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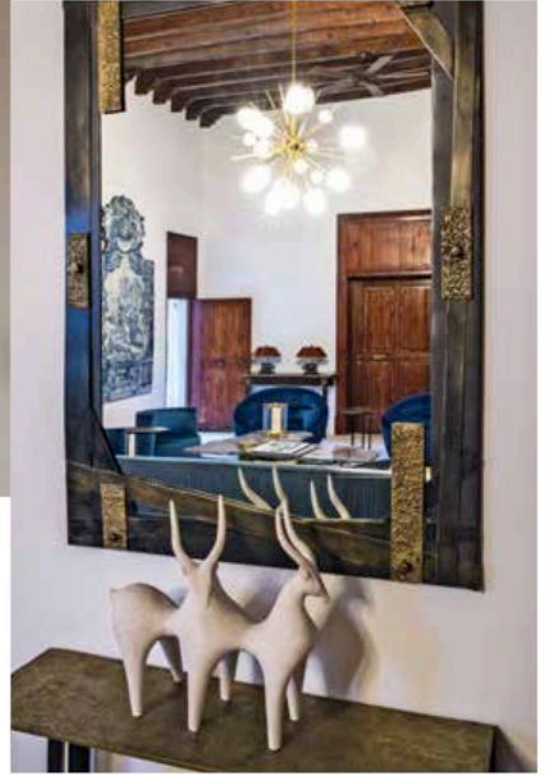
Racing yacht owner Kim Schindelhauer and his designer partner Aline Matsika tell *Charlotte Hogarth-Jones* about their seven-year restoration of Palma's fabulous 18th-century Palacio Can Marqués

Photography Stuart Pearce





*Clockwise from left: the Diva suite; the common room; WinWin; the palacio's historically important patio. Previous page: the terrace of the Rose suite*



# I



It was sailing, not property, that first brought Kim Schindelhauer, owner of the 33-metre Baltic racing yacht *WinWin*, to Palma de Mallorca more than 20 years ago. “I wanted to move the boat from the Côte d’Azur, and I was looking for somewhere with better sailing conditions and direct flights from Germany,” he explains. “Back then, there was really no money put into the old buildings in Palma – lots of them looked very rough from the outside. So when I was sitting having a drink at the Plaza de la Drassana, and someone mentioned that the building just in front of us was for sale, I just said ‘No, I don’t want it.’”

And yet, being in a unique location – in the historic heart of Palma, just 100 metres from the water – Schindelhauer’s nose for a promising investment got the better of him. It wasn’t long before he was putting an offer to the Marques family, who had owned the palacio for 150 years, and embarking on a daunting restoration project that lasted more than seven years.

“I like special properties, and the challenges that come with them,” he explains. “I knew that work needed doing, but even I didn’t expect how much – we did everything, inside and out. New electrics, new plumbing, turning the 50 individual apartments on the top floor that had been used for servants’ accommodation back into the big rooms that now make up the 400-square-metre Presidential suite – we even took the whole roof off.”

Built in the second half of the 18th century, the property has A2 historical status with the local authority thanks to its distinctive symmetrical entrance hall and staircase, meaning that it is second in historic significance only to the imposing Gothic cathedral that can be seen from the palacio’s rooftop terrace. For some years, Schindelhauer

resided in only the ground floor and the penthouse apartment, while building work continued. “We had some great parties here,” he says, “but as a private residence, it was just too big.”

Enter Aline Matsika, an interior designer who has studios in both Paris and New York, and who first met Schindelhauer on holiday in St Barths. Over the two-week period, Schindelhauer persuaded Matsika to take on his Hamburg home as a project. “And also,” she laughs, “he asked me to be his girlfriend.”

Their professional and personal relationship duly flourished, and after several years of gentle suggestion by Matsika, Schindelhauer finally agreed to turn the semi-renovated palacio into a boutique hotel. But where to begin?

