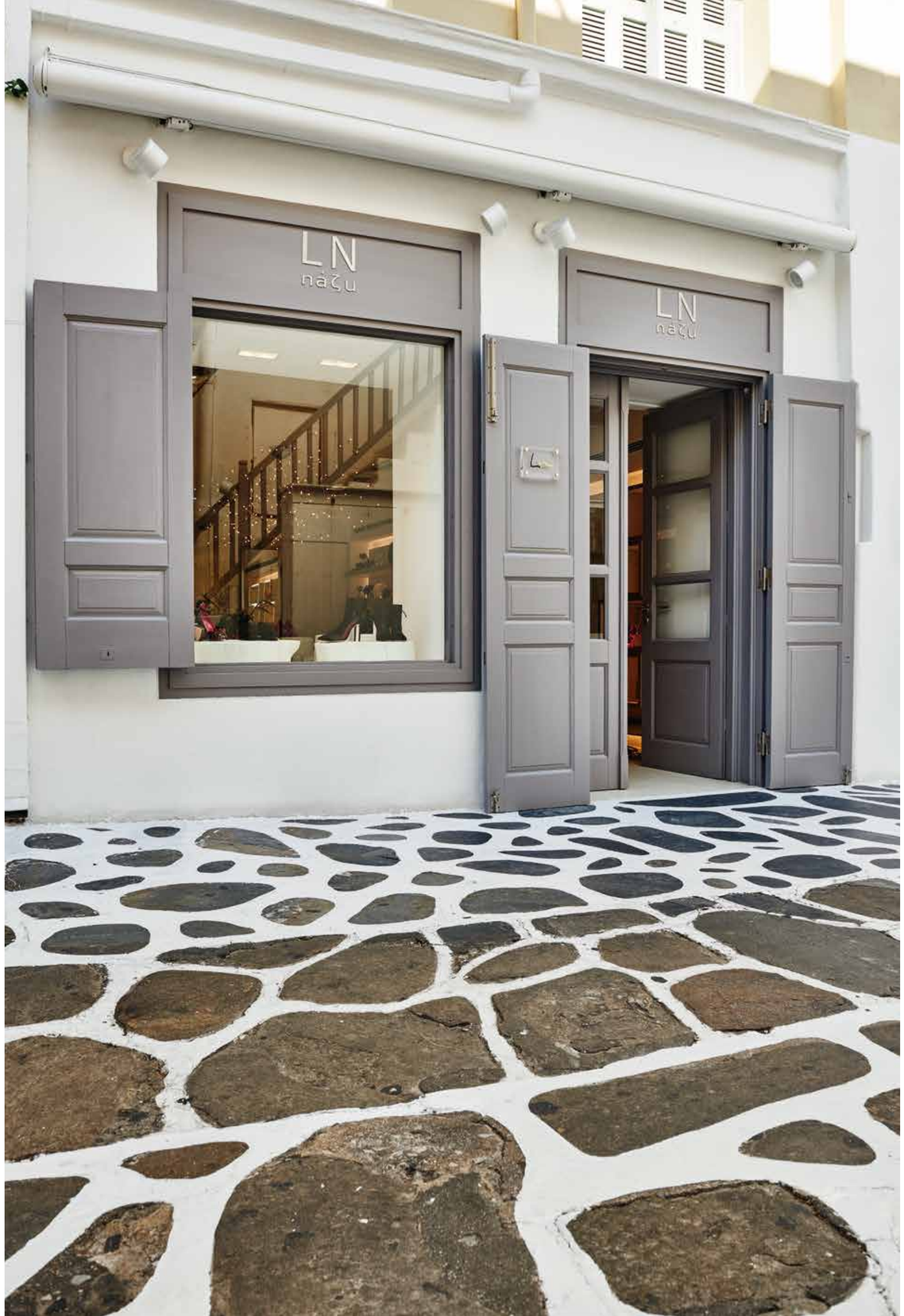




The owners love the water, sailing and swimming whenever they can, so it makes sense that they should settle in this area of the Netherlands known for its numerous lakes. The modern architectural style of the house, with its use of angles and generous proportions, was designed to maximize views of the lake beyond the villa's extensive gardens.

Kuster's interior designs emphasize the architectural geometry and focus on perspective. Every element has been considered with this in mind, using a mix of straight clean lines and strategically placed curved structures and accessories. The façade's impressive symmetry has been maintained internally through the positioning of furniture and general layout. The palette is a clean mix of grey, taupe and metallic hues, which reflect the sunlight that streams through the vast windows. Decorative items bring the beauty of nature inside. In areas where comfort is the main focus, layers of soft textiles and accessories have been used to soften the architecture's acute angles.

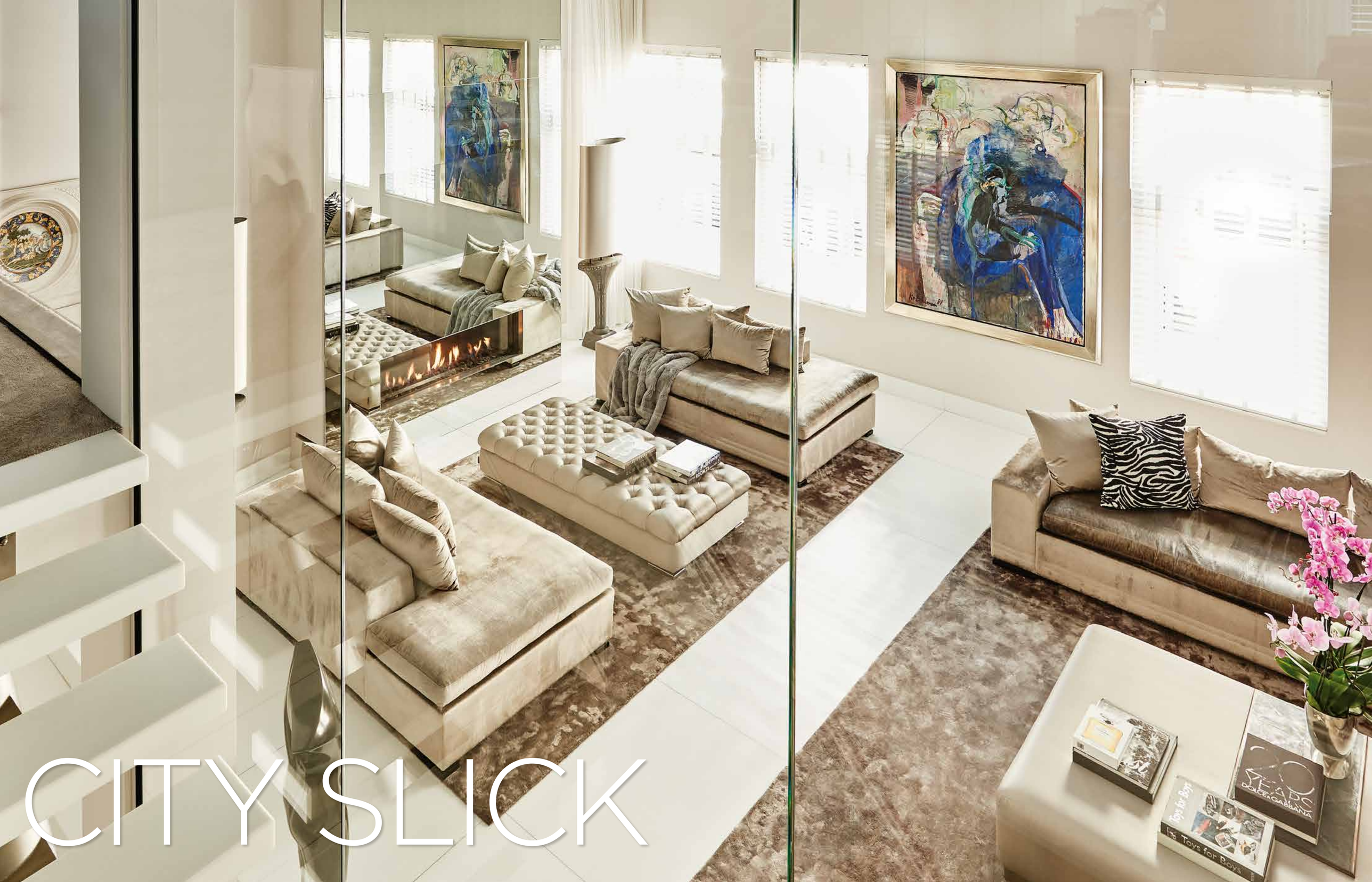
FUN AND FASHION


LN
LN

CATWALK

The Greek island of Mykonos is one of Kuster's favourite holiday destinations for its innate charm, style and the warmth of its people. It is a place where fashion is actively celebrated, especially during the high season when the couture industry's best and brightest descend on the sun-kissed isle. As a haven for high-profile individuals, it is only natural that Mykonos should play host to numerous luxury boutiques with all the most sought-after labels represented.

It was only a matter of time before Kuster was asked to design one of these high-end stores. Recognizing that the super shiny interiors that typify luxury retail in most places wouldn't suit the island's style, Kuster instead took inspiration from its whitewashed buildings and sandy beaches. From the large white tree trunks that offer a resting place for as-yet-unworn stilettos to the mirrored backed walls that create the illusion of space in the small boutique, everything serves to amplify the clothing and accessories on display, including Kuster's own collections of shoes and leather jackets.



CITY SLICK

N°5
CHANEL
PARIS
PARFUM

CHAMPAGNE
TAITTINGER
JACQUES HELLE

GIORGIO ARMANI
ELIE SAAB
SAM FRANCIS
ROOM 23

By day, this cavernous apartment in the center of Amsterdam is bathed in sunlight, which streams through its large windows and reflects off the vertiginous mirror that extends from the fireplace in the atrium-like living room. Everything is open or glass-walled, allowing views from one room to the next. This, along with Kuster's intelligent use of proportion and palette of pale neutral shades, gives a sense of fluidity throughout the space. It combines the most desirable elements of a family house with those of a glamorous urban loft.

Kuster was eager to make the owners' extensive fine art collection a focal point of the entire interior design concept. With this in mind, he employed a simple palette of gallery white walls and tone-on-tone furniture pieces, allowing the eye to be drawn to the power of the paintings, photography, sculpture and other art that punctuates almost every room. However, where an art gallery might be considered cold, here there is warmth and comfort introduced through layered textiles and unique lighting.

