

THE WORLD'S LEADING HOMES MAGAZINE

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# ELLE

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*Easy summer living...*

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*Handcrafted pots as art for your home*



## HOW TO DINE IN STYLE

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# COLOUR BLOCK

*With its bright colours, lush garden and stunning original features, this bold house in Mexico offers its owners an escape to sunnier climes*

Words SARAH MORGAN Photography BRUCE BUCK/LIVING INSIDE



**Pool area** The deck and pool are part of the casita (small house), which also contains a bedroom and bathroom. The white steel-and-cord outdoor chairs – which are based on the mid-century ‘Concha’ design, a close cousin of the ‘Acapulco’ – were custom made

**Exterior** Homeowners Adam McCulloch and Emma Sloley stand in the entrance. The staircase leads up to the roof terrace and second storey ►





**Dining area** The patterned tiles throughout the main house are original to the property. The hacienda-style dining table – which homeowner Adam likes to work at – is paired with ‘DSW’ chairs by Charles and Ray Eames for Vitra  
**Stockist details on p179**

**S**et in the cosmopolitan city of Mérida, Mexico, Casa Cárdenas offers its New York-based owners a chance to relax and recharge. Australian couple Emma Sloley and Adam McCulloch – who are both writers – bought the property in 2011. ‘We love our life in New York, but after eight years we craved trees and water and sunshine,’ Emma says. The pair decided to buy a 19th-century house in Santiago, one of the city’s oldest districts and, after a year of restoration work, it is now a vast, colourful mix of traditional finishes, vintage finds and mid-century furniture. The bright palette, locally made lighting and original tiles reflect the owners’ love of the region. ‘Anyone who travels knows that certain places just get under your skin,’ Emma says, ‘and Mexico was like that for us.’ Here, Adam talks to us about redesigning the house.



**How have you changed the house?** We demolished a pokey little kitchen, laundry room and bedroom – which together comprised roughly one-third of the space – and added a second storey with a terrace, two bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms. On the ground floor we added a kitchen and dining room, another bedroom, a bathroom in the casita [an annexed space in the garden] and a pool. **What was most important to you when reconfiguring the space?** We wanted to accentuate its best features: the length and height. I designed a line of vision from the front door through the house, the yard and the casita, all the way to the bougainvillea growing up the back wall. And when you step into the slim internal courtyard, the height of the double-storey space is accentuated by the staircase, the flat-leaf fig creeper and the position of the porthole windows.

**How does Casa Cárdenas differ from your New York home?** Our New York apartment could fit into our two front rooms in Mexico, so the contrast couldn't be greater. Yet, while Casa Cárdenas is larger, I didn't want a house where we'd have to close off half of it. We use as many of the rooms as possible: we migrate from the kitchen for breakfast to the casita for afternoon reading, then to the pool for cocktails, and the screening room for dinner and a movie.

**What are your favourite pieces?** I am very fond of the bust of ex-president Lázaro Cárdenas; he was a man of the people. I also love the old hacienda-style dining table; it has a great view of the garden.

**What inspired the bold colour palette?** We see bright colours everywhere in Mexico. I'm always surprised when people remark on the bold colours we've used; I think of them as fairly restrained! ►



**Ground floor** From the entrance hall (far left), a succession of rooms provide a sight line through the ground floor, to the sitting room and the homeowners' offices (which double as guest bedrooms). The pendant lights in the entrance hall and sitting room were custom made, and the Art Deco typewriter is a vintage find ►



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**Bedroom and bathroom** A newly added second storey houses a main suite (above left and right) and a guest bedroom and bathroom. The main bedroom is painted in the same turquoise used downstairs. The pendant light is from Santiago Antiques: 'It is a good match for the ones we had made,' says the homeowner. The low-level shelf offers a neat storage solution **ED**





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