“My starting point was what was here already,” explains Matsika. “I kept whatever I could – so with the incredible old pine doors that were throughout the building, for example, we kept the original door on the outside, and added a duplicate panel inside the room to make sure they were strong and well insulated. In the Riad suite, the fireplace had a really Moroccan feel, so that was the inspiration there, and in the Romance suite there was a beautiful stone floor, so it was about how to tile the wall, and then find furniture and furnishings in a colour palette to match.”

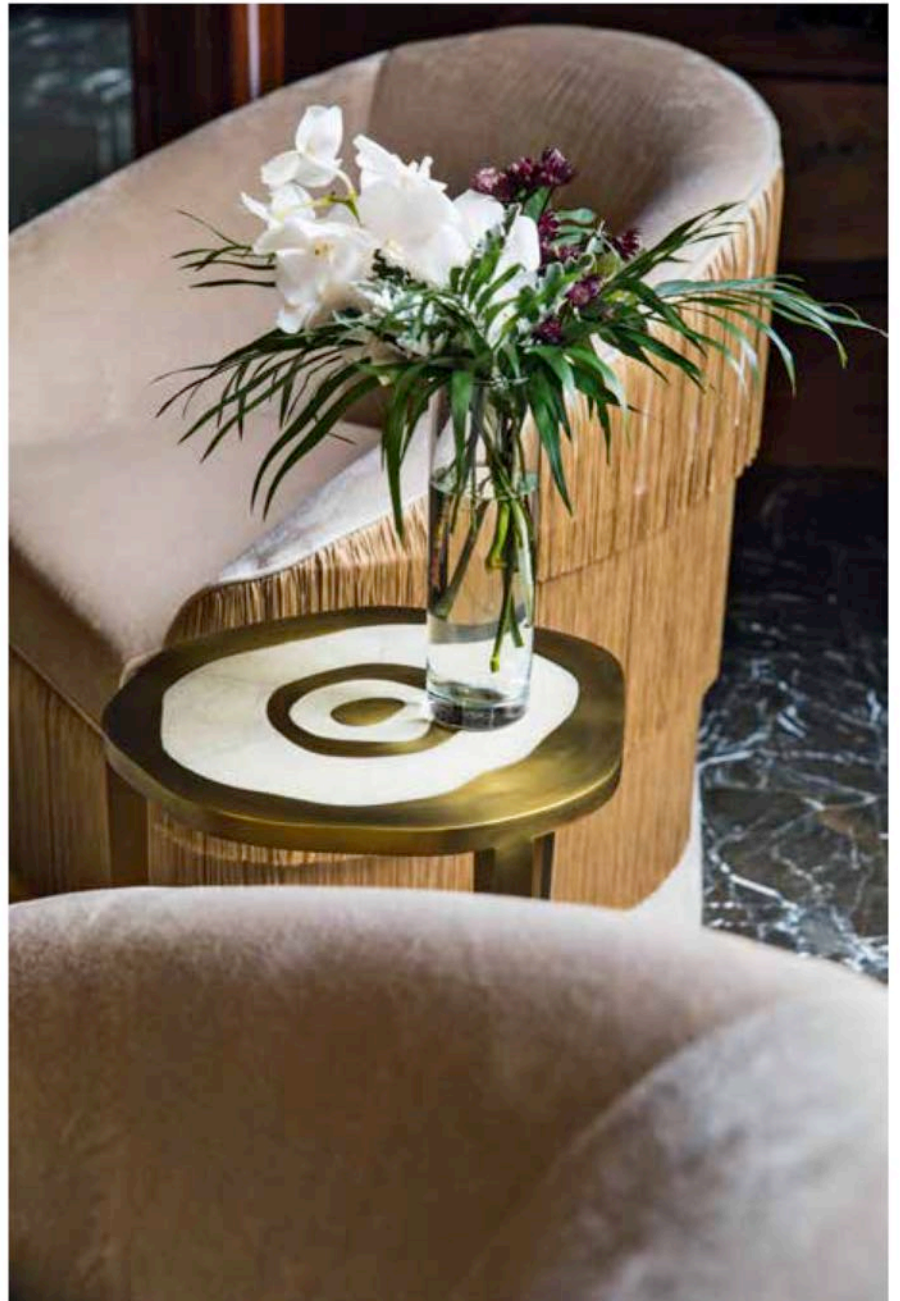
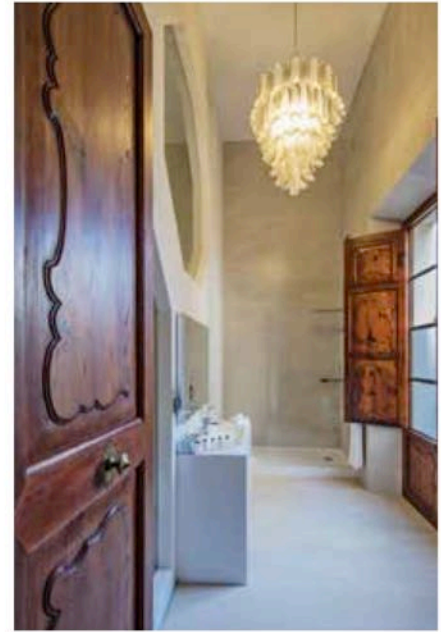
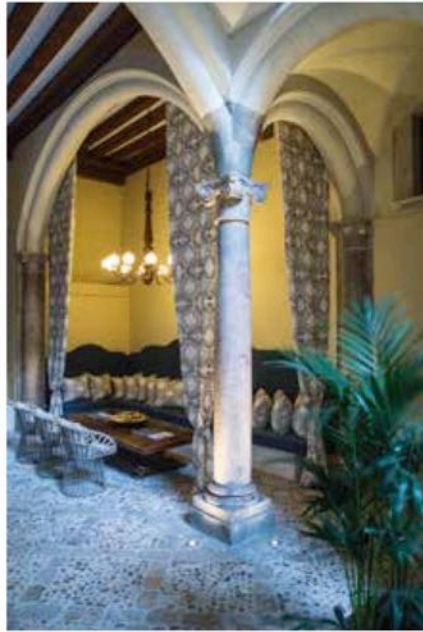
Taking the bare bones of the 13 suites in the building as a jumping-off point,