A VIEW TO LOVE

LOVE

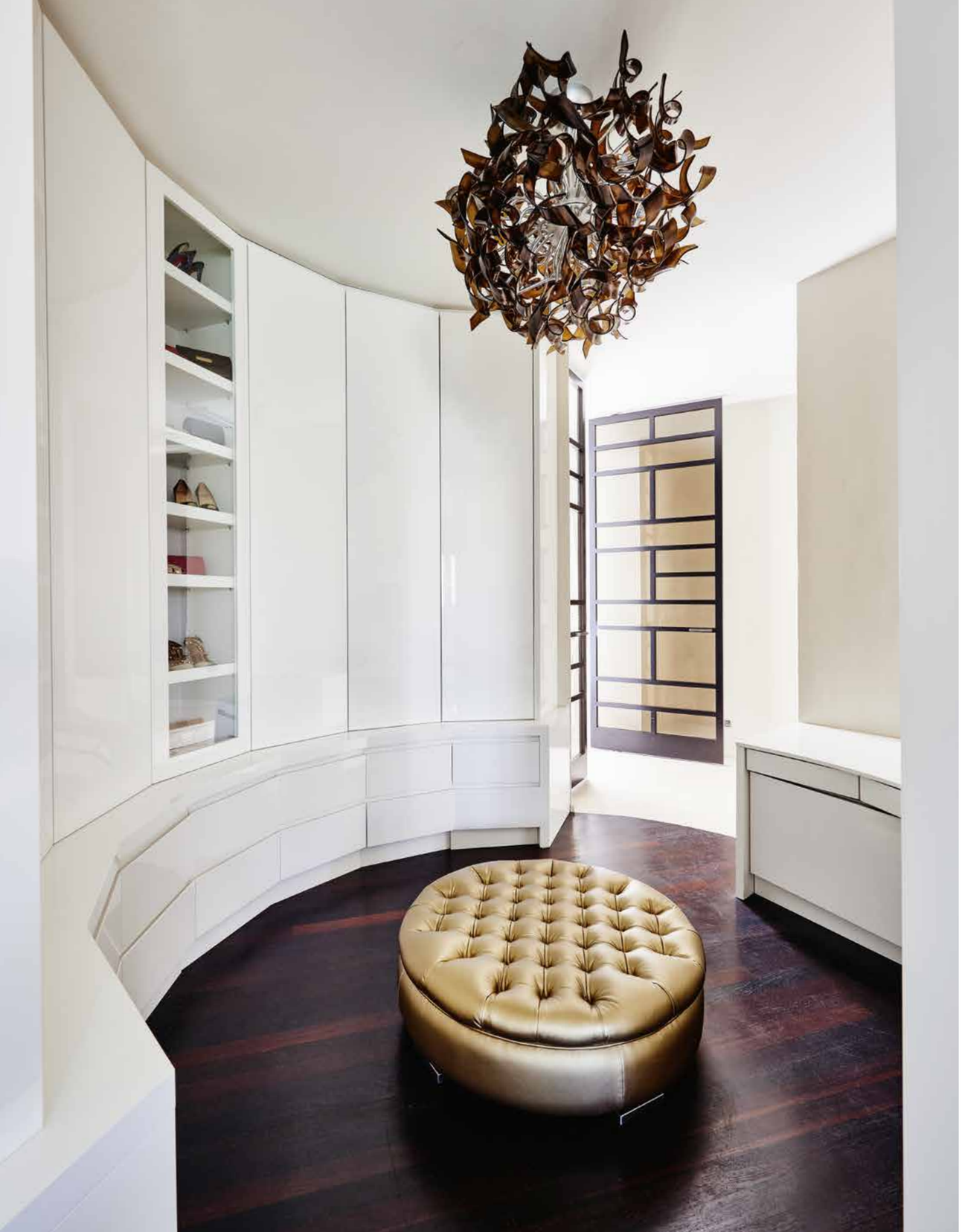
LO
VE

Dior

Christian Dior
YVES SAINT LAURENT
LUXURY HOUSES

LOVE

LOVE



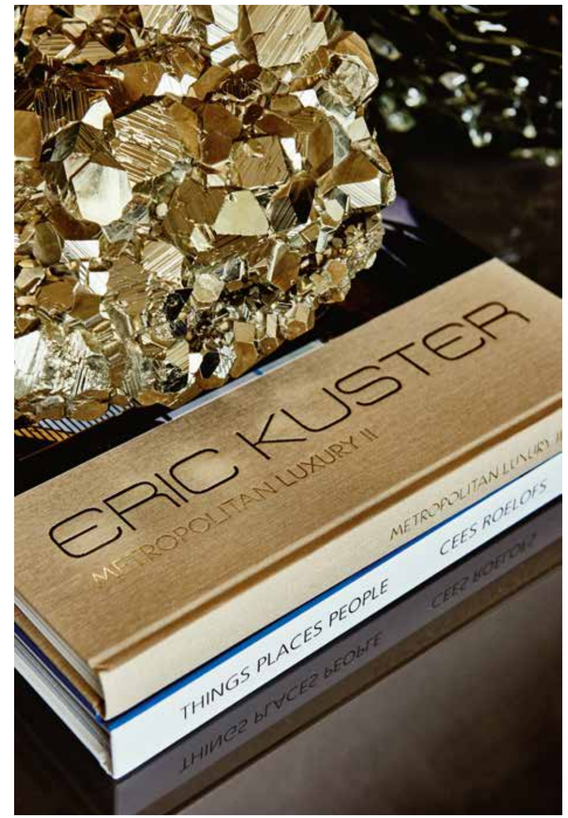
Unlike the traditional Curaçao home that featured earlier in the book, this house—also on the island—is more Miami villa in its styling. Home to a couple who hail from America and South America, Kuster was keen to emphasize this architectural personality and transport some mainland glamour to the Dutch Caribbean island. Of course, central to this lifestyle is the swimming pool and its surroundings, which in light of the warm climate become a de facto outdoor living room.

The owners were newlyweds when the project was conceived, so Kuster wanted to echo their relationship in the design concept by tying together the indoor and outdoor spaces with the iconic pop-art work 'Love.' In its sculptural form, the piece sits on a jetty at the edge of the pool, framed by stunning ocean and mountain views, its red hue creating a stark contrast to the natural azure and green colors beyond. The same typography features in the bedroom in a monochromatic print that complements the all white palette that surrounds it. Downstairs, a dark, seductive cinema room sets the scene for romantic movie nights.

