ELLE DECORATION COUNTRY

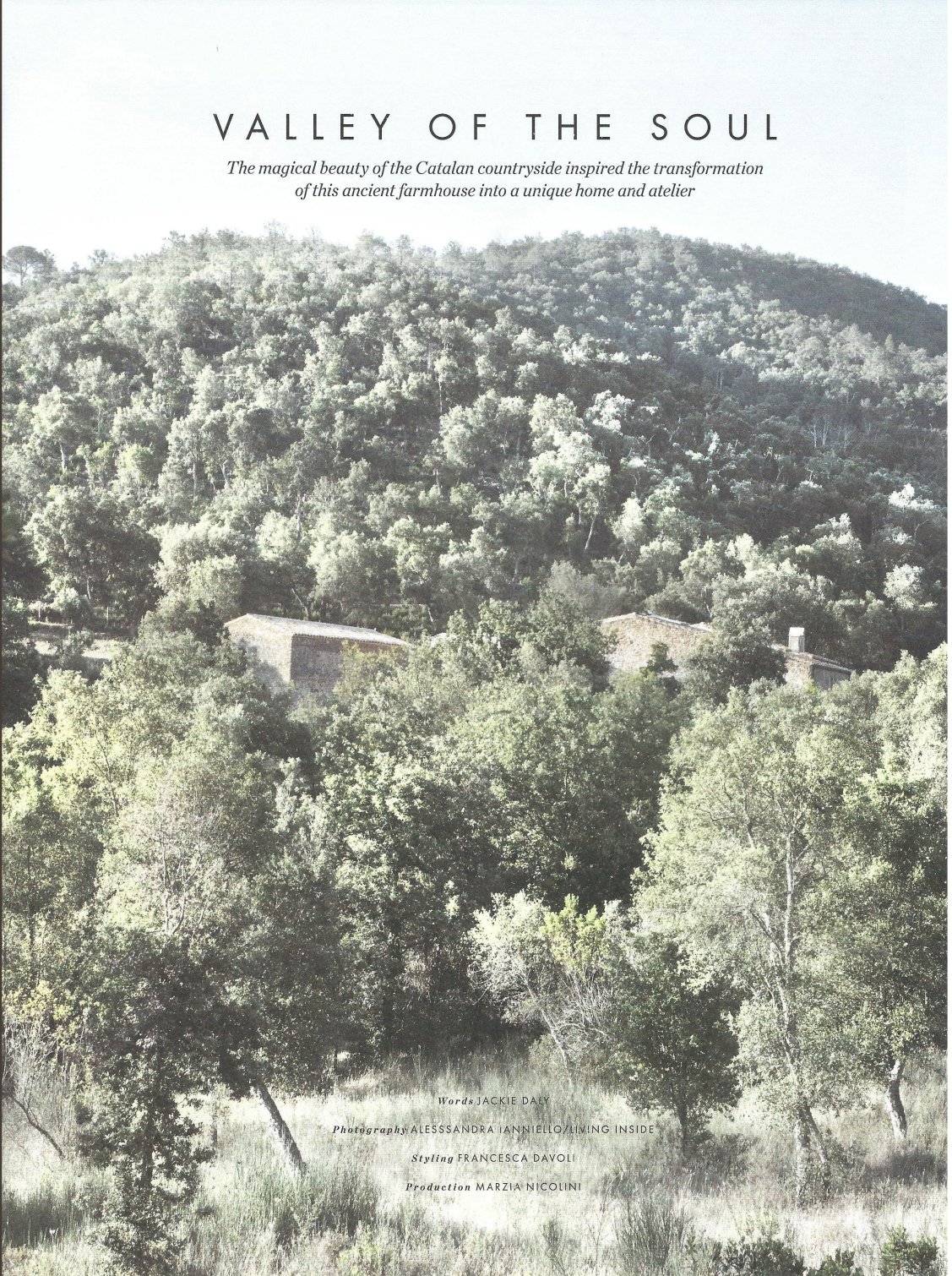
VOLUME 11



THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL HOMES IN THE COUNTRY

VALLEY OF THE SOUL

The magical beauty of the Catalan countryside inspired the transformation of this ancient farmhouse into a unique home and atelier



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Deep in the countryside, a few hours' drive from Barcelona, this 17th-century house's isolation lends it a sense of mystery. Travelling out of the city, motorways turn into roads, and roads to bumpy dirt tracks, one of which comes to a halt at the entrance of this *mas* (the local word for a traditional Catalonian farmhouse), home to architect and designer Joan Lao, his artist wife, Adelina Coromines, and their daughter, Africa.

It was the tranquillity of this plot in Baix Empordà – a rural enclave hidden between gentle hills that reach towards the Pyrenees on one side and the sea on the other – that lured the family to the property. 'It allows us to live in a healthy, positive way,' says Adelina. 'We spend our days painting and being creative, enjoying the constant connection with nature.'

The couple renovated the house sensitively, with a reverence for its existing features. The original exposed masonry, vaulted ceilings and timber beams remain untouched, and their rustic beauty is a foil to a contemporary collection of furnishings and artworks. Adelina's colourful canvases, which are included in every room, provided the starting point for the décor – they are the thread that ties the scheme together. Many of the furnishings, which are arranged sparingly against the rugged stone backdrop of the building's walls, come from the couple's sketches and prototypes – work and life are one and the same for Joan and Adelina, who have reconfigured the space to include an atelier. 'Almost every detail was designed by us,' Adelina proudly proclaims.

Where wooden elements appear in the house, they have a raw quality that complements the property's rural charm. This is countered by statement lighting in brass and copper, and lengths of rich Lizzo fabric that hang dramatically from the high ceilings. Everything here is in balance: past and present, old and new, life and work. *joanlao.com*

ORIGINAL FEATURES, FROM THE EXPOSED MASONRY TO THE VAULTED CEILINGS, HAVE BEEN LOVINGLY AND SENSITIVELY RESTORED





THE FARMHOUSE IS HIDDEN AMID GENTLE
HILLS THAT REACH TOWARDS THE MOUNTAINS
ON ONE SIDE AND THE SEA ON THE OTHER



BOLD STATEMENT LIGHTING ACTS AS
A COUNTERPOINT TO THE RAW, RUSTIC
QUALITY OF THE BUILDING'S BONES



SUMPTUOUS FABRICS IN RICH COLOURS ARE
DRAPED DECADENTLY THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE,
PROVIDING A FEELING OF TIMELESS LUXURY

