



SICILIAN 'DOLCEVITA'

A **setting for living** of dry masonry walls and pure volumes in a citrus grove, in dialogue with the Mediterranean brush, the horizon open to the sea, the **lights** and **shadows** of **Vendicari**

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Above, the path from the parking area to the entrance of the villa, surrounded by age-old Mediterranean brush.

Marco Merendi has inserted the greenery into the project, thanks to the precious contribution of landscape designer Ivan Gallo. Right, detail of the entrance: other stone walls, in dry masonry, and the white stucco walls of the villa. Over the custom door in black sheet metal, the Imu lamp by **Daive Groppi**



An open, luminous, organized vacation home, made with simple architectural features deployed in a complex manner, drawing maximum benefit from the parts woven horizontally and vertically, inside and outside, between light and shadow, rugged and smooth. A house conceived in terms of contrasts, an alternation of openings, glimpses and views towards the landscape of Vendicari, enclosed by massive stone walls like a bastion of a fortified citadel: the white, precise construction of the villa.

Oppositions, but also illusions, because the enclosure wall, which marks an abrupt, continuous margin towards the arrival zone, is broken into fragments on the other sides, like the forceful remains of an archaeological dig, allowing the boundary between garden and countryside to become blurred and almost vanish. The rugged walls, in dry masonry of local stone, face the brushland of age-old mastic, typical Mediterranean shrubs, which the new architecture has conserved. The horizons open to the countryside are a poetic pause, which in the short curved route between the parking area and the house offer a compendium of the smells and colors of Sicilian nature. Along this short pathway one reaches the entrance: a deep breach, almost a vague Mycenaean remnant, that pierces the thickness of the walls bent in an 'L' towards the inside, leading into the pleasantly shady space of the house. From a setting dominated by the ochre

tones of the arid soil and the dark green of the brush, one passes in a ritual atmosphere underlined by the narrowness of the opening to a place of white light, of polished concrete floors, where the full-height openings frame images of the 'courtyard' garden border by the local stone walls: the brilliant green of the orange grove, the vibrant shadow cast on the lawn by the brise-soleil awning, the reflexes of light from the infinity pool and - in the background - the full, spreading luminosity of the nature reserve and sea of Vendicari. "The project stems from my family's passion for Sicily and Vendicari," says the architect Marco Merendi. "the light, the aromas, the view of the sea are the elements that made us fall in love with this place and convinced us to build this house here for ourselves, to enjoy the

The villa incorporates a 'courtyard' garden bordered by local stone walls. The outdoor spaces develop in convivial area for various activities throughout the day: the living area, the sunbathing zone, the orange grove in the shadow, the kitchen counter for aperitifs and dinners with friends. Industrial lamp, custom sofa with colored cushions by **Paola Lenti**, vintage cord chairs and coffee table in **Cementoskin**, made to measure by **Gypsum**. The volume is covered in glazed volcanic stone tiles by **Made a Mano**



The living area with the large openings facing the internal garden, towards Vendicari. A steel kitchen, suspended and with concealed sink, custom made by **Gerratana**. Danish bookcase from the 1950s, purchased from **Mauro Bolognesi**, Milan, vintage table in volcanic stone and *Superleggera* chairs by Gio Ponti, **Cassina**. *Nulla* ceiling lamps by **Davide Groppi**. Below, the corner of the living area organized around a fireplace in lavic stone, with the *Agio* sofa and pouf by **Paola Lenti**, and the *Superloon* floor lamp by **Flos**

Sicily we love." Though with a professional practice based in Milan, in recent years Merendi has done another project in Vendicari, in 2015, where he already had a chance to experiment with the presence of hewn stone walls and white surfaces. In this new project, "the challenge – Merendi explains – was to build a villa of little more than 100 square meters that would seem larger, with an ample space for the living area and the kitchen as the core of the house, including the outdoors in the domestic setting." Sicily, then, where the decisive presence of nature requires the architect to make a specific commitment, to convert the force of the landscape into beauty, energy and comfort. Hence the control of solar radiation, which for many hours in the summer can be far too strong, becomes a theme behind all the design choices: the form of the rooms, the arrangement of the openings, the transition between outdoors and indoors. The most telling example, in this battle