LOVE

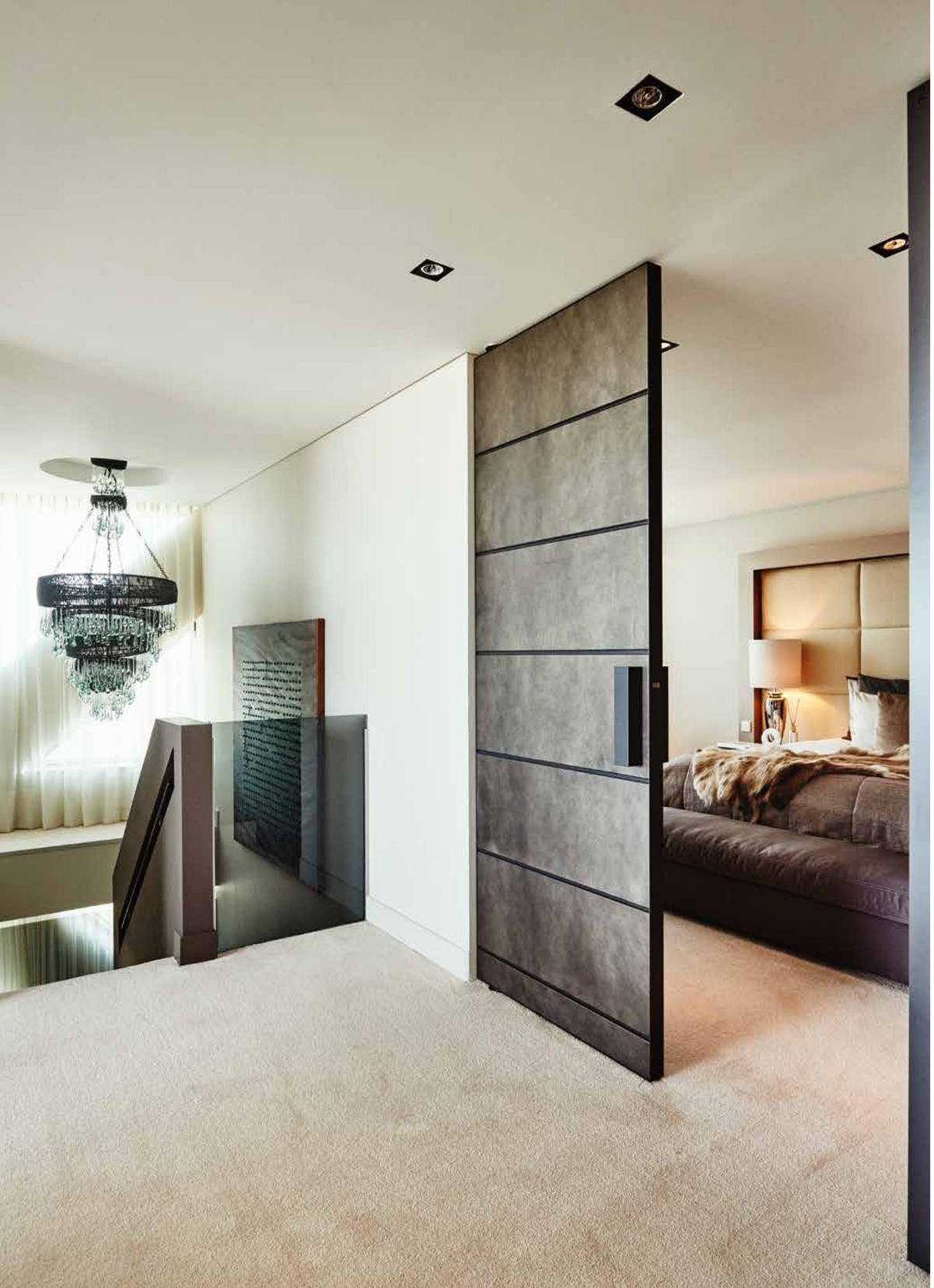
SKYVIEW

VILLAS
FRANK MISSOTTEN
CHANEL
VILLAS
FRANK MISSOTTEN


ERIC KUSTER
METROPOLITAN LUXURY II
THINGS PLACES PEOPLE
CEES ROELOFS

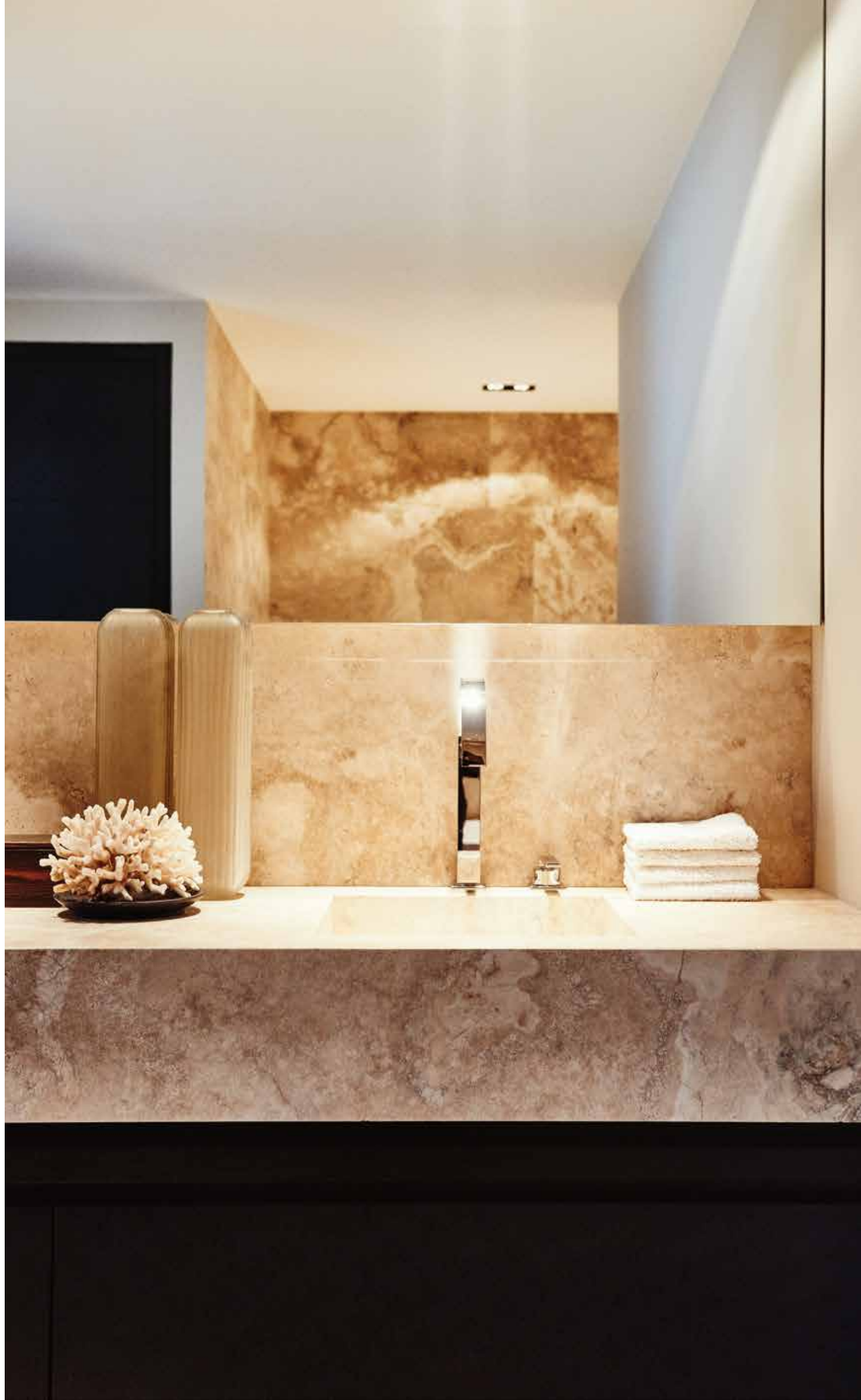
OGNO

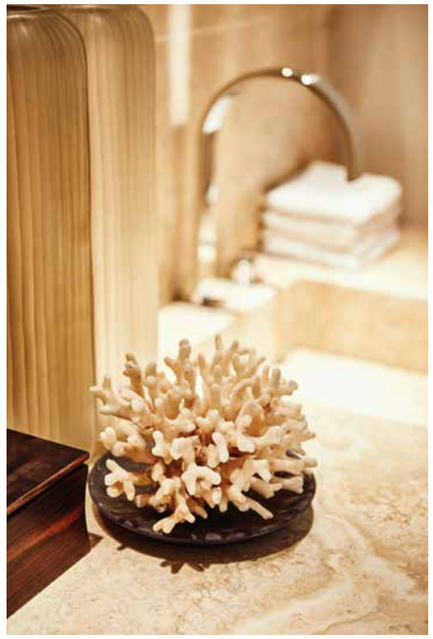
JAZZLIFE



The geometric lines that form the architectural features of this spacious penthouse apartment in the Netherlands were the starting point for Kuster as he developed the interior concept. Located on the top floor of a skyscraper with views over The Hague and North Sea, the designer had a solid base to start from and sought to enhance the existing structural beauty.

The apartment was designed for entertaining. Therefore, attention is focused on the main living spaces with a particular emphasis on the kitchen, which of course is at the heart of any party. The overall ambience is one of tailored masculinity with heavy blocks of stone and industrial metal furniture echoing the geometry of the penthouse's architecture. This feeling of masculinity is bolstered further by a monochrome palette, accented with metallic details, and then softened with sumptuous textiles, such as furs, satins and velvets, alongside objects from the natural world.

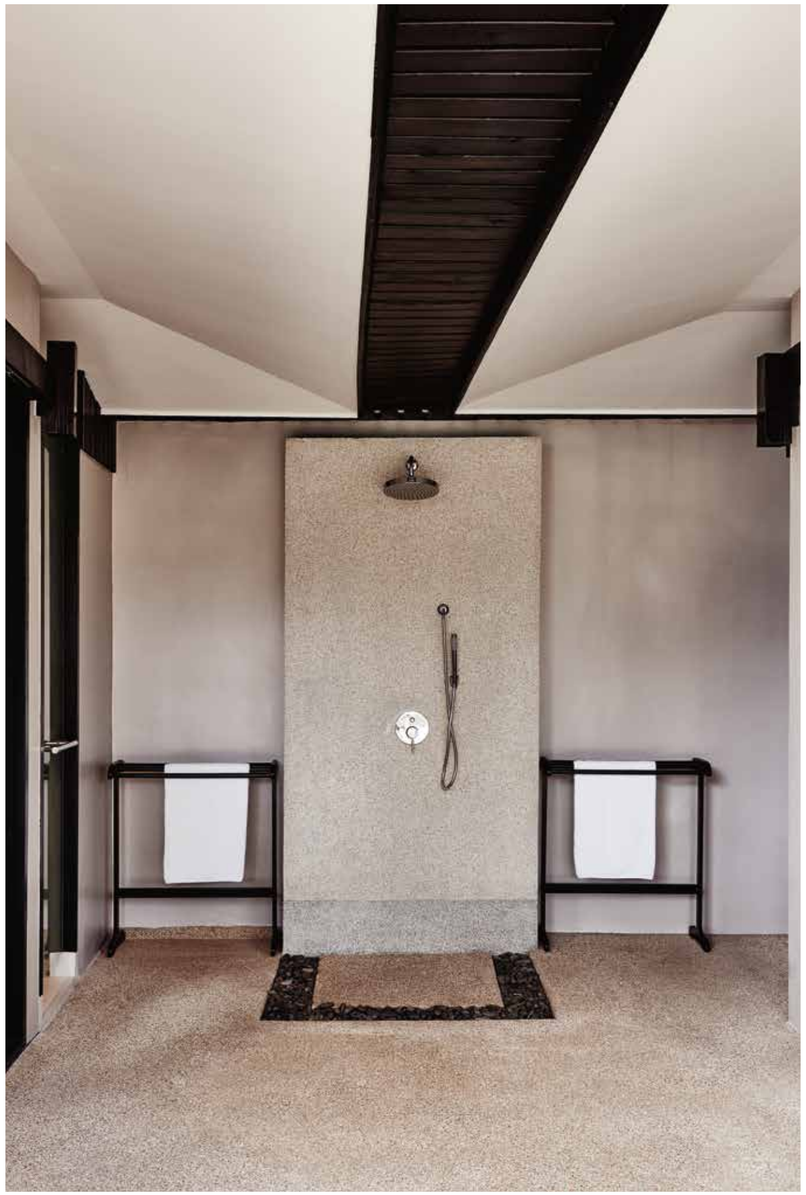




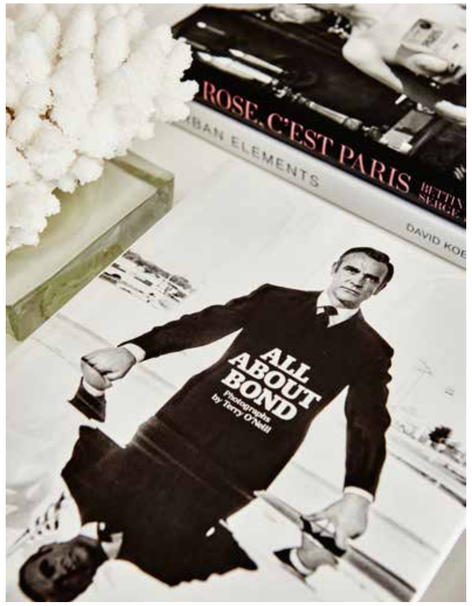
NIKKI BEACH RESORT

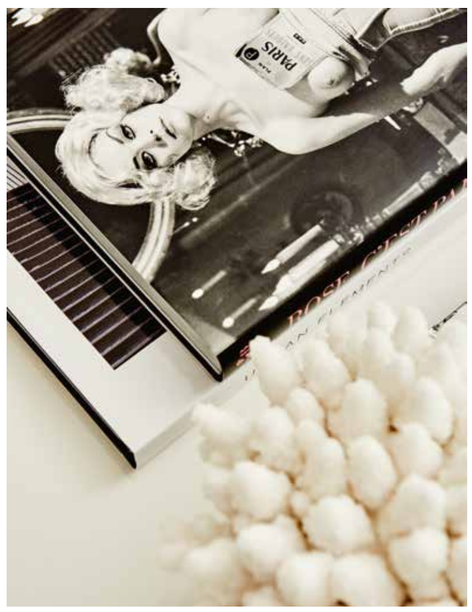
Kuster was tasked with designing the villas and suites at the Nikki Beach resort in Thailand's Koh Samui, a destination for jet-setting party lovers and sun worshippers. This was one project where he believed it best to source materials and furniture locally in order to enhance the Thai beach holiday experience for guests. This included everything from a bamboo bath tub to natural stone floors. However, also knowing the global nature of the clientele, Kuster injected his signature metropolitan glamour and European design aesthetic through sharp material contrasts and a neutral color scheme.