Matsika then began to create bespoke pieces to fill the enormous space. Every distinctive chandelier was designed by her, based on mid-century designs found online and then custom made in Murano. The rugs, meanwhile, were designed by Matsika with the support of a company in New York, a family business from Nepal whose founders were originally refugees from Tibet.

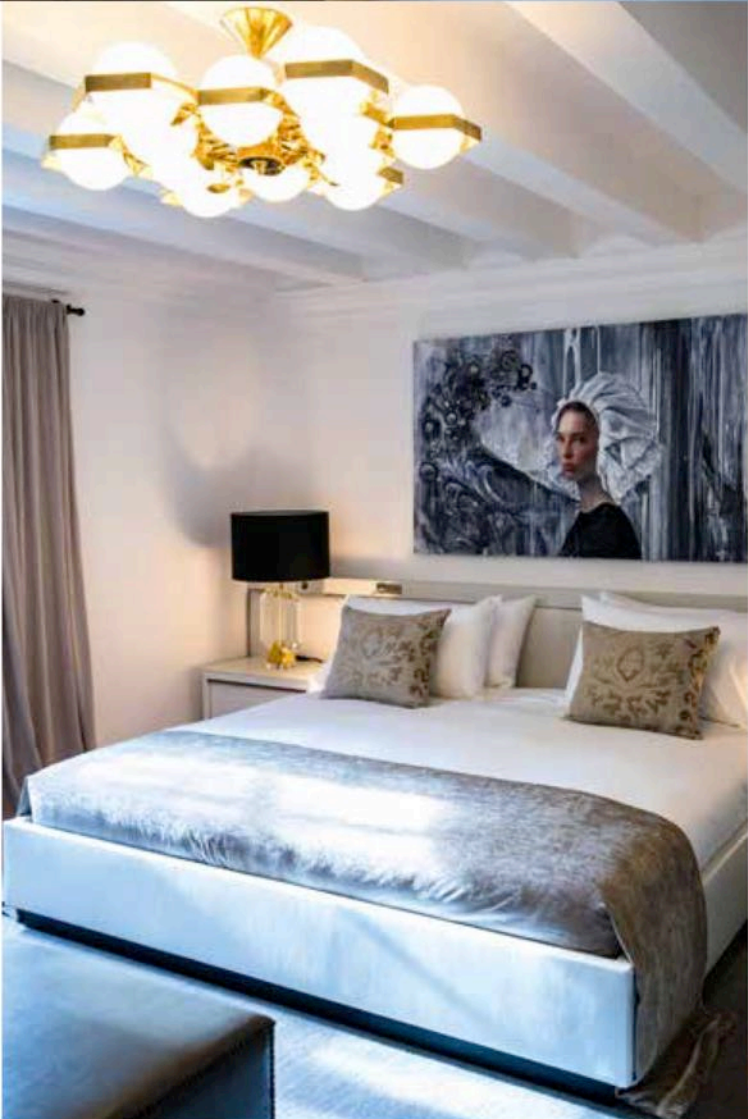
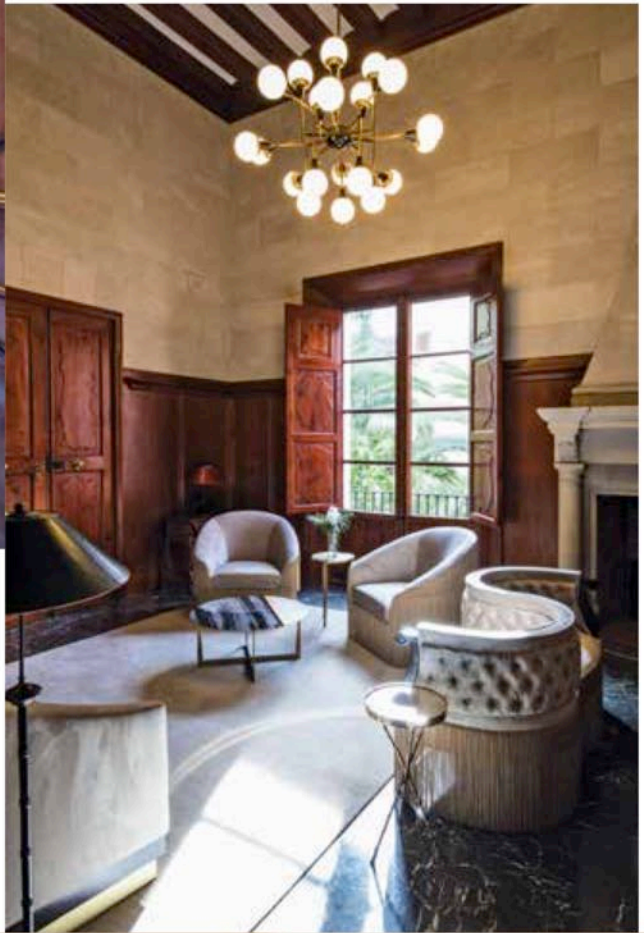
“It was a big surprise for me when everything suddenly came together,” says

