



# Port of Call

Beguiled by the charms of Tangier, decorator **Nicolò Castellini Baldissera** decided to make a colourful home in the white-walled city

**P**erched between Africa and Europe, the Moroccan port of Tangier has long been a magnet for bohemians seeking a sunny refuge. It has attracted generations of writers, artists and designers, including Henri Matisse and Yves Saint Laurent. The interior designer Nicolò Castellini Baldissera decided to live in Tangier after being asked to scout a property for a client. “In the end, I ended up buying a house and they didn’t,” he says jovially. “I guess I just fell in love with something about the city.” His richly layered, hot pink- and peacock blue-walled home mixes local style with disparate global influences, and is capped by a pool terrace with sweeping sea views. The Italian designer’s latest project was documenting the homes of fellow creatives in the city in an evocative new book *Inside Tangier: Houses & Gardens* (Vendome Press).



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK LUSCOMBE-WHYTE AND GUIDO TARONI



**What’s the best part of living in the city?** Tangier has a very unique geography and sits between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. The hills provide beautiful vistas, and the year-round breeze keeps the air cool, even in the dead of August.

**What was your home like when you moved in?** It was a ruin – the salon had been divided into five bedrooms – so it was basically rebuilt from the inside out. We added a pool on the roof, which required 24 steel-and-cement columns. We also put in an elevator and switched the way the stairs go. Except for the art deco facade, everything has been reworked.

**How would you describe your decorating style?** I layer in colour, antiques, contemporary furniture and fabric. I am not interested in the minimalist goal of seeking decoration in a lack of

objects, colour and texture. A home should be comfortable and have an element of fantasy.

**What’s your approach to using pattern?** In Morocco, I have fallen in love with the wide variety of antique embroidery; each city has its own look, colour and even material. But pattern can also be created with paint. A simple stripe is so classically Italian and is something anyone can incorporate into a communal space to make it stand out.

**Where in your home are you happiest and why?** My bedroom. The walls are painted in my favourite colour: peacock blue. I also love the bed frame, which I purchased in Tangier from Jerry and Meryl Butler, and the little terrace from which I can see parrots in the palms and hear doves cooing in the grape vines.



“A home should be comfortable and have some element of fantasy”



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Castellini Baldissera in the striped green terrace; the rooftop swimming pool; the peacock blue master bedroom.

OPPOSITE PAGE FROM LEFT: The lush walled garden; a view into the book-lined dining room





CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM:  
The Georgian green hallway;  
the zingy pink drawing room;  
a view to the garden.

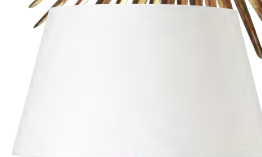
## GET THE LOOK



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Sole mirror by  
Officina Ciani  
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Calabash  
table lamp,  
[Okaoka.com](http://Okaoka.com)



Mamounia Sky rug, Martyn Lawrence Bullard  
for the Rug Company [therugcompany.com](http://therugcompany.com)

### Your most prized possession?

The plants in my garden. I worked with my friend, the garden designer Umberto Pasti, on the layout. I spend a lot of time pruning, training and watching them grow.

### Your biggest home extravagance?

A rooftop pool with a view of the bay of Tangier.

### Fondest memory of home?

The day the three palms in the front arrived from Marrakech. I invited a few friends over and we all watched as they were hoisted into place with a crane.

### If the walls could talk, what would they say?

In Tangier they tend to say "Have fun!"  
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