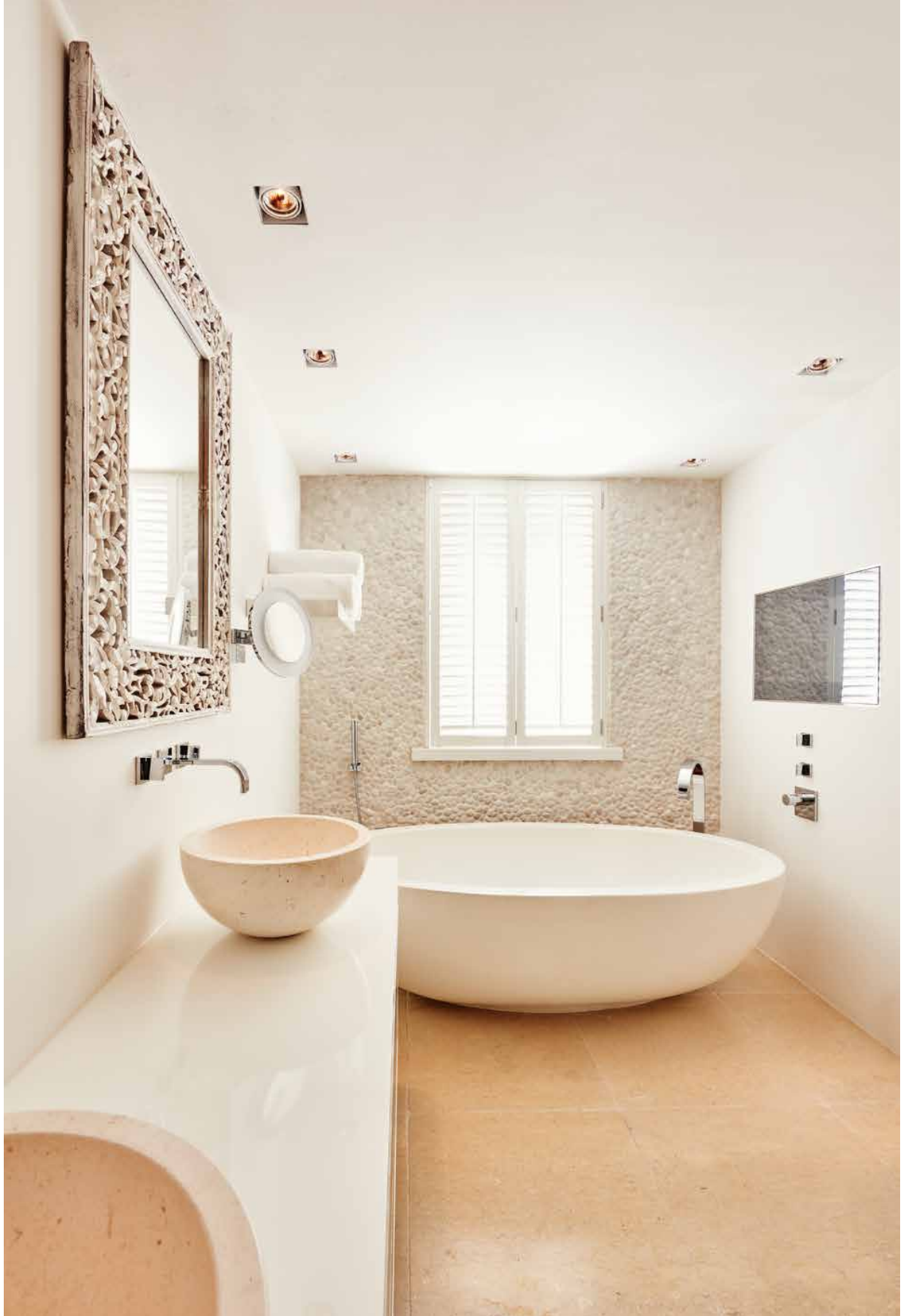
Not content with designing the accommodation, Kuster also had a hand in the concept of placing an elongated swimming pool—the longest in Thailand—through the center of two rows of villas. This, with its clean lines and sense of perspective, guides the eye and creates the perfect frame for breathtaking sunsets on the horizon beyond.



NIGHTS IN WHITE SATIN


ROSE, C'EST PARIS
ALL ABOUT BOND


PARIS



The owners of this Dutch family home are regular visitors to Ibiza and love everything about the 'white isle,' which is why Kuster decided to transport Balearic charm all the way to the Netherlands for this design concept. In addition to a multi-tonal white-on-white palette, other Ibizan influences include Buddha artwork, referencing the famous Buddha Bar and its meditative ambience, and a table made with wood sourced from the island, sprayed with a high-gloss finish. Black-and-white photographs from the golden years of cinema inject party lifestyle glamor.

Alluding to lazy days spent on the Playa d'en Bossa or Las Salinas, a feature wall in the bathroom is a mosaic of sand-colored pebbles, while the mantelpiece in the living room is decorated with driftwood, coral and tortoise shell. The owners' son has his own slice of island life with a pirate-themed bedroom in the eaves of the house. The main feature is a playfully colorful pirate seascape mural that spans the back wall.

OCEAN VIEW VILLA

KENZO
COOL HOTELS BEST OF EUROPE
TIM WALKER PICTURES

This villa in Mauritius is pure paradise. So it's no wonder that the owners decided to transform it from holiday home to main family home. Everything about it shouts opulence. Kuster was given carte blanche on the interiors and wanted to create a balance between all-out luxury resort and down-to-earth beachside villa. The Moroccan-inspired pool house is one of the most impressive spaces, lit by intricate handmade lanterns that hang from the vaulted wooden ceiling. These, in juxtaposition with the rich red and gold accessories and deep brown furniture, conjure up images of an exotic Bedouin tent. It's the perfect place to cozy up after a midnight swim on a starry night. The main house is built around the pool and features everything one would expect at a boutique hotel, from the gym, to the plush bar, decked out in purple velvets and satins, to the eight bedrooms with their serene neutral and all-white palettes.

LINARI
SCURO

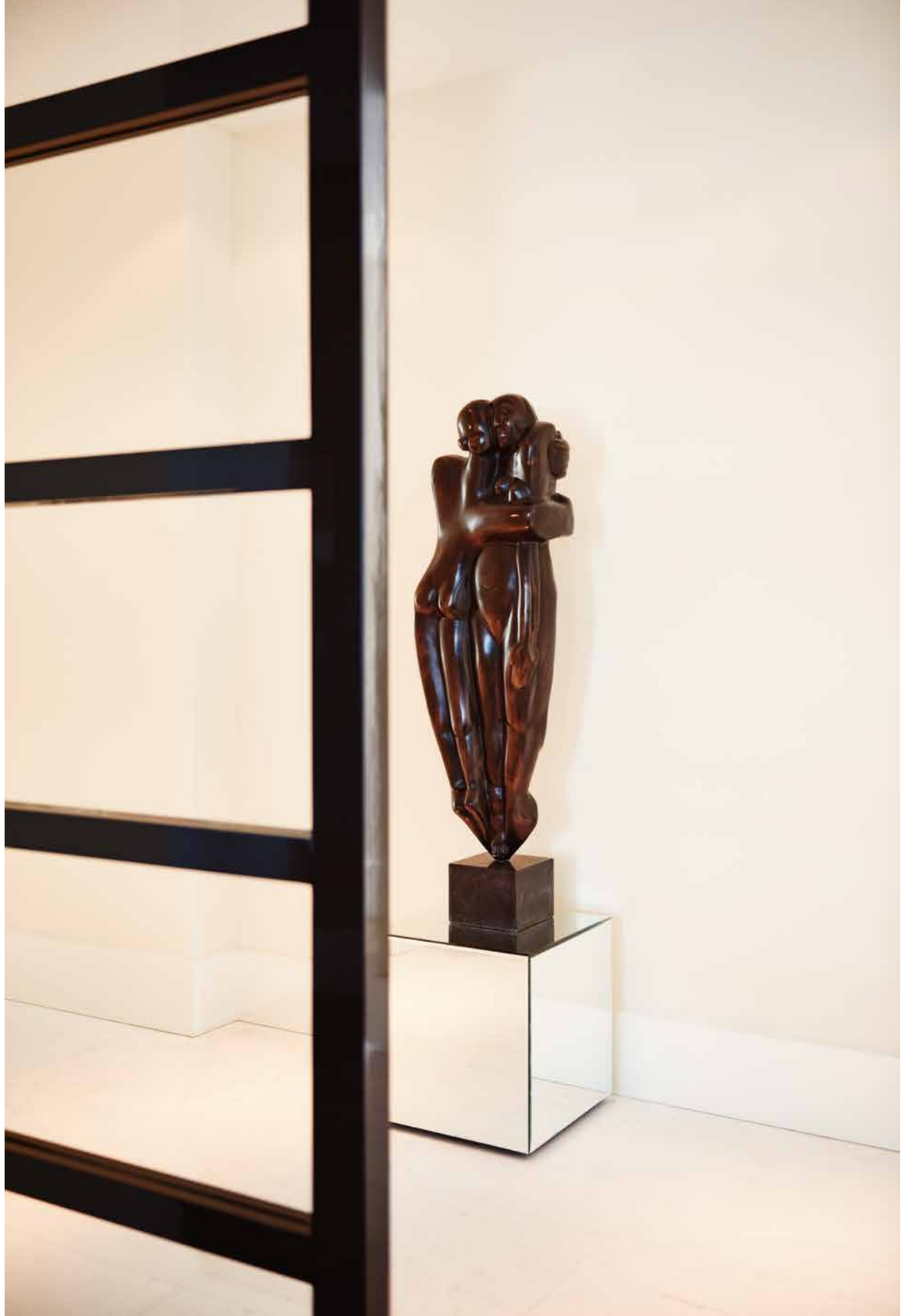
KENZO
LUXURY HOUSES
007

ISLAND HOPPING

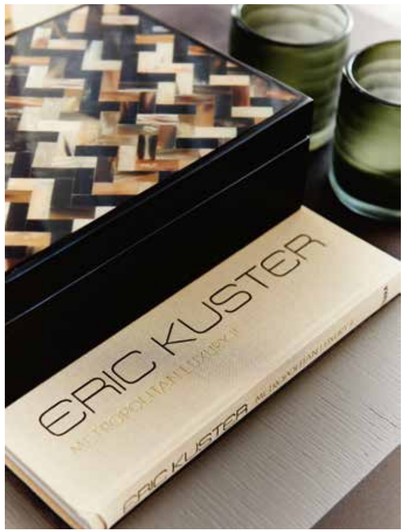
The owners of the beautiful villa featured previously also own this elegant 60ft yacht, designed by Kuster in collaboration with the boatbuilders. The protected coral reefs that surround Mauritius put strict limitations on keel depth, so this was the first challenge that Kuster faced in the yacht's design. However, he met this head on through shape and form.

