

Guest houses have become an exceptionally popular and attractive type of accommodation for tourists and travelers in recent decades. As the setting often influences the architecture, interior design, and decoration of a guest house, visitors have the opportunity to more closely experience local customs and culture and engage with the surrounding environment. *Another Escape: Designing the Modern Guest House II* presents a collection of guest houses in China, North America, Europe and Northern Africa that are in harmony with their setting. These outstanding projects are distinct for their architecture and interior spaces, and each has a character that is greatly influenced by history, culture, and regional context. This book provides guidance on guest house design and management, and with enticing color photographs, technical drawings, and freehand sketches, it is an essential source of inspiration for architects, interior designers, small business owners, and anyone looking to establish a guest house in their local region.

Cover image: Wood Warmth
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Another

ESCAPE

Designing the Modern
Guest House II

Edited by Stefan Camenzind
and Yao Liang



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PREFACE



Architect Stefan Camenzind founded the Switzerland-based studio Evolution Design with the passion and drive to create a new level of client-focused design solutions. Over the last twenty years Camenzind has successfully designed and executed a diverse array of international projects, including the world-renowned workplace designs for Google, and award-winning residential and commercial buildings and cultural landmarks. Camenzind leads the project strategy and set-up, which is uniquely tailored for each project. By analyzing clients' objectives and aspirations his creative process evolves to inspire innovative design solutions.

The desire to offer hospitality, to share one's home and one's food with a guest, is a global and age-long human tradition and one that is only growing stronger as our world evolves. Across much of today's world we have reached a level of material wealth that no longer needs satiating with more objects. Instead, trying new things and seeing new places has become increasingly important.

Another Escape: Designing the Modern Guest House II, which features 37 guest houses from around the world, highlights the best of modern hospitality, with projects that offer architecturally interesting designs in predominantly reconstructed and restored buildings and in beautiful and unique environments.

A beautiful location is a vital criterion for a successful guest house. Humans are hardwired to enjoy two types of scenery: the lush and the novel. As cities become the default way of living for large swathes of humanity, we are beginning to place greater value on lush natural beauty. We all feel good in picturesque natural environments, be that walking in a sun-dappled forest, marveling at snow-capped mountains, or watching waves breaking on pristine beaches. But the novel, the new, also moves us.

The pleasure in the new is an evolutionary trait. It is the trait that creates the urge to see what's around the next corner or over the next hill. It is also the trait that encouraged humanity to explore and helped our species expand to every corner of the earth. The novel need not be the natural world: we can enjoy the sensation of the new when we visit a city for the first time or see an innovative building.

In this book you will find exquisite examples of guest houses that make the most of both the lush and the novel. From the House in Tzia designed to frame spectacular views of the sea that surrounds it (page 134) to the loft-style space of the wooden Alpine Barn in the ancient heart of Slovenia (page 190), the guest houses showcased in this book feature striking architecture, tactile materials, and new typologies in luxuriant settings.

Outstanding architecture is important. As humans we instinctively seek out objects and buildings that speak to our aesthetic sense and that have distinct emotional and psychological benefits. What makes the architecture of so many of the guest houses in this book particularly special is that it concentrates on a sense of place.

To spend time in any of these guest houses is to truly experience the places these buildings inhabit. The stone and rough-hewn wood exterior of the Rockin' E Ranch in Big Sky, Montana (page 116), distills the energy and strength of the high peaks that surround it. In the same way, the red paper lanterns, wood and paper shuttered windows, and peaceful courtyard that

welcome guests as they arrive at Jiuzhou Inn (page 162) immediately evoke the ancient lanes and traditional Chinese culture of Anshun.

Today we live in a world where much can be virtually experienced before we have physically arrived. Through websites, social media, or television programming we have greater awareness of what we have yet to encounter, which can lead to a heightened possibility for disappointment. We've all faced the phenomenon of having high expectations only to find the actual experience is not as rewarding as we imagined it would be. However the opposite is also true: when we try something that gives us more pleasure than we expected, we perceive it as especially satisfying.

So a truly remarkable guest house must be more than just a striking space in a beautiful place; it must also offer a sensual experience. From the Guest House in Vonitsa, Greece (page 126), that is alive with the fragrance of fresh herbs, pomegranate, and citrus trees, to the sound of church bells that drift through the stained glass windows at Porto's 1872 River House (page 184), the architectural spaces deliver an experience that speaks to all of our senses, an essential ingredient in meeting and exceeding our high expectations.

