

# mediterranean *Life*

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WAYNE CHEONG

### A World Apart

Travelling through Andalusia there are many large *cortijos*, or country houses lying idle, ripe for renovation. Kuky Reid remembers weekends during her childhood at just one such place, an old olive mill which had been in her family for generations. On the road between Jerez and Seville, the beautiful building, set amid prairie-like terrain, had seen days of past glory, but with lack of interest and funding it was sadly in need of help.

Years later, after living in England, and like many Jerezanos becoming completely anglicised, Kuky and her husband Tim decided to turn the old mill into their home and to make a business of it. Tim, having been marketing manager of the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong, saw the potential for guest rooms, with a small conference room for incentive groups when required. They set to work on the



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The tiered, tiled roofs form the courtyard, floored with a patchwork of brick and cobbles

Huge bunches of sunflowers from the surrounding fields decorate the house

The grand  
transformation  
scene - from  
olive mill to  
stylish home

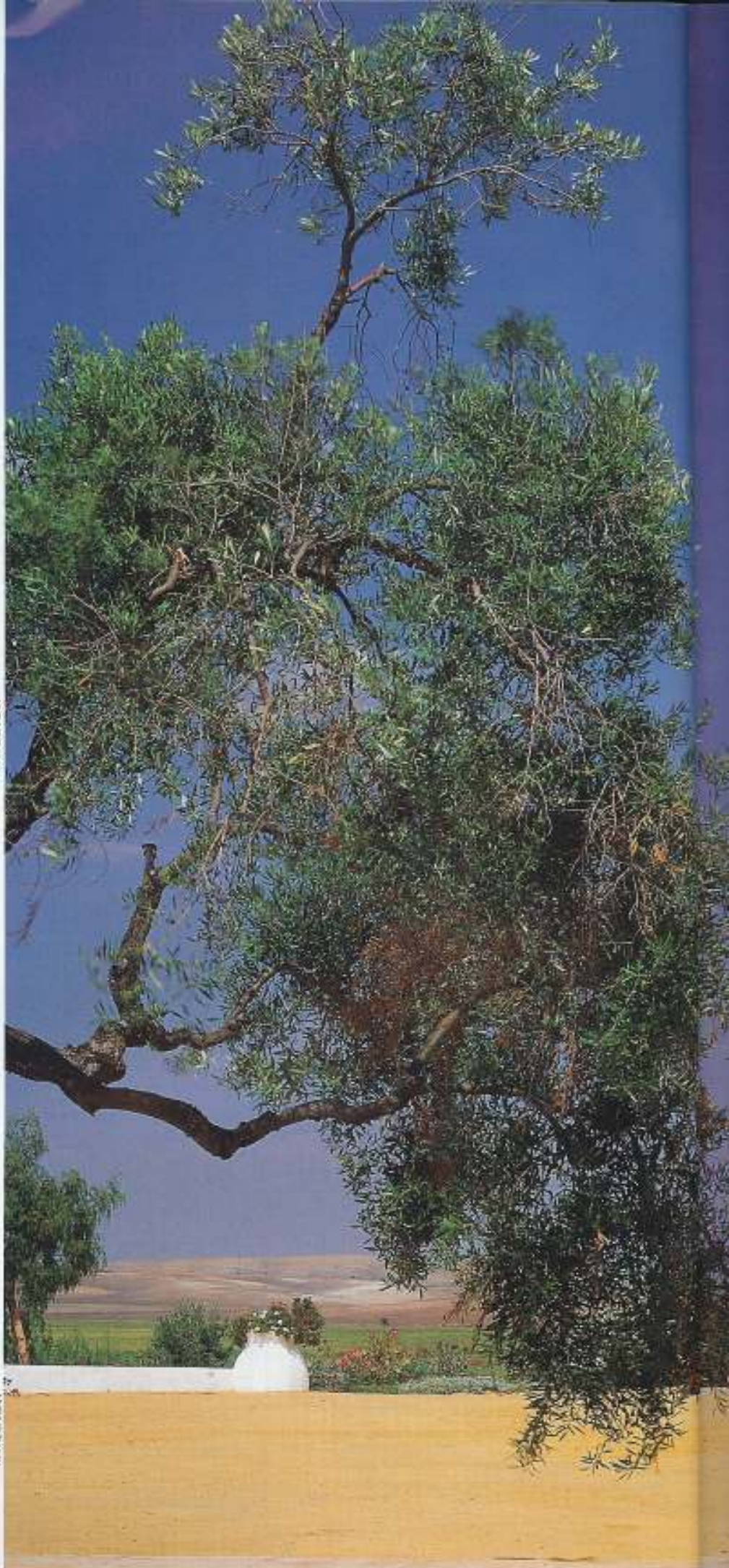


Simple but sophisticated, the dining room with its beautifully patinated table

project, and like the ugly duckling, Hacienda de San Rafael was completely transformed over a period of three years from a tumble-down mill into a stylish home.

Passing through the enormous entrance doors, you enter another world. This is traditional Andalusia at its best, a cobbled courtyard, spilling over with geraniums and Bougainvillea, arched walkways and an old well. The surroundings alone make you feel elegant.

Since opening its doors in 1993, Kuky and Tim have continued the renovation work relentlessly. All the old olive trees had been destroyed and had to be replaced with 1000 new ones. The garden has been a battle waged against the dry conditions, the wind and heat. The Mirador had to be completely rebuilt, areas where the olive oil had been stored were turned into the drawing room and dining room, and bedrooms around the central courtyard created. Space has been used creatively in these rooms, making the most of the high ceilings by building a gallery for a small sitting area over each bathroom. Kuky has done the interior design herself - it has a quality feel, peppered with hints of their world-wide





BOUTIQUE DE  
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Chic checks and stripes for the Hacienda's very liveable drawing room



travels. Rustic Spain mingles with chic checked and striped fabrics, antiques with Indian prints. Asked whether work was now complete, 'Heavens no', she replies, 'there are plans for another garden and dining area, cottages and another pool!'. The words 'a labour of love' spring instantly to mind.

Kuky gives a wonderfully personal service to her guests, organising trips to the bodegas and palaces in Jerez, to Seville, and of course to the bars and restaurants. Being her family home, local knowledge is plentiful. The Hacienda is definitely a special place for a special occasion.

*Bed and Breakfast at Hacienda San Rafael is 13,000 pts per person plus IVA per day. Lunch, dinner and picnics are available. For information on group bookings call Kuky on (0034) 908 652 748 in Spain or their office in England on 0181 563 2100.*

A touch of grandeur marks out the bathroom of a guest suite at Hacienda San Rafael