

# BRAZILIAN BEAUTY

*Surrounded by tropical greenery, this laid-back, simply furnished home on the Brazilian coast is one family's serene sanctuary from the bustle of New York*

*Words* JO CAULKETT *Photography* MATTHEW WILLIAMS/PHOTOFOYER

**Ground floor** This home is made up of two separate structures: the main house and a smaller, single-storey guest cottage. Vast doors open from both buildings onto a central outdoor area complete with pool, creating one large space with an airy, beach-like feel ▶





**Exterior** Jan Eleni Lemonedes, Ronnie Stam and their daughter Lola (pictured opposite) wanted their Brazilian holiday home to reflect the traditional local style of house building, but with a light and airy feel. A careful mix of white-washed concrete, expanses of glass and wood specially washed to make it paler contributes to the resultant modern-rustic look



When New Yorkers Jan Eleni Lemonedes and Ronnie Stam first visited the beachside town of Trancoso on the Brazilian coast, they were completely captivated. 'Ronnie is in the fashion industry and has travelled his whole life, seeing some of the most beautiful beaches in the world,' says Jan, an interior designer. Nonetheless, Trancoso made a big impression on both of them: 'We just fell in love,' she recalls. Enchanted by the area's laid-back, bohemian lifestyle and unspoilt stretches of white sand, the couple decided after just ten days that they wanted a second home here so they could come back regularly with their daughter Lola, 14. 'Everything felt right for us,' says Jan.

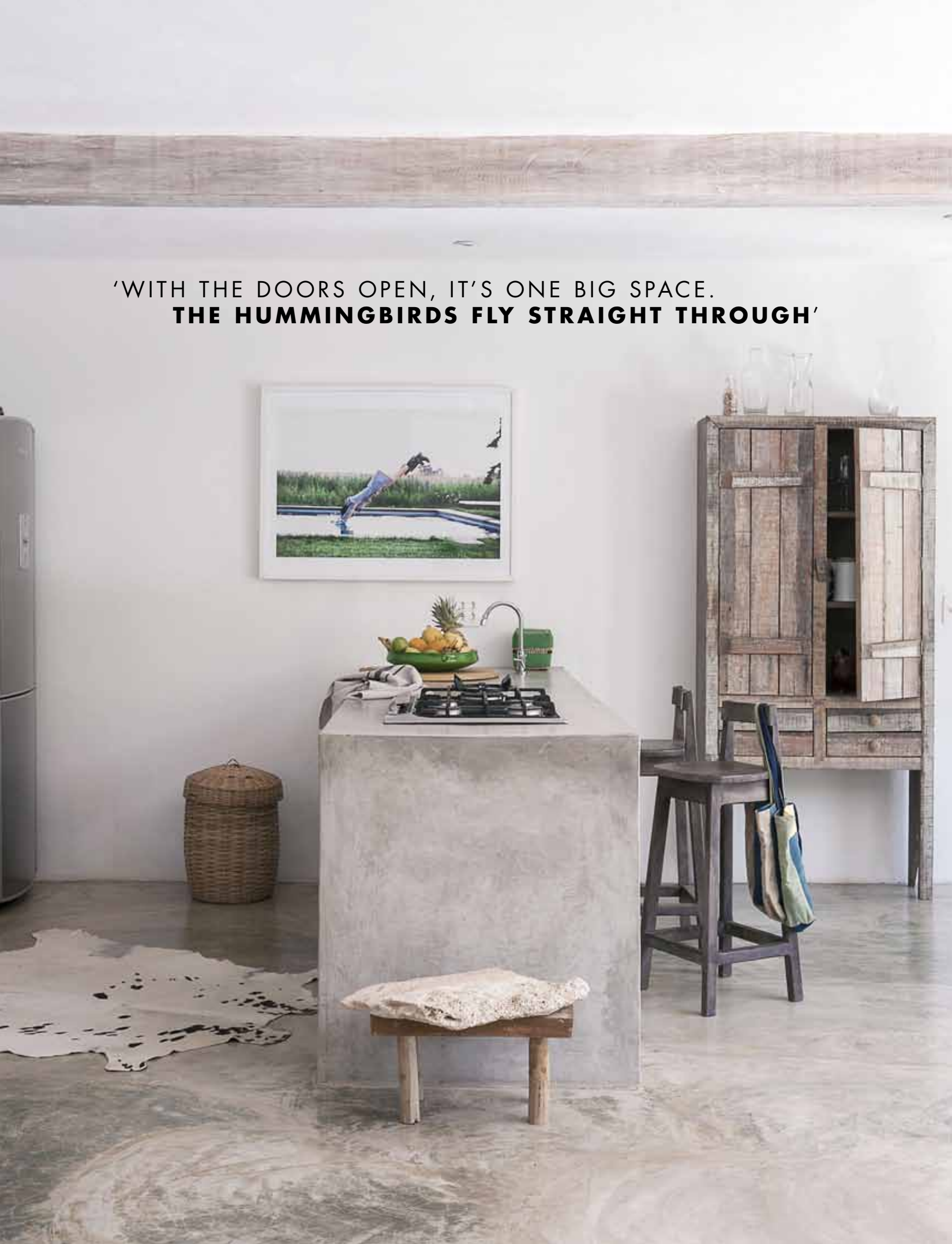
When they discovered an old house on a small, quiet plot, close to the beach and surrounded by mango trees, the couple wasted no time in snapping it up to remodel as their holiday escape. Collaborating with a local architect and builder, they restructured the original property completely, creating two separate buildings: one to be used as their main living space, the other as a smaller, single-storey guest cottage and studio. Separating the two, a decked outdoor area with a pool, wooden seating and comfy cushions makes an informal spot to relax under the shade of tropical foliage. Vast doors open onto this central courtyard from the main house on one side and the cottage on the other, letting daylight flood in. 'We wanted a beachy, open-air feel,' says Jan. 'When the doors are open, it becomes one large space – the hummingbirds fly straight through.'