Service, too, is vital, for human interaction is at the heart of hospitality. Service design is about putting people at the very center of the experience, whether that's by serving breakfast to guests on their first morning, offering freshly baked cake for afternoon tea, or adding homely touches such as the warm fire and fresh flowers in the converted Chapel on the Hill in the Pennines (page 274). It is these elements that deliver gratification and can help turn a brief visit into an genuine and pleasing experience.

It is easier than it has ever been to travel the world, but in this age of the everyman host, of couch surfing and spare-room rentals, where uncomfortable sofa beds, leaky showers, and noisy housemates have become par for the course, it is not always easy to find true hospitality. The guest houses presented in this book are an inspiring reminder of what hosting guests is truly about: offering an authentic and rich encounter that reflects the place visited and which delivers an attention to detail that exceeds our expectations.

No matter if you are sleeping under the seventeenth-century timber beams high in the eaves of an ancient British inn (page 206) or opening the wide bamboo-slatted bedroom windows to better appreciate the deep green of the Yixian countryside and its lily-covered ponds, the guest houses showcased on the following pages will make you happy to be exploring the novel and the new. They show what is possible when hospitality and attention to detail lies at the core of design and when remarkable places and arresting architecture meet in happy harmony.

Stefan Camenzind
Partner and Executive Director at Evolution Design



Yao Liang studied Chinese paintings as a child, majored in sculpture at university, and has 20 years of experience in interior architecture and design. He is the founder of Yaoliang Architecture and Space Design Office and serves as the Deputy Secretary-General of Wenzhou Representative Office of Art Display Committee of China, and as the Vice President of Wenzhou Branch of China Institute of Interior Design (CIID). In recent years, Liang has been predominantly engaged in the design of cultural and commercial spaces, as well as curation and product design. Liang is also developing his own brand of tea culture, Quan Lu and Display and Products Design Company, Ruishe.

Many guest houses are characterized as being buildings that are in harmony with their local environment and with living spaces that range from basic to luxurious. The types of living spaces are often influenced by the environment, setting, and architecture, while the facilities and operations of a guest house differ greatly to that of a traditional hotel. Indeed, it is this diversity and unexpectedness that contribute to the character of guest houses.

Another Escape: Designing the Modern Guest House II presents a collection of guest houses in China, North America, and Europe with outstanding design. These remarkable projects are all distinct for their architecture, living spaces, and characters that are influenced by history, culture, and regional context.

Guest houses are a diverse and versatile design type, offering architects and designers the ability to explore relationships between culture, architecture, and interior space. Nearly all of the guest houses in this book have also provided designers with the opportunity to reconstruct and restore historic or abandoned buildings in natural and urban areas.

As guest house owners come from many walks of life they bring their experiences, lifestyle, and personal outlook to the design of these lodgings, which therefore become an expression of the guest house owner. For example, Su Tong, the descendant of the great poet Su Tungpo, rebuilt an old Hui-style residence at the foot of Huangshan in China (page 56). Shu De House is the ancestral hall of the Su family who were Huizhou merchants, and by retaining the building's original appearance, but with modern spaces and interiors, it acquires the cultural and historical references of the owner.

There is typically a closer relationship between guests and host than there is in hotels and motels, as well as the potential for guests to have greater engagement with the living spaces and surrounding environment of the guest house. These connections and interactions imbue guest houses with a more exploratory element.

Renowned poet Tao Yuanming once wrote, "Dim in the distance, is a remote village, lingering vaguely in the country smoke." This description of a traditional Chinese village pushed the owner of the Xu Li Cottages to give up his life and job in Beijing to operate a guest house business in his hometown of Yongjia, Wenzhou. Xu Li Cottage No.2 (page 48) has been designed like a house in a fairy tale; there are surprises around every corner and an entrance enveloped with fragrant wild roses to make guests feel like they are in another land, or a even a dreamland.

Guest houses have not only become important components of tourism development, but also offer architectural and economic possibilities in rural and urban areas. With highly successful design and management, a guest house can become an independent draw card for visitors to a particular region. Certainly many outstanding guest houses have extracted cultural and commercial value from their environment, while also contributing cultural and commercial value.