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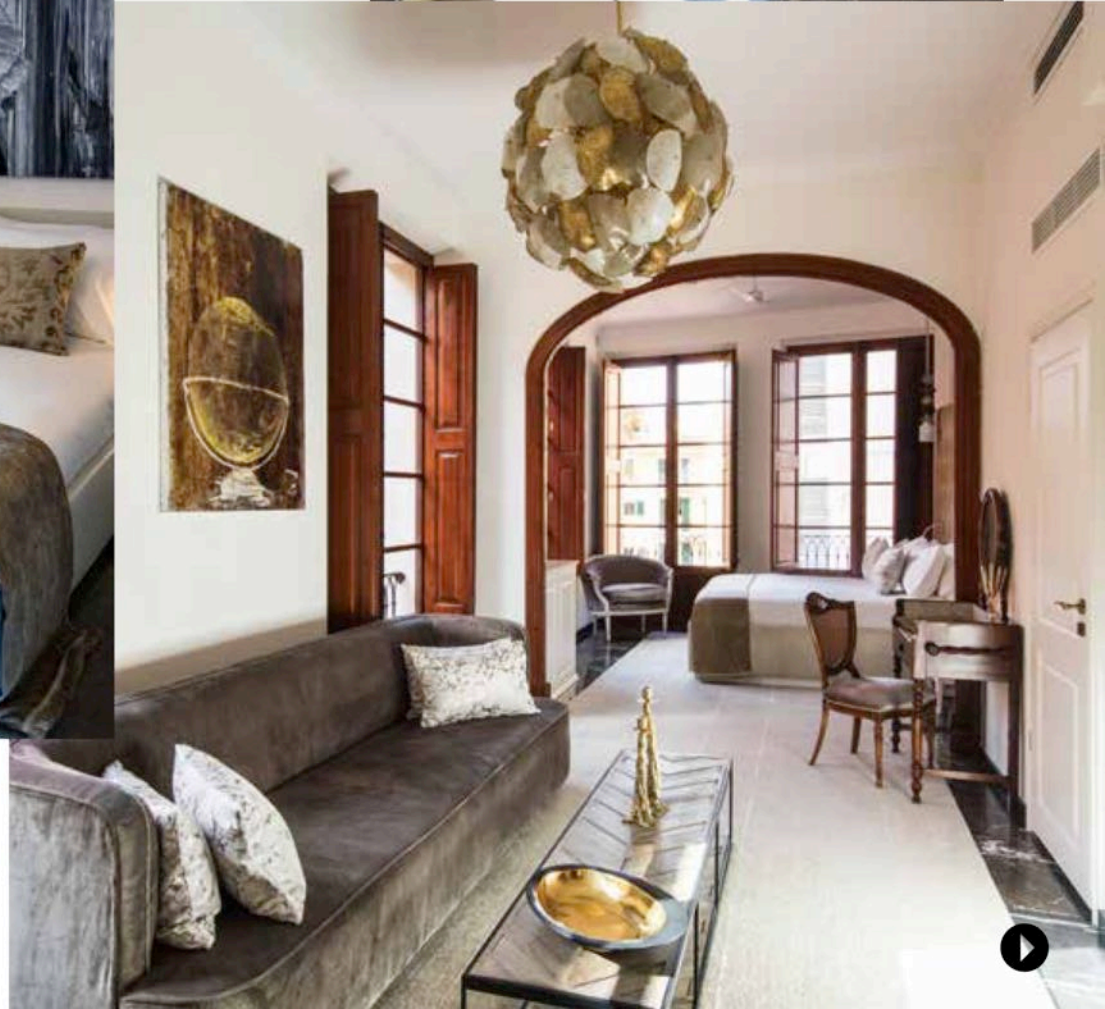




*Clockwise from above: Aline Matsika on the Rose suite terrace; the Rose suite; the patio; the Cathedral suite bathroom; the beige lounge*



The beige lounge (above and right) serves the right wing of the palacio and connects the suites. If guests require a combination of suites, this lounge - and another on the other side - can be made private



The bedroom of the Escape suite (above) has views over the garden. Right: the Majestic suite looks out on to Plaza de la Drassana





All 13 suites, including Romance (top left) and Renaissance (above) feature custom chandeliers designed by Aline Matsika. Opposite page: the hotel's reception and (inset) the chandelier from the bathroom in the Renaissance suite



Eden (left and above) is a large suite on the first floor, with a separate bedroom and library, and a lift providing direct access to the ground floor. Riad (right) is the spectacular three-bedroom suite on the top floor, adorned with art and artefacts





*“It has good vibes, this building,” says Schindelbauer.  
“It’s a place of tranquillity in the centre of this crazy old  
town, and I’ve always felt very comfortable here”*

