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THE BALEARIC SHAKE-UP SABINA IBIZA

THIS ECO-CONSCIOUS HIDEOUT SIGNALS A TEMPO CHANGE ON THE HIGH-ENERGY ISLAND, WHERE A CLUED-IN GLOBAL CROWD IS STARTING TO GATHER

BY MAYA BOYD. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANA LUI



ANTON BILTON IS DESCRIBING THE NON-DENOMINATIONAL temple at the heart of Sabina Ibiza, his new eco-community on the island's south-west coast. There is talk of its energetic stillness, of crystals embedded in the foundations to create a protective force against negativity, and the feeling of calm it evokes. 'It allows one to silently reconnect with the authentic self,' he says. A temple in the middle of a modernist village may seem incongruous, but Bilton is no ordinary entrepreneur. Passionate and profoundly articulate, he's also a lateral thinker, plant-medicine evangelist and founder of the Tyringham Initiative, which according to its literature is a 'think-tank for the evolution, expansion and deeper understanding of "new-paradigm consciousness"'. And he likes a party – Pete Tong can often be found on the decks at his home; for his 50th he chartered a boat from Venice to Hvar for three days and nights, with non-stop DJ sets and not much sleep. 'The idea of The Temple was triggered by a trip to the Lost City of Petra in Jordan four years ago,' he tells me. 'This was not some false cathedral; it was 200 temples carved into rock. It made me wonder – what sense of community did that bring? And where are we building our temples now?'

Bilton had long considered creating a get-away-from-it-all retreat for his family – he has five children and is married to the model Lisa B – and their extended group of friends. His own property on Ibiza, a restored finca in the north, had become the all-back-to-mine base for a crowd that includes Simon and

that rise up to Sa Talaia, Ibiza's highest point, and by an open expanse of the Mediterranean in front. To the north is the boho haven of Cala Comte and the islet of Sa Conillera, said to be the birthplace of the elephant-whispering Carthaginian general Hannibal. On a clear day, it's possible to see the olive-cloaked mountains of mainland Spain. The landscape at Sabina is fundamental to the architecture, a co-dependence between the cultivated and the wild.

All roads here tumble seawards to Sabina's central hub, the Clubhouse (design brief: a ruined Phoenician palace). This is where Bilton's handpicked tribe gathers – little ones at the kids' club, teens in the bowling alley – before heading to the tennis courts or the herb-scented subterranean spa. The Clubhouse walls are hung with commissioned artworks; polished peppermint stools circle the cocktail bar; a reference library is stashed with art volumes.

Lunch is served by the pool – all breezy farm-to-fork earthiness with a hefty slice of the Middle East, overseen by Israeli chef and Noma alumnus Shahr Tamir. There's tuna tataki and wood-fired pizzas; Caesar Salad with cured egg yolk; a Thousand Year Potato, preserved in seaweed for three months and layered with thin slices of wild sea bass. It's no coincidence the Clubhouse operates under the watchful eye of Amit Segev, co-founder of La Paloma, the San Lorenzo trattoria that's a key gathering point for a certain, loose-limbed bohemianism. Its regulars – a

'HERE IS A SPOT WHERE WE'RE NOT WEARING SUITS AND NOT COMPETING WITH EACH OTHER FOR BUSINESS. WHERE IT'S JUST A DAY ON THE BEACH OR BY THE POOL'

Yasmin Le Bon, Jade Jagger and James Blunt, who serenaded Lisa in the grounds for her 40th-birthday party while jeweller Stephen Webster swam naked past the windows of the underground nightclub. Inspired by the Bahamas' Lyford Cay and perhaps more so by Careyes, the haute-hippy enclave on Mexico's sunshine Jalisco coast, Bilton sought a spot 'where we're not wearing suits and not competing with each other for business. Where it's just a day on the beach or by the pool.' A fruitless search for land in Croatia left him uninspired yet undeterred. When the Ibiza site became available in 2015, he pounced.

Sabina is an ambitious yet ecologically aware project (with hi-tech water preservation and geothermal heating) that will eventually comprise 50 villas created by 12 leading architects. The credits include British minimalist hero John Pawson, Brazilian architect Marcio Kogan – known for his tropical modernism – and Arizona-based Rick Joy, whose low-slung, lateral creation at Sabina is redolent of his finest achievement, Utah's Amangiri. Can Calabaza – a five-bed modernist lair by Ibiza's own Jordi Carreño – is one of a handful of houses available to rent. It has cool stone floors and an open-plan layout peppered with oversized tribal art, rattan lampshades and glass walls that slide back at the touch of a button. Like all the villas, Can Calabaza faces the ocean. Outside, there's a swimming pool the colour of sea foam. Gravel crunches underfoot like apricot kernels; there are lavender and wild-thyme notes in the mineral sea air, and the scent of bone-dry pine needles rises from a nearby ravine.

Sabina's setting – a hillside above Cala Tarida puckered with ancient, crumbling terraces – is protected from behind by mountains

patchwork crew of island-dwelling yogis, healers, models and artists – will doubtless form the Clubhouse restaurant's core customers when it opens to all later this year.

Unsurprisingly, Sabina's villa owners are a reflection of the Biltons' social set – 'maverick minds, lateral thinkers', according to Anton. This translates to a coterie of new nomads from the USA and India, Switzerland and Bangladesh. The first villa here, a five-bedroom pad designed by Ibiza-born Jaime Romano, was bought by Diana d'Hendecourt Thermiotis, a Greek-Venezuelan countess and the unofficial queen of Gstaad. 'I would never have bought into Ibiza if Sabina didn't happen,' she tells me. 'I'm here because of Anton and Lisa. They're so much fun.' Thermiotis tells me she met her new neighbours at one of the many pre-opening get-togethers in the Temple's amphitheatre with drumming, shamanic dancing and a local crowd that included half of Pacha and DC10 – the sort of deeply exclusive after-party that it's almost impossible to get an invite to.

'I'm quietening down, rather than settling down,' reckons Bilton. 'It's just a different kind of communal activity than having huge parties all the time.' The island has been a hotbed of ideas since the 1950s but has been evolving over the past few years to embrace a more thoughtful and sustainable way of life, with a new-found maturity, softer energy and smaller, more intimate gatherings. A conscious collaborative effort, if you like, as the hedonists go holistic and former 24-hour party people take a look at their watches. 📍

To make an enquiry about villa rental, visit sabinaibiza.com or email sabina@sabina-estates.com

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Anton Bilton in the garden; Can Calabaza interior; and terrace; roasted aubergine with beluga-lentil ragout; outdoor seating; olive trees; curving architecture; Clubhouse bar; Can Calabaza. Previous pages, from left: Clubhouse bar; amphitheatre. All at Sabina Ibiza

PHOTOGRAPH: ANA LUI FOR WHITE IBIZA (TOP LEFT)