

# Submerging into landscapes and cultures

By Maria Chatzistavrou



## Maria Chatzistavrou of Lime Deco

Interior designer Maria Chatzistavrou founded the architectural and interior design company Lime Deco, based in Kolonaki, Athens, Greece, in 2007. Her projects have achieved high press recognition from publications around the world.

Following her dreams, Chatzistavrou invests in her love and passion for interior design. Her values are collaboration, dialogue, inspiration, and creation. Chatzistavrou's philosophy is to improve the quality of life of her clients by creating exceptional interior spaces that combine a remarkable and functional result.

Recently celebrating 10 years of work through wonderful collaborations, highly recognized projects, and distinguished friendships, Lime Deco's field of expertise is interior and small-scale exterior architecture, and the design of furniture and industrial and decorative objects. Its projects specialize in the interior design of hotels, private residences, and professional and commercial spaces.

Chatzistavrou creates exceptional spaces that correspond to modern design solutions and challenges. Her designs take into consideration the protection of the natural environment and the enrichment of life. Chatzistavrou's ideas stem from her collection of data that reflect the altered tendencies of the current market.

Traditionally, bed and breakfasts and guesthouses in England are owned by families who live on the premises. Although they are not usually available during the evening, on average most family members work 10 to 12 hours a day from 6 o'clock in the morning; they sometimes employ part-time staff. While many hotels ensure a staff presence 24 hours a day and seven days a week, guesthouses generally have a more limited staff presence. In Japan, guesthouse tenants have to pay a substantial damage deposit and a cleaning fee when they leave. In India, tremendous growth can be seen in the guesthouse business.

Nowadays the guesthouse-accommodation sector has been largely improved from previous times. Even home-converted guesthouses often provide three-star-equivalent facilities to guests. While people living in a paying-guest accommodation are from all around the world and different cultures, for those who live within them, the goal is generally the same: to carefully select designs and décor to make their own lives—as well as the stay of the guests—easy and comfortable.

Modern times and access to information on the internet have increased the desire to travel, to see different places, and to live experiences that detach us from our everyday life. The various stimuli and the variety of choices of the modern traveler have also created the need to live a more complete experience in a place, such as that offered by a home or private retreat, rather than the generic accommodation of a hotel. To live in a house in the forest or by the sea has created a new need for guesthouse accommodation for the international traveler, and such a setting breeds more personalized hospitality from the owner-operators who reside there.

The concept of guesthouse accommodation was generally created by the need to lodge friends or relatives and, as such, it traditionally constitutes the extension of a main residence. In many cases, the main residence even turns into a guesthouse to be shared with or lent to friends for accommodation.

While not always located in a popular destination, guesthouses should always aim to be part of the local culture and/or in accord with the landscape. Guesthouses that I have curated in Greece as an interior designer have always possessed clear influences from their landscape and geographical location. They were designed to host and were decorated with respect to their surroundings to allow guests to be submerged in the experience when visiting them.

The guesthouse My Fairytale Villas in Vonitsa in the Amvrakikos Gulf is situated in an estate full of pine, olive, and citrus trees and has three private beaches. Through the use of stone, wood, and bright colors, the décor strongly reminds visitors of the elements and colors of nature. Waking up in the morning, guests find themselves in a perfectly quiet environment—away from the lights and noise of the city—to start their day by enjoying breakfast in nature with products produced within the estate.

The Syra Suites guesthouses are in perfect harmony with the Cycladic landscape on the island of Syros, which overlooks the enchanting Aegean Sea. The spaces are distinguished by luminosity; they are oriented towards the view of the sea and preserve privacy at the same time. The natural and modern interior design refers to the Boho style and reflects a modern and global decorative approach of feeling lighter and more intimate.

Finally, in the Namaste Suites in Oia, Santorini on the caldera side, the rooms are basically a cave with branches that are used to separate the spaces. The decoration, fully respecting this particular architecture, complements and gives the visitor the feeling of a delightful luxury accommodation with positive energy influence, as appropriate to the island of Santorini.

These three guesthouses, located in different places in Greece with such a great landscape variation—from the forest in Vonitsa, endless blue in Chios, Boho disposition in Syros, and the unique setting of a cave in the caldera of Santorini—guests are hosted with a variety of stimuli and experiences and are able to take some of the energy of each space away with their experience.

# My Fairytale Villas

## Location

Vonitsa, Greece

## Composition

1 building, 11 bedrooms

## Design company

Maria Chatzistavrou of Lime Deco

## Photography

Louisa Nikolaidou

This guesthouse is located in Vonitsa among green surroundings on the south side of Amvrakikos Gulf, Greece. In an olive grove with a variety of trees such as pomegranate, lemon, and orange trees, the boldness of nature became a reference point in the decoration of the house. Stone and wood dress the remodeled old building, which consists of an open-plan ground floor with living room, kitchen, and washing room and a floor with the bedrooms and main bathroom.

On the ground floor and almost level to the surrounding patio, there is a spacious dining room with wood and metal, with shades of gray used in the living room to balance the intensity of the materials. Antiques from the family collection decorate the room, including a wooden trunk used as a coffee table. Chandeliers with clear crystal add glamor to the space. The curtains are unobtrusive, allowing undisturbed outside views.

The kitchen, separated from the living area by a towering arch, ends in Paso dressed in wood. The kitchen bench is solid oak, the cupboards oak veneer, and the dining table has the rustic appearance of untreated wood pieces. The ground floor washing room was dressed with cement mortar, composed of natural materials such as stone sink, the granite bench, and bronze items.

In the master bedroom, the mood is enhanced through wooden carvings and ambient lighting with an impressive mirror of old cut tiles and small pieces of wood, while the children's bedrooms are more simplistic and playful. The central corridor is lit by upturned metal buckets. Off the balcony of the first floor is a living room and a dining table to enjoy the views of the Amvrakikos Gulf, while an easy opening pergola makes it possible to use the balcony all day long.