Yao Liang
Director at Yaoliang Architecture and Space Design Office

INTRODUCTION

A guest house is a type of dwelling designed for temporary stays by travelers, vacationers, and visitors. It may be purpose built or it may make use of idle rooms or lodgings in a private residence or as part of a larger complex. Guest houses have unique and attractive design features and provide visitors with access to local culture, landscape, activities, and ecological and environmental resources. Many guest houses are operated by owners who wish to offer visitors a place where they can experience the local life of a particular destination. Thus a guest house is designed to enable visitors to more deeply experience the culture and landscape of a city, village, or region of the world in order to enjoy its distinctive beauty.

The outstanding examples showcased in *Another Escape: Designing the Modern Guest House II* are primarily guest houses that have been developed from the restoration of old and sometimes abandoned or ruined buildings that were once private residences, churches, barns, and haciendas. These structures represent the traditional vernacular of their region and the designers and architects featured in this book have paid meticulous attention to reconstructing these buildings as a contemporary expression of this vernacular. They combine natural materials, traditional construction techniques, and historic elements, balanced with all the comforts of modern life. By transforming aged buildings and structures into beautifully designed guest houses, visitors and vacationers are provided with a unique opportunity to experience a region's culture and environment.

1. Location

Location is vital in attracting visitors to a guest house and in making their stay enjoyable, interesting, and as convenient as possible. Factors related to the weather and climate, regional landscape, accessibility, local culture, and infrastructure should be considered.

1.1 Weather and climate

Climate is an important environmental factor to consider when determining the location of where to build or develop a guest house. Many popular guest houses are established in regions with temperature and weather conditions that are conducive to the type of vacation or activities visitors are looking for. Warm temperatures and plenty of sunlight enable guests to participate in outdoor activities or to spend time outside. At House in Tzia (Figs. 1, 2) in Greece, for example, guests can enjoy the local beach and environment due to the Mediterranean climate. In contrast, locations with rain, wind, or cooler temperatures might be more suitable for an indoor getaway. House No.7 in Tiree (Fig. 3), Scotland, is exposed to wind and very cold winters and has therefore been designed to provide shelter and warmth.



Location /
Kea, Greece

Area /
2691 square feet
(250 square meters)

Architecture and design /
Elena Karoula Design

Photography /
Vangelis Paterakis

House in Tzia

A coveted spot at Otzia bay on the island of Kea (Tzia) beckons the owners to make it their own and the setting inspires interior architect consultant Elena Karoula, based in Athens/Greece and Nicosia/Cyprus, to create a seafront residence with simplicity and soul.

Elana Karoula undertook the design of the interior layout down to the last detail, including the final touches of the decoration, as stated by the boundaries of the architecture of the building, which was based on the traditional agricultural type of structure called "kathikia." The unaffected balance between traditional elements and materials in conjunction with the contemporary spare lines characterizes the interior atmosphere.

The presence of the stone walls stand in solid contrast to the changeability of the omnipresent sea as it enters in the interior unified space of the top floor, which services the living, dining and kitchen facilities. The stone surfaces left in their natural form inside and outside coexist with those painted white. The result is an interior island style distinguished by Cycladic quotes. Three basic materials were used: native stone, large sized gray floor tiles, and white paint which covers stone walls, plastered walls and wooden ceilings.

The idea of mixing few materials provides a peaceful, casual and bright interior space that contrasts pleasantly with the intense natural surroundings, hence creates the sense of

timelessness. In a house like this, anything but the most minimal pattern becomes an unnecessary distraction.

Given this, the protagonist element in the creation of the interior design is the strong visual reference of the natural surroundings as it infiltrates through the openings with their traditional scale, the choice of furniture with their simple forms; and the plain colors support the philosophy of this particular design.

The rest of the house services comfortably the everyday needs of the family. The top level is for common use and it is linked by the stone staircase with the lower level which offers hospitality to the bedrooms and the bathrooms.

