

Summer Residence in Imerovigli, Santorini Island, 2018

The old Summer Residence, which is located in the traditional village of Imerovigli, on the island of Santorini, was reconstructed, while keeping unchanged its initial architecture.

The house faces South to the Volcano and to the Aegean Sea.

A high, austere but noble rectangular building, that was in the past the main residence, a long cave house inside the volcanic earth, which was used as warehouse - barn and two low ceilinged spaces for sanitary purposes and baking were the diverse architectural parts of the old residence.

At present, most of them are retained and the Summer House as a whole, consists of independent bedrooms with living spaces, exterior yards next to the pedestrian street of the village, social spaces on the terraces and a small patio.

The main idea of the proposal was to maintain the existing traditional architectural forms of the exterior, and to show up the diversity and the values of their interior spaces.

The outer layer of the main building is preserved, while the small exterior outbuildings are reconstructed.

A considerable exterior staircase has been added to lead to the top of the building.

A medium-height, white wall that includes three pools of different shapes is created in the front of the courtyards, as a limit to the pedestrian and a way to preserve the privacy of the house.

A forth circular pool is constructed on the top of the main building, with most of its part immersed in the internal part of the house, as a 'drop'.

In respect to the interior space, the amorphous curves of the sculptural cave house are preserved and redesigned in order to be adjusted to the functional needs of the residence. White spaces in a row, consisting of a living space, a dining area, a kitchen, two bedrooms and two bathrooms lead to the depth of the earth, creating a sense of anticipation, while on the other side lead to an open patio under the blue sky and through it, to a pool that stares to the volcanic cliffs and the village.

Regarding to the clean-cut white 'box', that is separated in two spaces, two attics have been added in each space, in order to take the advantage of their high ceiling. The space is formed by a series of ceilings mostly vaults, restoring the old condition of the house and a coil-shaped staircase that leads to the terrace.

The white as the main colour of the internal space aims to showcase the bare beauty of it and to create a serene, contemporary space that explores the borderlines between the light and the shadow. The sense of purity is interrupted by some pieces of furniture with matt earthy colours that reminds the Mediterranean coasts. The achromatic bright areas seem to be alive and filled with curves, spotted by the smooth natural light.

The main material used for the reconstruction of the cave house and the support of the main building is 'gunite', a mixture of cement, sand and water, that creates a dense hard layer of concrete. White plaster is used for the construction of the interior and exterior walls and white mosaic for the floor.

Architecture: Kapsimalis Architects

Photographer: Yiorgos Kordakis