The interior design reflects the yacht's purpose as a leisure cruiser, meant for days spent island hopping, anchoring for lunch in remote bays and sunbathing on deck. Strategically placed windows stretch across the length of the vessel, maximizing views from the cabin. The natural light that floods through these windows reflects off the bronze, cream and platinum textiles that cover cushions, sofas, beds and walls, brightening the dark wood surrounds and bringing to mind the shimmering surface of the sea.

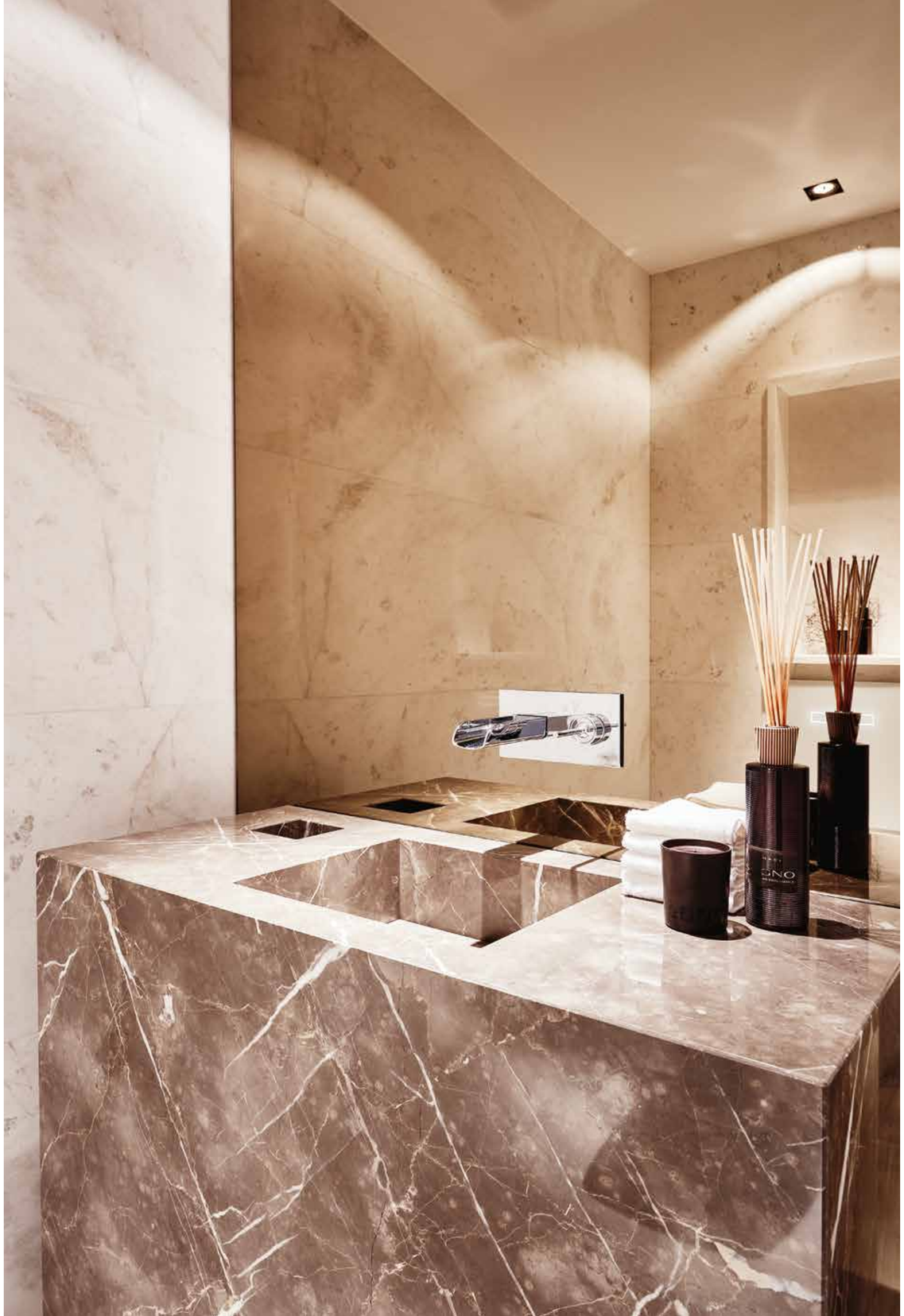
RIVER VIEW PENTHOUSE

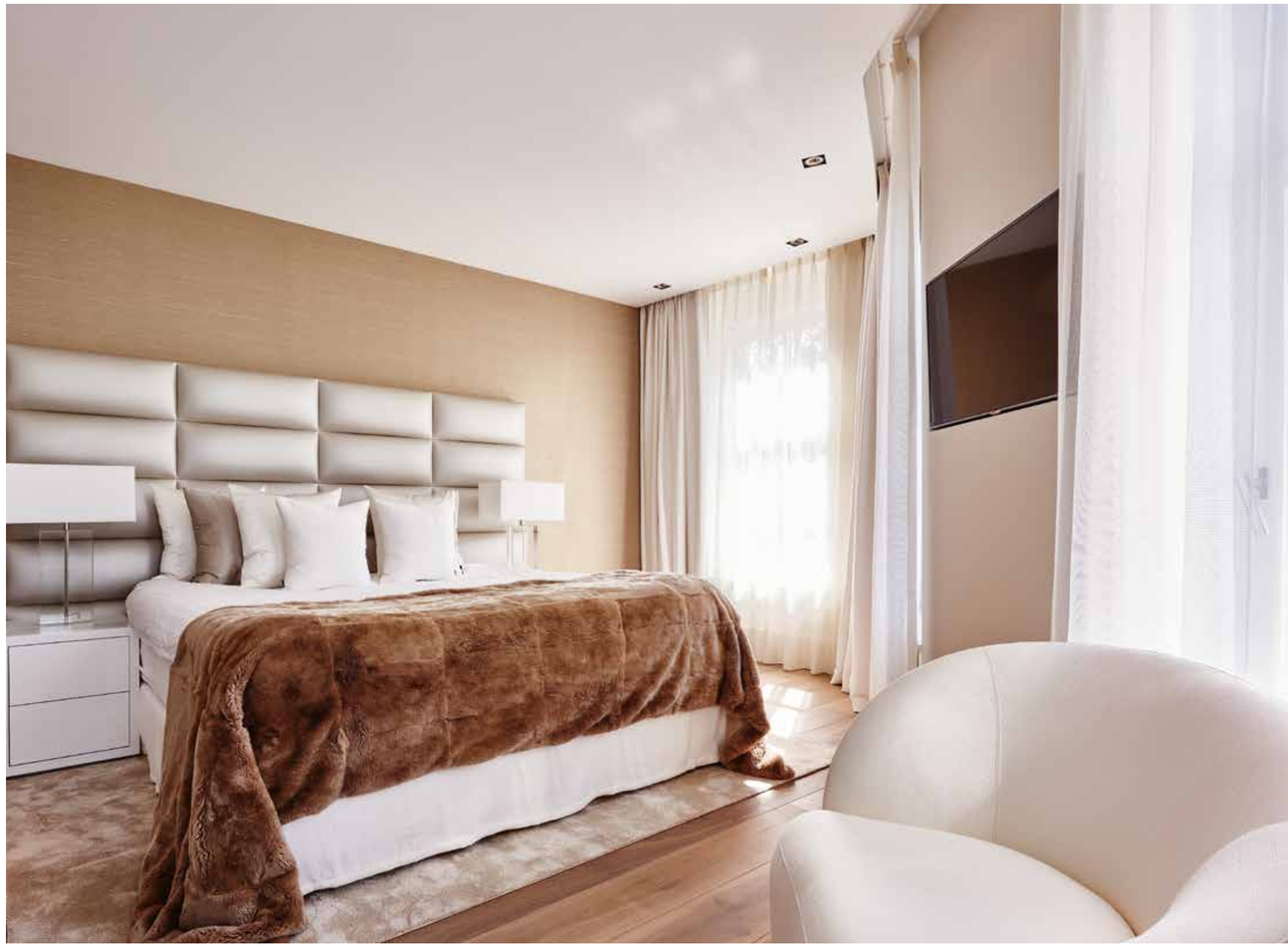


LOUIS
VUITTON
MARC
JACOBS

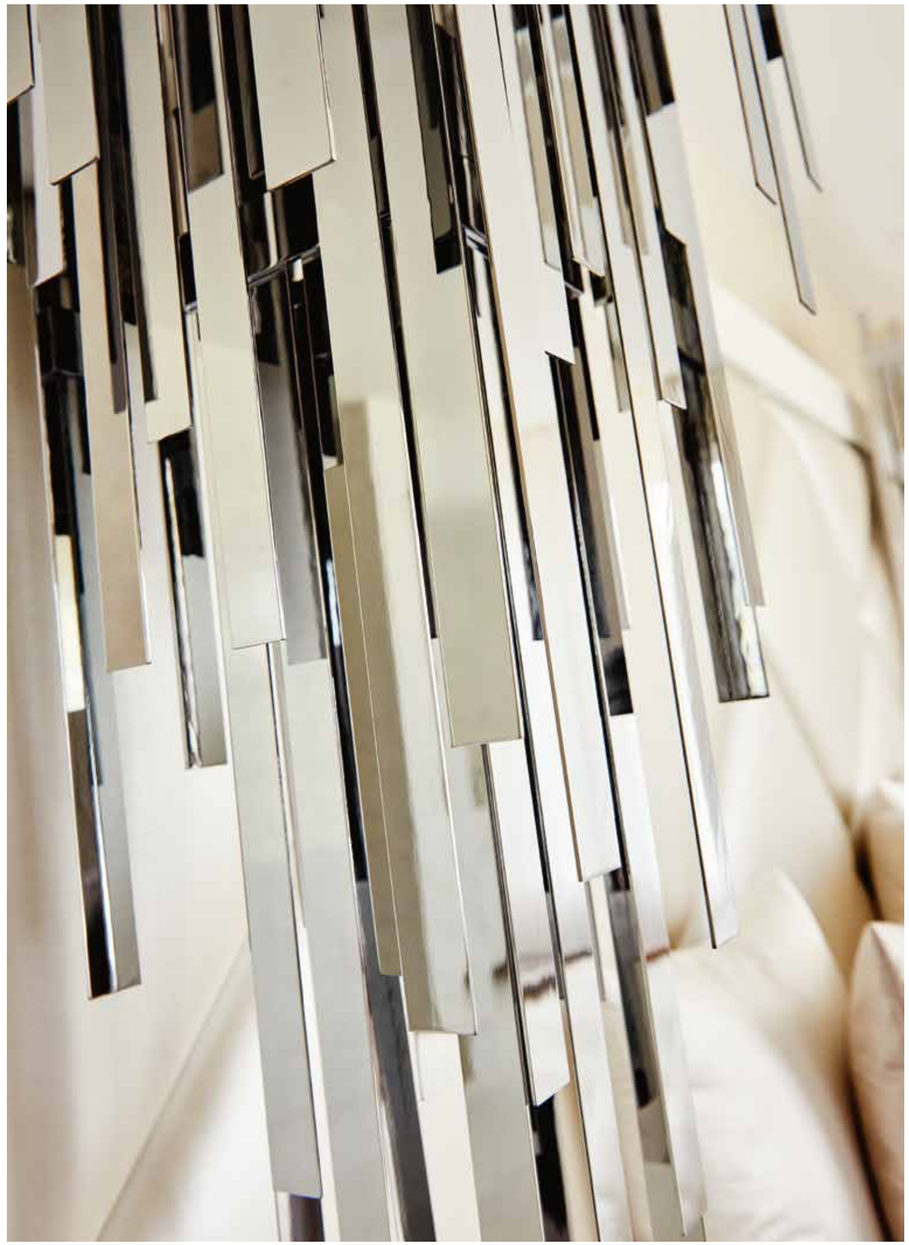

ERIC KUSTER

FASHION
ALBUM





CHANEL
CHANEL
VOGUE



The owner of this expansive penthouse apartment approached Kuster and his team to develop the entire layout, including all finishes and furniture, so everything you see has the Eric Kuster signature. The project was palatial in both its scope and square footage. Therefore, everything in the home had to take on equally grand proportions, from sofas to tables and televisions to fireplaces. In fact, two large fireplaces encased in glass stretch either side of the HDTV in the main living room, which is decked in masculine shades of grey and silver.

The penthouse sits within a newly built block of luxury apartments. The building has been sympathetically designed to sit alongside the architectural beauty of the castles, palaces and stately homes that dominate the surrounding landscape, close to the Vecht River in the Netherlands. However, when you step over the threshold into the penthouse, you are transported to the here and now. From the contemporary kitchen with its metallic surfaces and white marble flagstone floor, to the high gloss, pure white dressing room, every space and material is uber-modern and imposing in scale.

