

HOME AWAY *from home*

Across the ocean from his Patagonian birthplace, Marcelo Burlon's Ibizan villa has the same relaxed vibe and raw, natural style, writes GRACE CAIN



Creative director, DJ and event organiser Marcelo Burlon at home in Ibiza with his dogs (from left), Reina, Noa and Kosta

MARCELO BURLON IS (in his own words) “in Patagonia, away from the civilisation”, which sounds utterly romantic and lovely... and terrifying. It’s possibly more mundane for Burlon, who was born and raised in El Bolsón, an Argentinian village with a reputation as a hippy hangout. As a teenager, he moved to Italy, where he embarked on building a diverse résumé: DJ and event organiser for the likes of Chanel and Versace; co-founder of New Guards Group (parent company of brands including Off-White, Heron Preston and Palm Angels); and founder and creative director of his own fashion label, County of Milan. “It has been my dream to live in three places,” he states. “Patagonia and Milan, because that is where I belong; I come from there, I grew up there. And Ibiza, because it gives me the kind of freedom that I cannot feel anywhere else.”

The latter reflects an interesting turn of events: in his younger days, Burlon never even wanted to take a holiday on the Spanish island. “I only visited for the first time for a wedding,” he admits. “I had always imagined that Ibiza would have a specific mood that I wouldn’t vibe with. But then I actually enjoyed it.” That feels like quite a blasé way to describe his love for the place in which he has now resided for nearly half a decade. “Before that [move], I



would search through my pockets for spare change, just so that I could afford to rent a house and spend my summer in Ibiza,” he remembers. “I love the variety that the island offers. It is a place where you can do whatever you want. You can spend the morning reading a book alone on a deserted beach, then drive south to party in Las Salinas.”

For his permanent residence, Burlon settled on Sant Joan de Labritja, also known as San Juan, a village in the north of the island. “It has a relaxed, cosy vibe that made a natural choice for me,” he says, drawing a parallel with the Argentinian village of his birth. “Historically, San Juan was the area in Ibiza where the hippies would hang out. Today, it is still the locals’ favourite place to spend time away from the more chaotic parts of the island.” Emerging like an otherworldly monolith against a backdrop of dusty hills and shrubbery, the home Burlon chose is also reminiscent of his life in Patagonia. “I liked it immediately, because it was very similar to my house in Argentina,” he says. “It’s the same style – Brazilian brutalism.”

Designed by Jordi Carreño of Estudio Vila 13, the structure is divided into two ‘boxes’: one for sleep and relaxation, the other for the busyness of daily life. Sliding glass walls allow the space to remain dynamic, blurring the boundaries between the interior and exterior. “My idea of home is to be inside, but feel like I am outside,” Burlon tells me. “I like that the living room feels as though it’s in the garden.” Indeed, it’s the garden where Burlon is at his most content. “Farming is rooted in Patagonian culture, so I feel it’s a place where I belong,” he says. “Plus, growing fruit and vegetables is a very Zen and meditative practice.” Of course, it’s also a very *serious* business. “Last summer, I tried to grow the biggest watermelon on the island,” he recalls.

“There is an actual competition for this. I didn’t win.” (Burlon’s watermelon fell just short of the champion, which tipped the scales at 26kg.)

Burlon also has his own olive oil, pressed from the trees on his land. “I planted them following sacred geometry and built a circular stage in the middle. This spot is

very dear to me: I often gather there with my friends to dance and practise rituals, but I also spend a lot of time there alone and lost in thought.”

Does he entertain often? “I used to have guests all the time, everywhere, all at once,” he says. “But now? I’d rather they sleep at their own homes.” But if sleepovers are out, Burlon does still welcome visitors for what he calls ‘happenings’ – an Argentinian folk music concert, for example. In 2021, he launched his non-profit foundation with an intimate festival in partnership with C2C, curated by Arca. “My house is a platform where all my passions are gathered, and a space where I can share my vision with other people,” he says. “I have a console with turntables in my living room, a private club in the basement, a cinema and a library. I collect books, vinyl records, cars and garments – including many one-of-a-kind pieces and prototypes from different designers.” >

Clockwise from top: Sliding glass walls blur the lines between indoor and outdoor; colourful artwork pops against the natural wood; the brutalist structure comprises two ‘boxes’ – one for activity and one for rest

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Clockwise: Burlon's concrete, wood and glass home, designed by Spanish architect Jordi Carreño; flanked by his art collection, which includes work by Hungarian-French artist Victor Vasarely; the Ibiza garden, featuring a piece by Italian sculptor Fabio Viale

Burlon also has a keen interest in art, which forms the foundation of his décor. He describes his collection as “wide”, linked only by an avant-garde outlook. “I make sure to collect things that are not necessarily related, to keep it from becoming overly matchy-matchy,” he explains. “Everything I choose says

something about me, my present and my past. I'm drawn by what is reminiscent of my background: for example, Pop Art is important because when I was a teen in the club scene, I used to perform with different Pop Art works projected onto my body.”

Victor Vasarely's psychedelic Op Art pieces resonate deeply with Burlon, as do the works of Keith

Haring and Andy Warhol. “I collect series, like Haring's *Subway Drawings* and Warhol's *Ladies and Gentlemen*,” he says. “I also look for up-and-coming artists, such as Felipe Pantone, Miranda Makaroff and Manolo Nikau.” And he also treasures a wooden sculpture of a headless eagle, one of four pieces he owns by Helmut Lang: “When I was young, he was one of my icons in fashion. Once I could afford more than his garments, I started to purchase his artwork.” As for his favourite piece of all? “One of Damien Hirst's famous butterfly pieces. He gifted it to me with a dedication, so it's very dear to me.” For a man – and a house – existing in a permanent state of flux, such a symbol of metamorphosis seems entirely apt. □

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