

SENEGAL LAMU URUGUAY INDIA

COLOMBIA

SPAIN

BALI TENERIFE

Photographer Mirjam Bleeker and stylist and designer Frank Visser have travelled around the world together, in search for adventure and beautiful houses. They visited the holiday retreats of some fascinating people on or at the beaches of various oceans and seas. Here, they made sensitive photo reports of the houses or cabanas, and still lifes of details of the interiors, as well as wonderful images of the people and surroundings.

ITALY COSTA RICA SWEDEN PORTUGAL

CHILI JAPAN CURAÇAO

AT THE OCEAN

LUSTER

AT THE

MIRJAM BLEEKER & FRANK VISSER

OCEAN

INSPIRING COASTAL HOUSES AND REFUGES

LUSTER

SENEGAL



WHO?

Dutchman Erik Pol is joint owner of earthenware and interior design label Pols Potten.

WHERE?

Yène, Senegal. A small village consisting of 15 kilometres of artificial beach along the Atlantic Ocean, about 45 kilometres south of Dakar and close to the larger town of Rufisque. The village is almost exclusively inhabited by fishermen.

Erik ended up in Senegal through his company: the furniture they had ordered from Senegal never arrived, so he decided on a whim to start a workshop of his own: "It may not have been a very smart move - out of 195 countries, Senegal comes 178th on the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business' list - but it turned out to be the right decision. Africa is an attractive market for Pols Potten when it comes to articles that cannot be produced anywhere else in the world. For our line of interior design products, that mainly means wooden stools."



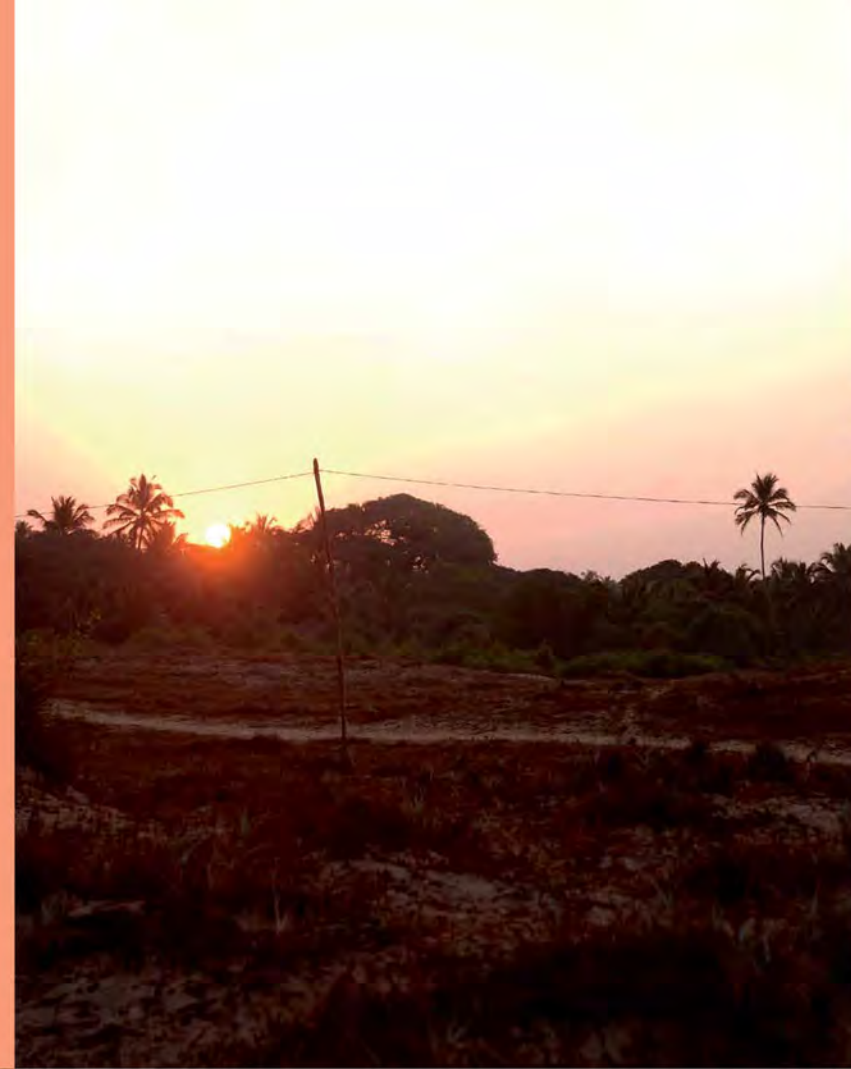
Erik is currently working on building a second house in a 3-hectare orchard across the road, next to the workshop he built there years ago. About forty local skilled workers are employed on the site: choppers, woodworkers and masons, as well as craftsmen making baskets and stools from the heaps of refuse and old shoes that wash ashore. The stools and other polished wood objects are made by boys from the Diourbel area, who grow up creating all kinds of objects from wood. "They are true artists who would amaze European artists if they saw them. At our workshop, we also create sculptures for Dutch artist Hans van Benthem (who is well-known for his magnificent chandelier); these have been exhibited at places like the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague. We have partnered with Hans in the past to take part in the Dakar biennial art fair together. You might not expect it, but there are a lot of cultural activities in Dakar - mostly organised by and for white expats, but still."