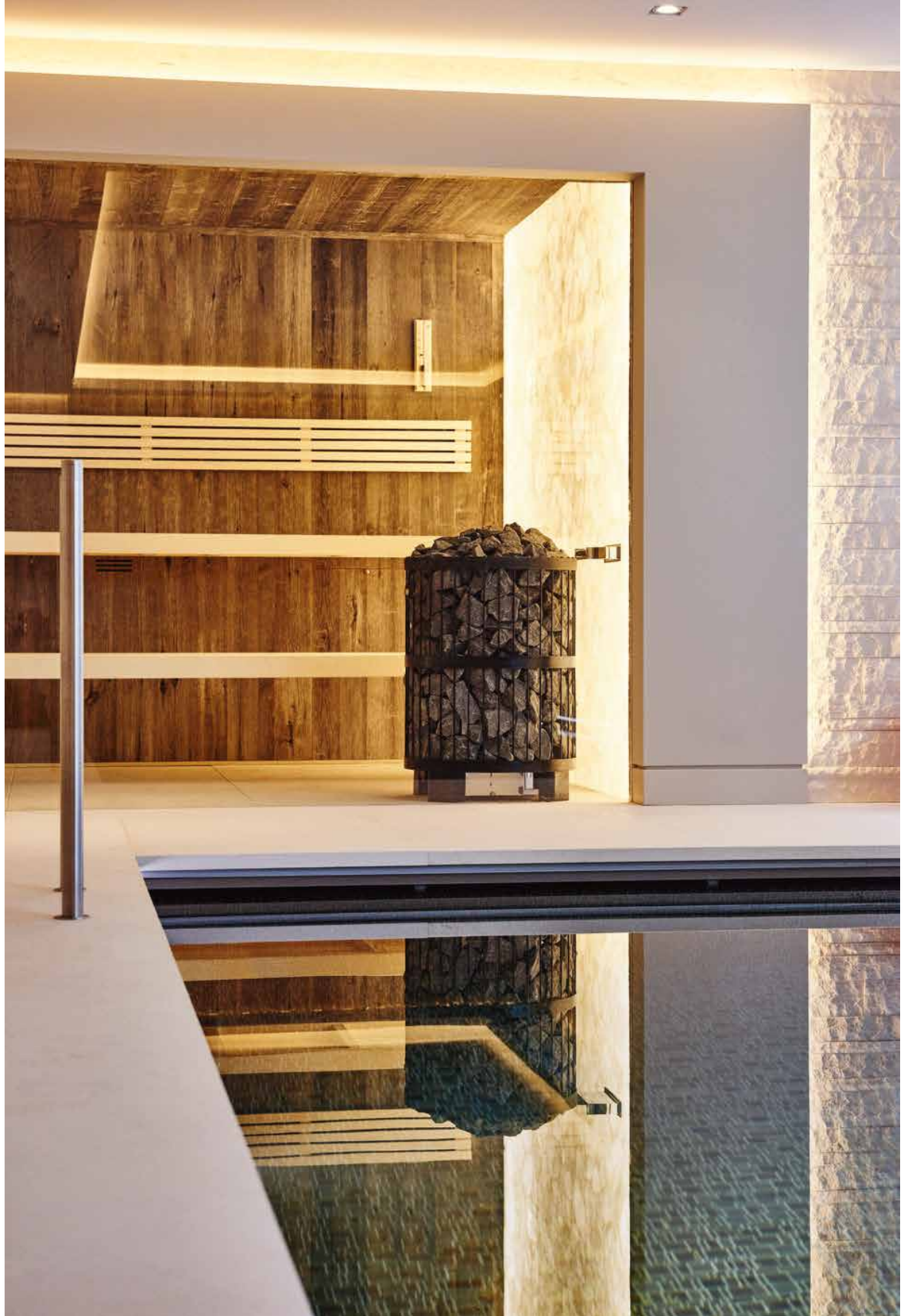
THE FASHION BOOK
Louis Vuitton

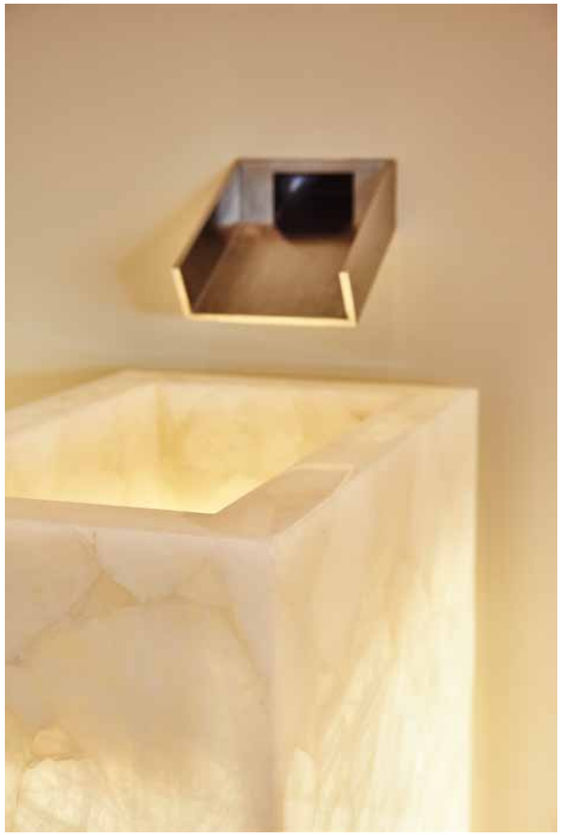
ON THE WATERFRONT

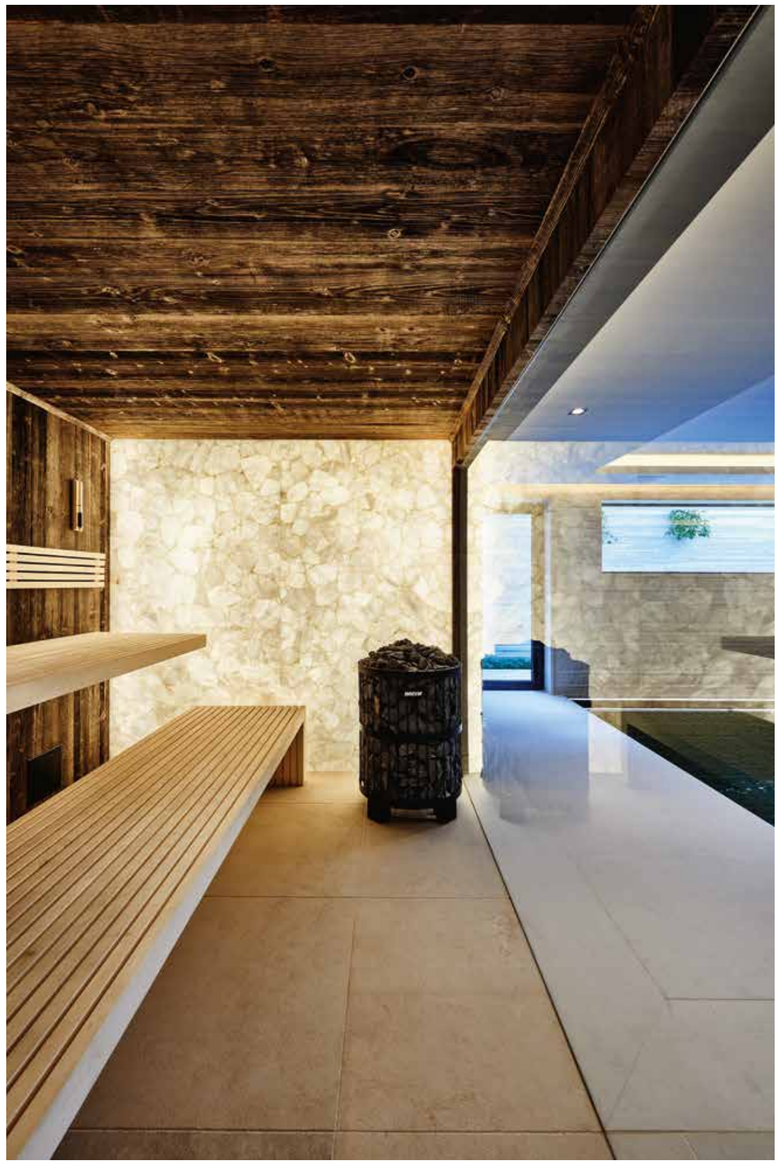
SOUTH AFRICA

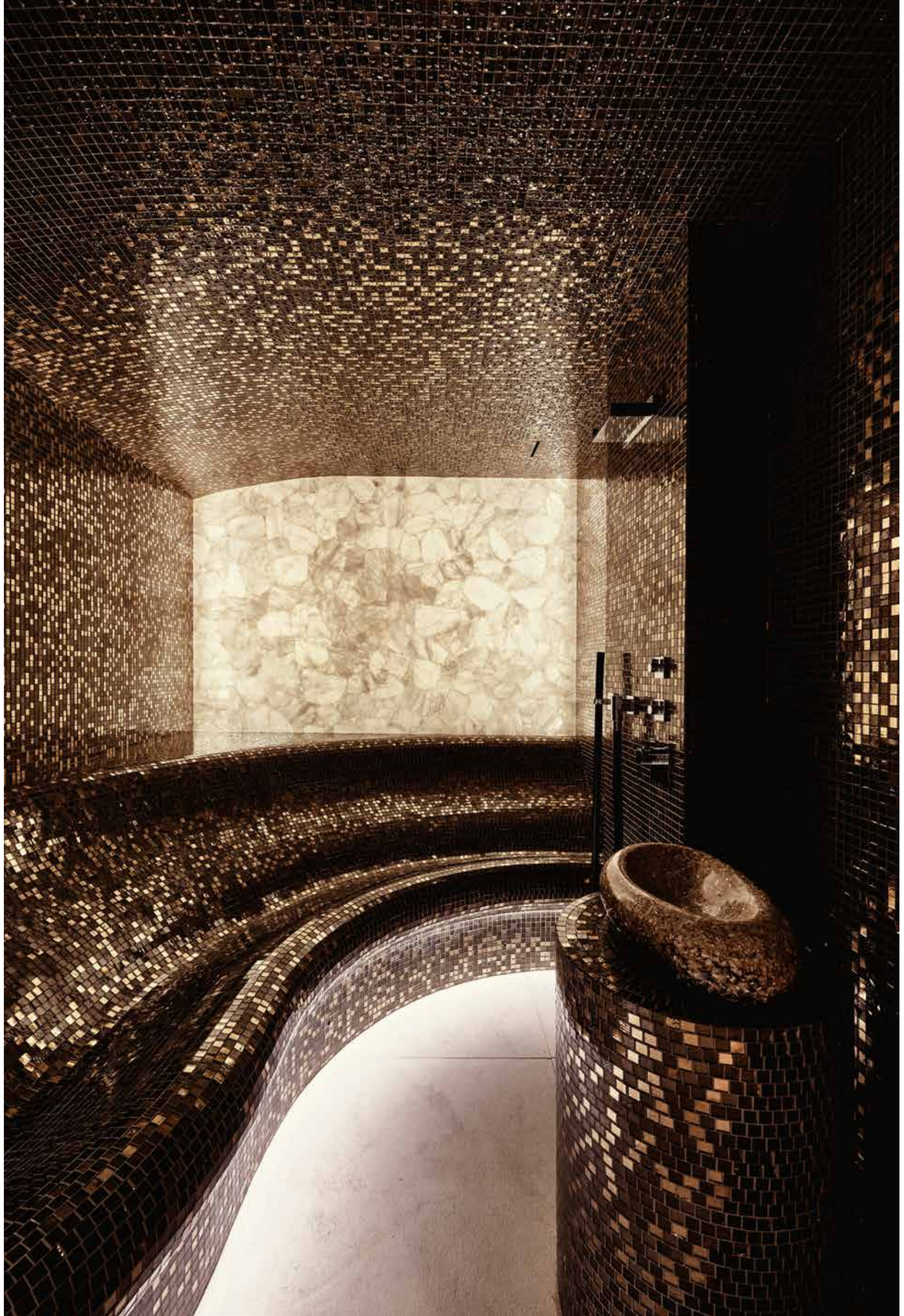
The owner of this charming lakeside villa on the edge of Lake Geneva was a repeat client for Kuster, who also designed their nearby home. With this project, Kuster wanted to echo the other home, while creating something fresh. The lifestyle allowed by the villa, with its spa, gym, cinema, multiple bedrooms and extensive entertaining space, is superior even to a five-star hotel. Designed for a large family with four kids, the emphasis for the design was on comfort combined with high energy.

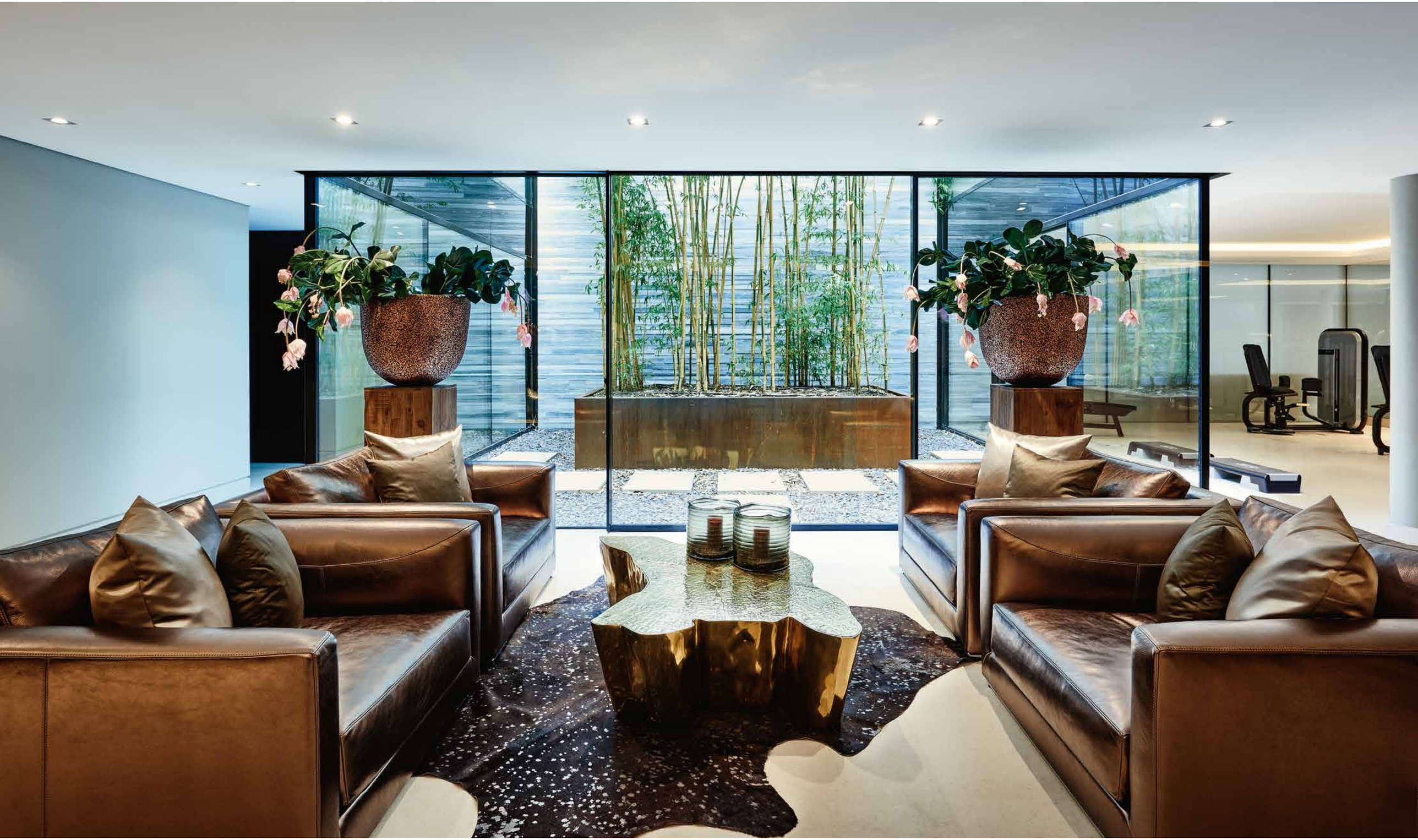
Because of the villa's breathtaking location right on the waterfront, Kuster used a lot of natural materials to bring the outdoors in, especially in the basement leisure area where the spa, gym, pool and cinema are housed. In the hammam, an onyx wall meets opulent gold and bronze mosaic tiles, and in the sauna, a mix of woods creates the sense of a Swiss mountain retreat. Upstairs, in the living areas, comfort is enhanced through the use of soft textures applied to the walls, floors and furniture. Venturing yet another floor up, this warm ambience is carried through to the master bedroom where a palette of metallic greys and golds brings the luster of the lake indoors.











HEADQUARTERS

Interview with Eric Kuster

Since establishing his studio in 1999, Eric Kuster has not only built an outstanding international reputation for his exclusive and unique interior designs, he also counts many prominent and high-maintenance personalities among his clientele. How do you find your customers, or, to put it the other way around, how do customers find Eric Kuster?

It's primarily through word of mouth. Especially with certain customers, if they like what you do, they'll tell all their friends. This is why reputation is so important when you work in design. It's really the lifeline of a company. We also receive lots of attention from publishing books and being featured in the international press. On top of this, we have our own magazine *Entourage*, which is distributed worldwide, so that's also an ideal way for us to communicate the Eric Kuster brand and what we're passionate about. It's all about the beauty of design.

