



PROFILES

Fitting In

Architect Andrew Trotter builds structures so distinctive that they define their locales and become immediate icons. Yet, whatever he designs seems endemic to a given region and its people.

WRITTEN BY *David Masello*



Based in Barcelona, architect Andrew Trotter (far left) is known for his boldly geometric houses and boutique hotels. One of his most iconic private residences is Villa Cardo (opening page) in the Puglia region of Italy, a home that embraces the outdoors via a series of exterior stairways. Left and above: Masseria Moroseta, a small Pugliese hotel, embodies elements both endemic to the region and particular to Trotter's aesthetic—recessed arched windows and interiors that are defined by local materials and stonework.

Andrew Trotter remembers his first building. Just as any of us recall the first experience of something new and joyous, so, too, does Trotter continue to cite with affection the first real building he designed as an architect.

“In some ways, of course, I like all the hotels and houses I’ve designed, but Masseria Moroseta is very special to me,” he says, referring to the boutique hotel in Ostuni, Italy, that was completed in 2016. “It was my first project, and one that brought me many things. All my projects have come from that one project. And I’ve met many wonderful people as a result.”

So iconic has the design of the hotel become in the Puglia region of southern Italy that it is as much a landmark in the dramatic landscape as the region’s vast olive groves, undulating vineyards, and conical stone houses known as *trulli*. Trotter has earned a reputation not only for the distinctive forms he creates in his architectural and

interior design projects, but also for his ability to honor local building traditions. His interest in *masseria* (which can mean “farm” or “farmhouse”), for example, extends to the rural dwellings and their settings that have characterized Puglia for centuries. Like those structures that exist by the thousands, the very layout of Masseria Moroseta reflects, in significant part, the form of such dwellings, with an inviting central courtyard, large recessed windows, and a stairway that leads to a roof lookout, with views of the Adriatic.

And like many of the houses that fill dense Pugliese towns, Trotter chose local *tuffo*, a sandstone, for Masseria Moroseta, some of whose walls measure a meter thick, an eco-friendly way to keep rooms cool in the summer and warm in the winter. “In every structure I build, I try as much as possible to use local craftsmen,” Trotter emphasizes. “We try to buy all products locally, except with some furniture where we look further afield. We are used to this dynamic

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Upon its completion in 2016, Masseria Moroseta became a new built landmark in a Pugliese landscape of olive groves and vineyards. The property is noted for its use of local stones, a precise choreography of natural elements with built forms. A central courtyard (right) features notched columns that are both supportive and decorative, sheltered eating alcoves, and a prevailing contemplative atmosphere that is both public and private.



now, and I think it adds to our design.”

Trotter designs all over the world, with some 30 projects concurrently in the works, including homes, hotels, resorts, and stores in Utah, Mexico, Jamaica, Israel, Spain, and Italy. In Italy, examples of his bold geometric houses are found chiefly in Puglia, which continues to be the destination for second-home dwellers, perhaps in significant part because of Trotter’s existing projects there.

Trotter, born and raised in the Yorkshire Dales, a place he refers to as “a melancholic, romantic part of England and one I didn’t much like as a kid, though I love it now,” is

a constant traveler. And everywhere he goes, he pays close attention to the architecture, the art, the customs of the people, and the way everyone and every element relates to the land. “Everything just comes organically and naturally, whatever it is I’m designing. If I’m building in Puglia, for instance, I look to the old buildings of the area. I look to the local materials and the local craftsmen. If you design with these three in mind, you produce work that belongs to the area.”

In Mexico, where Trotter travels frequently, he cites especially the works of Luis Barragán, the noted late



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Villa Cardo, a private three-bedroom residence in Carovigno, Italy, is among Trotter's most celebrated commissions; it was completed in 2019. Clockwise, from top left: A railingless exterior stairway leads to a roof deck; the home's TV room, seemingly carved from rock, is able to sleep two; an outdoor kitchen and eating terrace are situated off the dining room; the external stairway assumes a sculptural presence.



architect whose "simplicity and forms are second to none. He could make a large space cozy. I also love the organic forms, too, of the Italian architect Alberto Ponis, and of many talented Mexican architects working now, such as Héctor Barroso, and those in the architectural firm of GOMA, all of whom are making marvelous works."

In keeping with his penchant for simplicity, Trotter has embraced a color palette that skews decidedly to the monochromatic, though many of his ongoing and forthcoming projects include darker hues. "White fits the Mediterranean landscape well, and when you make things monochrome, your eyes can relax," he says. "But I love beige and stone colors. And all earthy reds and browns." But Trotter discerns something, too, that goes beyond mere color preferences. "I think the choices I make don't depend on the color, but rather the hue of the color. Simplicity is key in the geometric forms and repetitions I like."

Among his most ambitious ongoing projects is Parea, a resort positioned at the edge of Utah's Zion National Park. It's a challenging project, not only because of the



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topography involved, but also in the ways a new building there needs to meld sensitively in a beautiful, natural protected locale, while retaining its own presence. “We worked hard to integrate the building as much as possible into the landscape, while making sure every guest has privacy and a feeling that they’re alone and one with the land. It’s a dream project for us.” After a 2½-year planning process, construction is set to begin imminently.

For a man and a team so busy from their Barcelona headquarters, Trotter understands another key dynamic. “We take our work with a stride.” And talking as much about his team as to every creative person, he adds, “I believe we all should enjoy our work. We have a creative job, so what we do should be fun.”

Although Trotter’s precise geometric forms have often resulted in him being labeled a minimalist, he strongly rejects that designation. “*Simplistic* would be more fitting to describe my architecture and my interiors. I see minimal as too perfect. I like rough walls, textures, imperfections. These, I hope, make our works cozier, more livable. If I achieve this, then I have achieved my goals.” ■

Clockwise, from left: Although in the early phases of construction, Trotter’s Parea spa resort in Virgin, Utah, is situated on the edge of Zion National Park, where the complex will assume a discreet and singular presence. Renderings by Klaudia Adamiak show the forms and materials and the ways the interiors are meant to seamlessly meld with the outdoors. Natural light streams through an oculus in what will be a sound temple.

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