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UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

A pink-walled former convent becomes a boho-chic family getaway for *Jacaranda Caracciolo di Melito Falck* and her rollicking clan

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JACARANDA CARACCILO DI MELITO FALCK'S HOUSE WAS DECORATED WITH TOMMASO ZIFFER, MADELINE WEINRIB RUGS, CUSHIONS OF GREEN DEDAR VELVET, OPPOSITE PINK ROSES TUMBLE OVER A STONE WALL. FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.



HAIR BY RICCARDO MONTELEONE FOR MASSIMO SERINI USING WELLA; MAKEUP BY RAUONA SCANCELLO FOR MASSIMO SERINI USING AIRMANI

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT STUART BARFOOT DESIGNED THE GARDENS. JACARANDA, AT RIGHT IN MISSONI, STROLLS WITH HER CHILDREN ALESSANDRO AND INDIA, WHO WEARS PHILOSOPHY DI LORENZO SERAFINI. IN ALESSANDRO'S BATH, AN IKAT PRINT BY SWAVELLE/MILL CREEK FABRICS CURTAINS THE DEVON&DEVON TUB; CEMENT WALL TILES BY MOSAIC DEL SUR. IN A LIVING ROOM, BESPOKE SOFAS WEAR WILLIAM YEOWARD FOR DESIGNERS GUILD FABRICS. MARIO SCHIFANO PAINTING, MADELINE WEINRIB RUG.



Falling between Florence to the north and Rome to the south, Maremma was once an impoverished hinterland, its Tuscan hills rolling down to malarial marshes. Mussolini may have had the swampland drained, but in the postwar period it was the country's left-wing intelligentsia who discovered the humble houses, ripe for conversion, in the medieval hilltop town of Capalbio.

An old convent crowning a nearby hill assumes special architectural prominence among the modest farmsteads. Circled by groves of towering pines and citrus and olive trees, it caught the eye of a noble Italian couple (he was married, but not to her) who used it as their love nest after World War II. Then in 1960 it was acquired as a holiday retreat—the area is now considered the Hamptons of Rome—by Don Filippo Caracciolo, eighth Prince of Castagneto and third Duke of Melito. Today the terra-cotta-pink former convent makes a convivial setting for Don Filippo's granddaughter Jacaranda Caracciolo di Melito Falck, a dynamic journalist, television producer, and philanthropist, and her children, Alessandro, Sofia, and India Borghese.

Jacaranda grew up in a "very cozy" Milanese house that her mother, Anna Cataldi, an associate producer of the movie *Out of Africa*, decorated with Renzo Mongiardino, layered with treasures brought back from India and Africa, where Jacaranda spent much of her childhood. When she married a Borghese prince and moved to Rome, she began to spend more time at the old convent, which she eventually inherited. →



"I like the buzz of the farm," says *Jacaranda*, who claims to be practically self-sufficient.

Jacaranda's style owes something to the unpretentious chic of her American grandmother.



A PORTRAIT OF JACARANDA'S GRANDMOTHER SURVEYS THE LIBRARY. TOM DIXON PENDANT LIGHT, TERRA-COTTA SCULPTURE BY NIKI DE SAINT-PHALLE, OPPOSITE DACHSHUNDS ARTÛ AND NIKI STAND GUARD IN THE DINING ROOM, WHERE A MADELEINE CASTAING BY BRUNSCHWIG & FILS WALLPAPER BORDER CREATES A FRAME. ENGLISH REGENCY DINING TABLE AND CHAIRS, VOCATURI SCONCE.



LEFT A GUCCI DRESS IS LAID ON AN ITALIAN EMPIRE BED OUTFITTED WITH ADA GIOVANNELLI LINENS. ANTIQUE ITALIAN ARMCHAIRS ARE CUSHIONED WITH A VINTAGE PRINTED COTTON; TUSCAN EMPIRE COMMODES, OPPOSITE IN A SALON, A BENCH AND ARMCHAIRS ARE DRESSED IN A MANUEL CANOVAS VELVET. DOGS LOUNGE AMONG SILK CUSHIONS, MOROCCAN BRASS PENDANT, NEAPOLITAN TILE FLOOR.

When it came to fabrics, “the funkier, the better,” *Jacaranda* says.

“I like the buzz of the farm,” the indefatigable Jacaranda explains—she claims to be practically self-sufficient and is cofounder of Wellbeing by Giaca, an organic-supplement company—but a path on the property leads to a wonderland that’s far from rustic. In 1979 her father, Carlo, and uncle Nicola gave the feminist artist Niki de Saint Phalle the land on which to realize a Tarot-inspired sculpture garden. (Its writhing wonders inspired Maria Grazia Chiuri’s spring 2018 Dior collection.) Jacaranda is continuing the family’s cultural philanthropy: Last July she brought Ilya and Emilia Kabakov’s itinerant *Ship of Tolerance* sculpture, which has life-size sails painted by local schoolchildren, to Maremma. “We want to keep our hearts open to those who need to migrate now,” she says.

Urbane Roman decorator Tommaso Ziffer helped with the house, although the interventions are minimal. For inspiration, Jacaranda assembled favorite images on a Pinterest board—stripes, toiles de Jouy, and the daintily high-style interiors of the decorator Madeleine Castaing, who also celebrated the unusual greens and blues in which Jacaranda delights. Artists transformed the drawing room’s whitewashed walls with a eucalyptus wash and painted the library arsenic-green. The latter spot is filled with old bound volumes of the innovative leftist newspaper *La Repubblica* and the weekly magazine *L’Espresso*, both cofounded by Jacaranda’s father and famed for their powerful graphics.

The house also owes something to the style of her American grandmother Margaret Clarke (born to a mayor of Peoria, Illinois), whose meltingly pretty debutante portrait hangs in the library. The Midwestern princess’s taste for unpretentious

comfort was instilled in Jacaranda’s aunt Marella Agnelli, who deflated the splendor of her own world-class artworks by hanging them in rooms of wicker furniture and sprigged cotton. Similarly, Jacaranda and Ziffer sleuthed kinetic upholstery fabrics (“the funkier, the better!” she declares) to dress the commodious sofas and armchairs that came with the house.

The most dramatic change, Jacaranda confesses, is the garden. “It was fantastic but very claustrophobic,” she recalls. “My father didn’t like to eat outside. A little bit of outside air to have a drink, perhaps, and then he’d repair inside to play chess and watch videos.” Visitors bemoaned the want of a view, so Jacaranda fearlessly toppled stone walls and axed shadowing trees. “The first few months, it looked like a lunar landscape,” she recalls. “I thought I had made the biggest mistake on Earth.”

Today the house commands a scintillating vista down the hill to a World Wildlife Fund nature reserve and the azure waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea. (It’s not all sunbathing, though—a hip nightclub is being planned that will be a locus for the region’s social life.) The refreshed garden, meanwhile, created with landscape designer Stuart Barfoot, is already a mass of crimson and blush-white roses.

“This open space changed our life,” says Jacaranda, surveying her bucolic domain. “Because we have so many in the house in summer, we always plan lunch and dinner for 25.” In the balmy heat of high summer, essential protection is provided by a new pergola, tumbling with white wisteria and shaded by—what else?—a jacaranda tree, its spreading branches engulfed by a cloud of flamboyant purple blossoms. **▲**



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A VIEW OF THE TUSCAN HILLS THROUGH MARITIME PINES.