As well as being an interior designer, I also have my own product collections, for example furniture and textiles, and have created limited editions for household names, such as Samsung and Mercedes. This helps to build the Eric Kuster brand's reputation as a holistic lifestyle offering. I'd like to shift focus somewhat, from me as an individual designer onto the Eric Kuster brand; a brand that is known for producing beautiful objects and textiles, alongside pure interior design, which still makes up the majority of our business.

TOM FORD

Just as everyone has his or her own taste, your customers are all very different. How do you take each client's unique wishes and ideas into account while still preserving that distinctive Kuster signature style?

There are three main ingredients that form the basis of every project we work on. Architecture, location and function. First up, I like to look at the architecture of the building and really get a feel for it, whether it's new or old, commercial or residential. Secondly, the location is super important. For example, a house in Northern Europe will differ from one in Southern Europe, which again will vary greatly from an interior in the Middle East—this is especially true when thinking about materials. And, the third ingredient is always who the client is and what they're going to use the space for. If residential, will it be a family home, a bachelor pad or a young person's hangout? If commercial, we think about the function of the space and the building and the way in which people will interact with it and others. There is an Eric Kuster signature, but also every project is made to order, like creating a haute couture dress or tailored suit. It has to be a perfect fit. I don't do copy and paste.

Your stylish interiors are an appealing blend of classic and modern elements and you develop your own collections of fabric and furnishings to use in your work. Where do you find inspiration and how do you present it to clients?

By traveling. I travel a lot to beautiful locations all over the world, so that's a major inspiration. Other references come from TV and film—I am obsessed with British cinema, especially from the 1960s and 70s, for example the glamor of James Bond or the retro vibe of the *Thunderbirds*.

I am also a big fan of internet research. I can spend hours looking for exactly the right image on Pinterest or even Google. Of course, as a designer, I am a very visual person, but so are my clients, and as the saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words." If I find the right inspiration, it's easy to communicate my vision to clients.

We make moodboards, material boards, and digital presentations. But one of the main things for me is to get clients into the studio because so much of what I do is about the materials and you really have to see them and feel them to get a true multi-sensory vision of the end design. Digital just doesn't give you the tactility that you need, especially when talking about marbles and textiles and woods, which you really have to see, feel and experience.

With every interior, it's all about finding perfect combinations. Of course the big idea needs to be good, but so does every detail. The mix of master plan and final execution are equally important. I was called a "glamor designer" for many many years, but my style has now evolved in keeping with my Metropolitan Luxury label. It's still luxurious, but less about the façade and more about an aesthetic that goes a little deeper.

Before establishing your own brand, you had a very successful ten-year stint at Chivasso, a textile label. One sees from your furnishings how much you know about fabrics and their effect. How important are textiles in your designs, and how do you use them?

Textiles are so important and our clients often come to us because they know the quality of our textiles. I'm a guy who likes textures and there's no better way to create depth and texture than with textiles. For perfect results you have to mix shiny with matte. My favorite combination is silk, velvet and linen. Silk because it's so luxurious and precious, velvet because it adds a sumptuous softness and linen for the rough and natural. It's all about contrast. Our clients like that we use a lot of textiles—cushions, curtains, throws, we layer them all up. It gives a house warmth. Working at Chivasso gave me a real sense of just how important textiles are to a space.

Again and again, "generosity" is the word that comes to mind when studying your interiors. You give spaces room to breathe. One way you accomplish this is in your choice of furnishings, but color also plays a role. Could you please describe the Kuster color palette?

For me, it's so important that interiors should be timeless, so if I do an interior now, it should still look modern and relevant in 10 to 15 years and beyond. Actually, it should become more beautiful the longer a client lives in it. This is why it's so important to use a timeless palette and that's the reason I'm not a big fan of bright colors. I like a palette that is muted and quite masculine—lots of natural tones with some grey and taupe, injected with some green and layered with a bit of beige, then contrasted with dark brown and black. Very masculine, but essentially not real colors. And then I like to add a more colorful accent to bring the interiors to life. However, the palette remains very classical: deep purples, champagne, bottle or olive greens. Always very subtle. There is never a color that is the main star of my interiors. The base is always very quiet, using tonal and textural variations to add depth.

Your interior designs grace homes all over the world—Thailand, Spain, and even Curaçao. How do you handle the challenge of preserving your style while incorporating local character?

We did an amazing project in Thailand a few years ago where we used lots of local materials and objects, but, I'm not afraid to use European products even in other markets, so long as they suit the project. People don't call me if they want a local designer who only uses local things. For this reason, I think it's important to incorporate a mix of influences, wherever we're working. I like to contrast old and new, expensive and inexpensive, glossy and matte, natural and artificial. For me, it's that idea of complementary contrasts that is so important.

If I can find local materials that fit into the design, I will do that. It all depends on the location. If I have a client in Morocco, then of course I'll use local things, because they are so beautiful. Markets and markets of amazing finds. But, I would still only use a maximum of 20%, because it still has to maintain my signature.

Over the years, we've found really great suppliers who can source special pieces from all over the world. Some of these are so beautiful that I buy them up for future projects or keep them for myself. I also travel so much myself and if I come across something I will buy it and store it. I'm a collector of objects, from beautiful stones, shells, and special pieces of wood, to beautiful antique chandeliers. I love discovery.

My home acts as a bit of a gallery for these things. I have an apartment in Monaco, which is really like a luxury hotel room—it's very much a sleep and go place for me. But, I love coming back here to my personal art collection and my books. Books are so important to me. They feature heavily in my interiors and I love sharing them with clients.

You are working on many different projects all over the world, but do you have a favorite kind of project?

I love working on commercial projects, like clubs and hotels, because then you have a space where you can take clients and really immerse them in your designs, show what you can do. I also love these projects because they offer the opportunity to really make an impact on a city or locale. For example, in Amsterdam, we did Jimmy Woo and that really became the new standard in Amsterdam club life. As a designer, you can almost create your own world within a city and that's so interesting.

With private clients, you always have favorites. Some of the houses you really love and some are less aligned to your personal taste. Having said that, we get on with all our clients. Sometimes a project will take two or three years, so you have to get really close to your client. If there's no connection, it won't work.

Your creativity and energy seem to be nearly boundless. What motivates you in your day-to-day work?

I love my work, I love my company. Of course I have good days and bad days, just like everyone else, but it's mostly good. Always after a bad day you have a good one and the positives outweigh the negatives ten fold. Having said that, what gets me out of bed most mornings is planes. Often I have to get up at 5am to catch a flight at 7am. That happens at least 3 times a week. But, also when I'm in my head office in Holland or London or Germany, I get up early and work late. I feel so passionate about what I do. I couldn't live this lifestyle if I didn't love what I do. I work around 18 hour days, so it would be impossible without passion. If I stopped enjoying what I do, I would give up tomorrow.

The really exciting thing for me right now is seeing Eric Kuster becoming a brand. That's where my focus is. When I travel to London and go to other designers' studios and see my books; that's amazing. It's so nice to work with colleagues. People who could be seen as competitors, but then become collaborators, using my textiles, my furniture for their client projects. For me, that's such a fantastic thing to see. Then you're really building your brand.

All of your work exudes exclusivity and luxury. In December 2012 you founded your own charity organization, the Eric Kuster Children Development Fund. What made you decide to do that?

I have built up a great social network of very influential people, who alongside me, want to make a small difference to the world. I don't have children of my own, but I love kids and want to help them to have the best possible start in life. It's not that I want to change the world, because that's impossible, but if I can just give one or two or ten children a better life then that's amazing. That was why I launched the foundation, working closely with SOS Children's Villages, to provide aid to locations across the world

Nobody can change the world by himself, but if everyone makes a little change it adds up. I want to grow the foundation and make it bigger, help more kids.

I recently visited two villages where we help children. At first, I was a bit nervous about going, because you never know what to expect, but it turned out to be one of the happiest days of my life because the children were so happy. Kids should be kids. Some of the kids there have been through so much already. Maybe they've lost a parent or lived in a war zone, so it's great to see them have a family life again, which is so important for their future. It was an incredible experience to be with them. Their joy was tangible. A happy trip.

Your work is characterized by its tremendous versatility—everything from furnishings to product design to fashion. To keep people informed, you publish your magazine, *Entourage*, twice a year. Why did you decide to launch the magazine and what are your ambitions for it?

I'm a big fan of magazines and have been throughout my life. For a few years I had a plan to create a magazine, but I didn't want it to be about me or my business or my projects. I wanted to create a magazine that I would actually want to read. So, three years ago we launched *Entourage*, which covers the best things in life: fashion, jewelery, interior design, architecture. The magazine became successful quite quickly because we had partners who distributed it worldwide.

Last summer we changed the concept of the magazine, because I really wanted to shift the focus to design, interior design and architecture because that's my passion. It's what I'm knowledgeable about. We still feature fashion, but always photographed with a backdrop of beautiful interiors or architecture. We're not going to talk about fashion for fashion's sake. We're going to talk about the design and the process. Never just the product. There are enough magazines doing that already.

I want to make *Entourage* the most beautiful magazine there is—that's the goal—I want to bring it to a level where it becomes an authority on interior design and architecture. There are so many magazines on this subject, but not really beautiful ones. I want it to become a keepsake document, covering the best design work in the world: fashion, jewelry, yachts, planes, hotels.

I'm always looking for new things to feature in the magazine and the inspiration works both ways. So my projects often influence the theme of the magazine, but equally I can be researching for the magazine and be inspired for a project.

Your portfolio extends far beyond residential interior design. Your projects also include the legendary Amsterdam club Jimmy Woo and the Camp Nou Stadium in Barcelona as well as designs for yachts, restaurants, and hotels. Do you have a dream project, something specific you'd really love to do?

I would really like to design a concept of city hotels with a company or investors. Also, designing the homes of the Beckhams would be a dream project, because they're very British and very stylish. I'm now expanding to London because of my love of British style and also because I believe we can conquer the world easier from London. It is a gateway to new global markets.

However, I will always be really proud of my Dutch roots. Dutch design has almost become a brand in itself. We have so many brilliant, famous Dutch interior and product designers, take for example Marcel Wanders. That works to my advantage, but the Dutch market is quiet so I want to go to the next level, to London.

BIOGRAPHY

Since establishing his own brand in 1999, Eric Kuster has become a world-renowned interior designer who counts many famous names among his clients. He also creates exclusive products, from fragrances to furniture under his Metropolitan Luxury label. And shares his extensive knowledge of design via his bi-annual magazine, *Entourage*. All of this establishes Eric Kuster as the holistic lifestyle guru.

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