The buildings' white-washed cement walls, stripped wooden beams and expanses of glass give a light, contemporary twist to the region's traditional style. Inside, the modern-rustic aesthetic continues with a combination of cement flooring and simple wooden furniture. Rugs and cushions in Indonesian textiles soften the space and give it a laid-back, lived-in feel, while a small fireplace keeps the open-plan living area cosy on cooler nights. Jan and Ronnie have added personality to their home with a careful selection of photographs, artworks and decorative objects, many of them found at flea markets on their travels.

Sitting on the upstairs balcony, looking down over lush greenery and the clear, calm pool, the atmosphere feels a world away from the bustle and noise of New York. 'In the end, our vision came to fruition,' says Jan. 'Our house is peaceful and tranquil – we still can't believe it's ours.' ►



'WITH THE DOORS OPEN, IT'S ONE BIG SPACE.  
**THE HUMMINGBIRDS FLY STRAIGHT THROUGH'**



**Kitchen/dining area** A cement unit and simple wooden furniture create a modern-rustic look in this large, open-plan space. The kitchen chairs are from a nearby garden centre; the cabinet was designed by the homeowner and made by a local craftsman. A framed photograph of British model Stella Tennant by Arthur Elgort reflects homeowner Ronnie's ties with the fashion industry ▶



'WE WANTED AN AIRY, BEACH-LIKE FEEL.  
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**Outdoor area** The family like to swim here in the early morning or late evening. During the day, they open up the doors and relax inside or around the pool, shaded from the hot Brazilian sun by tropical foliage. The 'Panamericana' teak folding chairs are by Industry of All Nations; the daybed is the homeowner's own design **Stockist details on p179** ▶



'OUR HOUSE FEELS PEACEFUL AND TRANQUIL  
- WE STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S REALLY OURS'

**Guest bedroom/bathroom** The homeowners call this space their guest cottage, although they occasionally use it as an alternative bedroom for themselves: 'It feels like a holiday from the main house,' says Jan. The simple, earthy palette combines cement for the flooring and basin unit with ceramics and other decorative finds, many of them sourced from flea markets on travels abroad **ED**