

DOMAINE DU MUY

PARC DE SCULPTURES CONTEMPORAINES  
CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE PARK

ELLE DECO – UK

JULY 2020

CLARE SARTIN



# REFLECTIONS

Words **CLARE SARTIN** Photography **AMBROISE TEZENAS/PHOTOFOYER**

## ON

*Appearing like a shimmer on the horizon, Domaine du Muy sculpture park's India Mahdavi-designed Silver House is a masterpiece in its own right*

## ART

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Living area "Rain 10" tiles by India Mahdavi for Bisazza add drama to the room. Covered in pink linen, her "Jetlag" sofa looks suitably cheerful, while, opposite, a vintage wooden armchair has been reupholstered in red velvet. Against the wall is Gary Webb's glass and aluminium palm tree sculpture, *First Time*, and the colourful figure on the plinth is *Femme Assise-Nana* by Niki de Saint Phalle ►

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**S**tanding at the junction of two overgrown paths in Domaine du Muy sculpture park, Italian artist Gianni Motti's *Success Failure* signpost is the ideal metaphor for the educated gamble involved in creating an artistic destination of this scale. For Jean-Gabriel Mitterrand, owner of Paris's Galerie Mitterrand and nephew of the former French president François Mitterrand, it had long been a dream to create an open-air collection. So when, in 2013, he spotted this wild slice of countryside near the Massif de l'Estérel mountain range, just a 45-minute drive north of St-Tropez, he jumped at the opportunity. By 2015, a total of 40 sculptures had been installed – all in the midst of a summer heatwave – and the park was open.

'It all happened a bit instinctively,' explains Edward Mitterrand, Domaine du Muy's artistic director. Father and son both loved the location, but when it comes to describing the house that sits at the top of the hill, Edward is less flattering. 'It was terrible,' he says. 'Unfinished, ugly and faux-Provençal.' Fortunately for him, he was introduced to India Mahdavi at a friend's party, and the acclaimed interior designer and architect hatched a novel plan to disguise the home's visual shortcomings: a silver façade. 'I'm not sure if she got the idea from the Prada Foundation in Milan, with its gold front,' muses Edward. 'Maybe it just came from her brilliant brain.' The result is not garishly glittering, but seems to reflect the blue of the sky, essentially erasing the architecture. 'At first, we were afraid that we would cook like eggs on the terrace in summer,' adds Edward, 'but it turned out really well.'

So well, in fact, that Mahdavi was then asked to extend her expertise to the interior. The result is colourful and full of joy – typical of Mahdavi's signature style, which Edward describes as 'somewhere between graphic and Mediterranean'. Tiles from her collaboration with Bisazza feature throughout, creating a bold backdrop to a collection of sunny pieces, including her bright 'Afro' dining chairs and inviting 'Jelly Pea' sofas. In an approach similar to the careful placement of sculptures outside in the grounds, artworks are scattered generously throughout all of the rooms. Outside, selections tend towards vividly hued pieces that stand apart from the nature that grows, often untamed, around them, and inside, a similar theme has developed. Edward is especially fond of *Lapsed Platform*, the arresting yellow sculpture by British artist Liam Gillick that is suspended from the living room ceiling.

Edward's aim is to be able to offer accommodation to artists and designers, whose work will be displayed in the house's basement-level studio space. 'It will be a great way to entice clients and friends to come back, because the works outside can't change every year,' he explains. Sat on the terrace, where you can catch glimpses of some of the current crop of sculptures peeking out through the foliage, it's actually hard to imagine things ever changing. 'Between the absence of sound and the wideness of the view,' says Edward, 'you have the impression of being alone in the environment, in nature.' [india-mahdavi.com](http://india-mahdavi.com); [domainedumuy.com](http://domainedumuy.com)

**Living room** Two India Mahdavi-designed 'Jelly Pea' sofas and a pair of her 'Cap Martin' chairs are placed around her 'Weekend' coffee table. The bronze 'Bambibola' bench is by Claude Lalanne and the yellow artwork hanging above is *Lapsed Platform* by Liam Gillick. The floor lamps are the 'Casanova' and 'Don Giovanni', also by Mahdavi ►



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**Exterior** The house, painted a muted silver, sits amid wild countryside near the Massif de l'Estérel mountain range  
**Portrait** Joan-Gabriel and his son Edward Mitterrand, artistic director of Domaine du Muy, with India Mahdavi and her 'Cap Martin' seats on the terrace. The coffee table is actually an artwork - Bench by German artist Peter Kogler  
**Dining room** Mahdavi's 'Henri' table is teamed with equally sunny 'Afro' chairs and a bespoke bench. The artwork on the wall is by Swiss-born artist Katja Schenker. Monochrome 'Ramsau' cushions by Mahdavi decorate the bench >

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**Kitchen** Bespoke Moroccan zellige tiles decorate the walls, while the floor features India Mahdavi's 'In The Sky 10' design for Bisazza. The custom units are also by Mahdavi, who, in addition, created the 'Acapulco' baskets on the countertop and the pale blue 'Bishops' stool  
**Above, from left** Set against the house's shimmering silver façade is patio furniture by India Mahdavi and large terracotta pots from Poterie Bavel; artist Gianni Motti's *Success Failure* signpost set within the Domaine du Muy sculpture park ►

ARTWORK: GIANNI MOTTI

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## TILES FROM MAHDAVI'S COLLABORATION WITH BISAZZA FEATURE THROUGHOUT, TO CREATE A BOLD BACKGROUND

Pool Graphic tiling in the swimming pool mirrors the striking theme of the house  
**Entrance** *Induction du Jour* 2002 by Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez hangs on the wall, and the 'Wintergarden Bench' is by American designer Donald Judd  
**Bedroom** *Archives* by Anne and Patrick Poirier hangs above the 'Tufty' bed by Patricia Urquiola for B&B Italia. The bedside lamp is vintage **See Stockists page for details** [\[3\]](#)

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