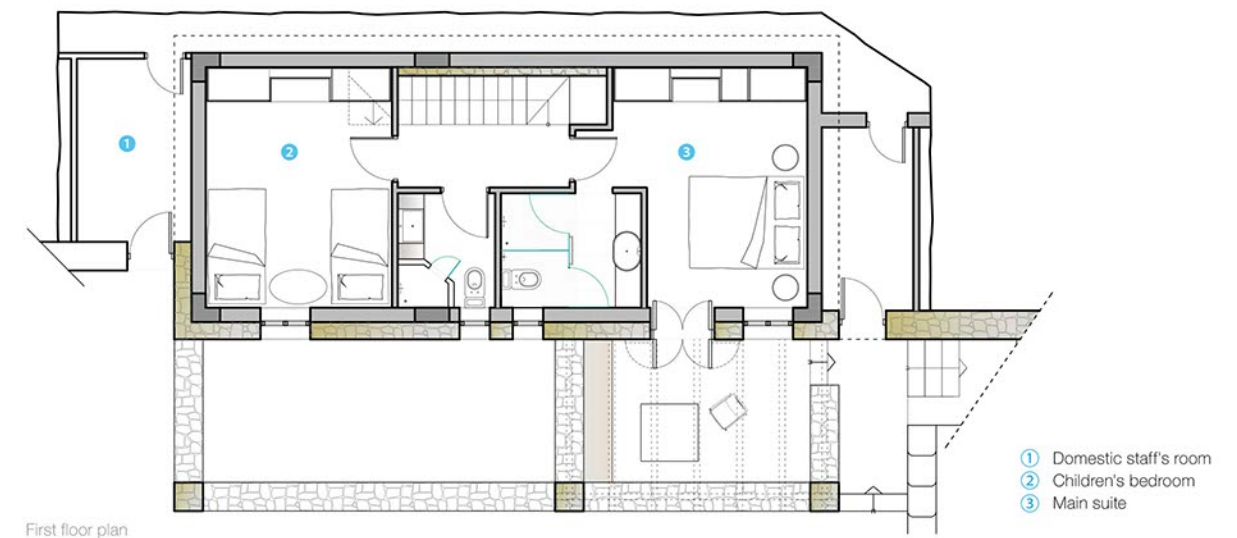
The piece of glass, strategically placed on the floor of the top level right under the window, allows the natural light to enter down to the lower level and emphasizes the linkage of the two levels even more.

The guest house is placed a good distance away so its connection with the main volume of the main house through the common yard with the pergola is sufficient to provide necessary privacy.

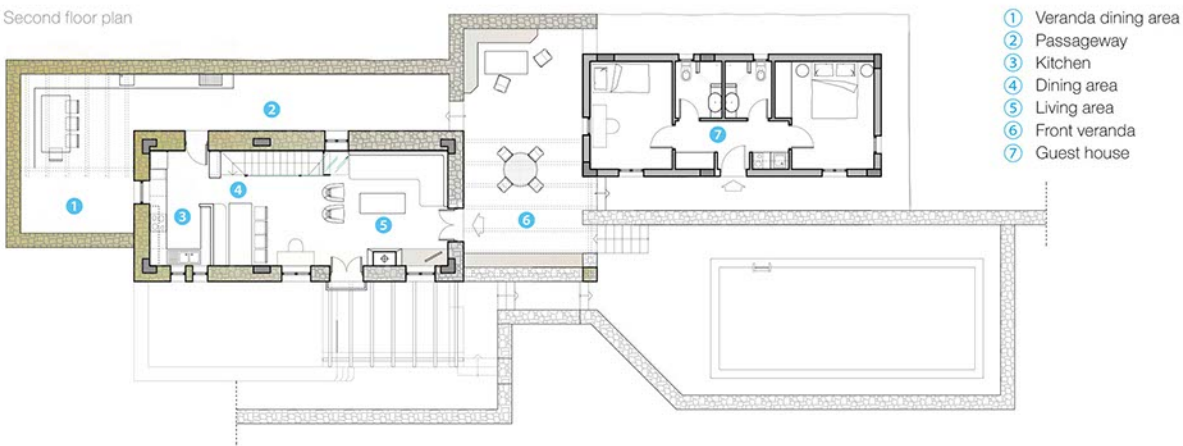
Without unnecessary ornaments this house secures to the owners exactly what they were looking for: a peaceful gateway that connects directly the natural surroundings of the island.



01 / Outside dining area
02 / Exterior view of the building



03 / Stone pathway
 04 / Passageway to the outdoor dining area
 05 / Seating on the front veranda with views of the bay
 06 / Lounge area



07 / White painted stone walls
 08 / Stone staircase linking the top level with the lower level
 09 / View of the sea from a lower window
 10 / Main suite with private veranda