



Stephanie
Kienle Gonzalez

FOREWORD BY INDIA HICKS

EMBRACING
NATURAL
DESIGN

Inspired Living

RIZZOLI
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New York · Paris · London · Milan

For Chris, Andrea, Arielle, and Anouck.
Home is wherever you are.





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FOREWORD

David and I embraced under-decorating long ago, and now here is Stephanie taking the ideas of organic forms and natural materials to insane levels of dreaminess, inspiring us all to create the most exquisite, perfect spaces that no one ever wants to leave.

Stephanie feels like such a kindred spirit to me. We share a fondness for palm fronds and the responsibility of decorating being the family business. Having spent nomadic youths studying and adventuring around the globe led us both to devote a good chunk of our time as adults to creating homes for our families. These are places to display the odd treasure or two found while traveling, but they are not museums by any stretch of the imagination. Instead, our homes serve as soft landing spots for our own tribes along with an ever-rotating group of interesting people and their entertaining stories.

Stephanie makes me believe in the possibilities of the future. From her commitment to supporting Filipino craftspeople to her gentle nudges toward an environmentally conscious lifestyle, Stephanie shows us what to do next.

Surely, her two beautiful daughters, and a third one on her way, are the main reasons for her devotion to a beautiful future for all. We must learn all we can from Stephanie to make sure there are palm trees and rhinos for the next generations to see. Thank goodness for this exquisite woman living a life of style with a conscience.

—India Hicks



INTRODUCTION

The house was in the middle of the Serengeti. It had been restored and was now a bright and airy space and, as I entered, I felt as though I could glide from one room to another, delighting in the magnificent landscape peeking through the windows. That view took my breath away.

It was December 2012, and we were on a family holiday. The house may have been 6,000 miles from Manila, where I live, but I felt right at home. The interior was warm, natural, and tactile—a cocoon of well-designed comfort. I remember this house and the emotions it evoked with such fondness that, to this day, it comes to mind whenever I approach a new design project. I hope that I am able to express myself just as clearly and inspire similar feelings in my clients, family, and friends, igniting a desire to live consciously, joyfully, and with great purpose.

I've visited many remarkable places throughout my life, from lush tropical villas in Southeast Asia to Parisian apartments that have been restored to full modernity, and even striking traditional African homesteads where heritage has left its indelible stamp. While I appreciate a wide range of styles, those that resonate with me have a natural charm and personality of their own. Many of the spaces I have come to love aren't particularly "perfect" in terms of design but have an authenticity that reflects the homeowner's character and life. The thoughtful layering of these spaces, a harmonious blend of form, function, and sentiment, gives meaning to the space.

Throughout the pages of this book, I share the personal spaces in which I have spent hours passionately working, entertaining, and relaxing. Each design experience imparts an invaluable lesson in intuition, exploration, collaboration, and creativity. I relish the opportunity to share with you the spaces I call home and the craft I am passionate about. As you join me on this visual journey, I encourage you to let the intimate stories, actionable ideas, awareness of nature, and designers who have influenced me, breathe life into your own endeavors.

OPPOSITE: A family trip to the Grumeti Reserve, Tanzania, in 2012. Singita's Serengeti House's covered terrace inspired me as it frames the majestic scenery filled with wildlife. It has had a lasting impact on me.