WHERE?

Off the coast of the Arabian Sea, in the Indian State of Goa.

"Provincial India can be very intense: it is always lively and busy. We were longing for peace, sand and water, which we found when we took a scooter ride to a stretch of beach with six small huts. There are several beaches like this one in the area: it is a popular destination for barefoot tourism. It's very different from the kind of tourism you see in places with a beach culture - this Indian beach is not for sunbathing, it's for getting in touch with nature. The huts are ideally suited to that purpose: very basic, with an outdoor shower and toilet and barely any interior furnishings. You can easily make it your own with just a few things and some lengths of fabric."

INDIA



"The fish installation that we have created here represents what we care about when we travel together. This is what we share: the sense of freedom, the way the installation allows you to be open to things that happen by chance, the way you reach out to the locals by going out to look for objects... The installation is open to the elements and passers-by respond to what they see, and that is how you really connect to the place. It allows you to see the country in a different way: not as a tourist, but as part of a whole."



SPAIN

WHO?

Charles and Jet Bergmans and their three children (as well as their children's partners and friends). The Bergmans family are a creative lot: Charles is a freelance shoe designer, Jet is an artist, Sjors is an art director, Pieke is a well known Dutch product designer and Lotje is a creative project manager.

WHERE?



L'Escala, a small fishing port on the Costa Brava, in the north-eastern part of Spain. L'Escala literally means 'sanctuary' and that is exactly what it is: in the past, it provided a safe haven for fishermen fleeing from the Tramuntana wind storms that regularly race across the Mediterranean. Now it is a popular, lively holiday destination that has nonetheless managed to keep plenty of its authentic charm. The Bergmans family's holiday home is a twenty-minute walk from the town centre on the way to Albons, at the foot of a large shrub-covered hill. The hilly landscape surrounding their land is one of many beautiful places in the varied Catalan countryside nearby.

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Charles and his wife took over Casa Lucia around 1990. "We soon discovered how wonderful it is to have a place like that to escape to. Some years later, we even bought the property next door and its hexagonal tower, Torre Azul ('blue tower') was built much later than Casa Lucia, and is smaller and more intimate. We use it as a workshop and studio - it offers wonderful views of the Pyrenees on one side and the Mediterranean on the other. Together, these two totally different houses form a wonderful and balanced combination which works perfectly for us: Torre Azul is more closed off, a place to withdraw to with a shaded patio; Casa Lucia is open, sunny and focused on the outside. This is where our kids and their friends stay, often with our own friends thrown into the mix too. We cook elaborate dinners at night: cooking is important to us, which is why we put in a well-equipped kitchen."



BALI



EXPLORE

'The sea is wild and powerful here, so it is much too dangerous for swimming. This place intrigued us because the black volcanic sand makes the beach very special, and because there are so many objects to be found here, of all shapes and sizes. The locals make offerings to the sea on this beach according to the traditions of their faith, which is a Balinese form of Hinduism. Since the waves are so strong, many of these offerings wash back up on the beach. We started working on a number of still lifes using things that we found in this way and some fabrics we bought on Bali: temporary creations that are open to the elements. It was a very powerful experience: spending the whole day outdoors, constantly hearing and feeling the intensity of the crashing waves. You become aware of the sand and the wind, and find yourself in the zone, simply working on whatever it is you are creating on the beach. We thought this was absolutely wonderful; at times we were excited like children. It was also really interesting to see how the locals responded to our work. They were very curious and often came to sit with us; we would exchange glances and nod to one another, but there was very little talking. They didn't mind that we were using their offerings, as long as we didn't remove them from the beach: once something has been given to the sea, you cannot take it away.'

WHERE?

On Medewi beach near Pekutatan, one of the black volcanic beaches on the Indonesian island of Bali, beside the Indian Ocean.



This enchanting view over the ocean looks like a painting in itself. It is one of the reasons why Cabo Polonio is such an inspiring place. Also, the wildness of nature here and the sense of being far away from civilisation are unique - this is what makes Cabo Polonio a sanctuary that sparks the imagination. Having a house there has been an enriching experience for Andres. He goes there every summer to rest and recuperate, enjoy the peace and quiet, relax and eat fish with like-minded friends and most of all to simply spend time alone, in harmony with the environment.



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SWEDEN



WHO?

Carouschka Streijffert is a Swedish architect and artist. She works on a wide range of projects, including converting and remodelling living spaces, public spaces and small houses, creating designs for exhibition stands and constructing sets for both stage and cinema. As an artist, she has had about thirty exhibitions and has participated in a large number of joint exhibitions.

WHERE?

A small island in the Stockholm archipelago, which can only be reached by private boat.

