



Architecture and Design Library: Moroccan Style (Architecture & Design Library)

Alexandra Bonfante-Warren

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A stunning pictorial of architecture and design, *Moroccan Style* takes us to a hot, dry land bordered on the east and south by the Sahara, on the west by the Atlantic, and on the north by the Mediterranean Sea. Forbidden by the Koran to depict any living part of creation literally, Moroccans have created inventive designs, which are seen in rugs, pottery, woodwork, and especially in the famous tilework *zillij*. The contrast of warm earth tones with the vivid blue of the sea and sky repeats time and again in the interiors and exteriors of the sumptuous villas presented in *Moroccan Style*. "Moroccan décor is a sublime balancing act," says author Alexandra Bonfante-Warren. "A harmony of simplicity and elegant profusion."

Steeped in traditional Islamic culture, Morocco is nonetheless a very modern country, and its homes reflect this dichotomy. One home sports a modern brass door flanked by two traditional lanterns. In another, a clean-lined wrought iron and glass dining set is placed in the middle of a palatial outdoor courtyard surrounded by carved white columns. Windows are most often covered with wooden or iron openwork grilles both to block out the bright sun and to add natural ornamentation from the resulting shadows.

The number of intricate patterns used in one room can be overwhelming to the Western eye, but when an elaborately tiled floor is tempered by a dusty saffron wall, the result is both elegance and austerity. A book for those who yearn for a month in Tangiers, *Moroccan Style* offers a tantalizing glimpse into the distinctive artistry of one of the world's oldest cultures. --*Dana Van Nest*

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