

SPACE

2009 #3



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hermitage hospitality

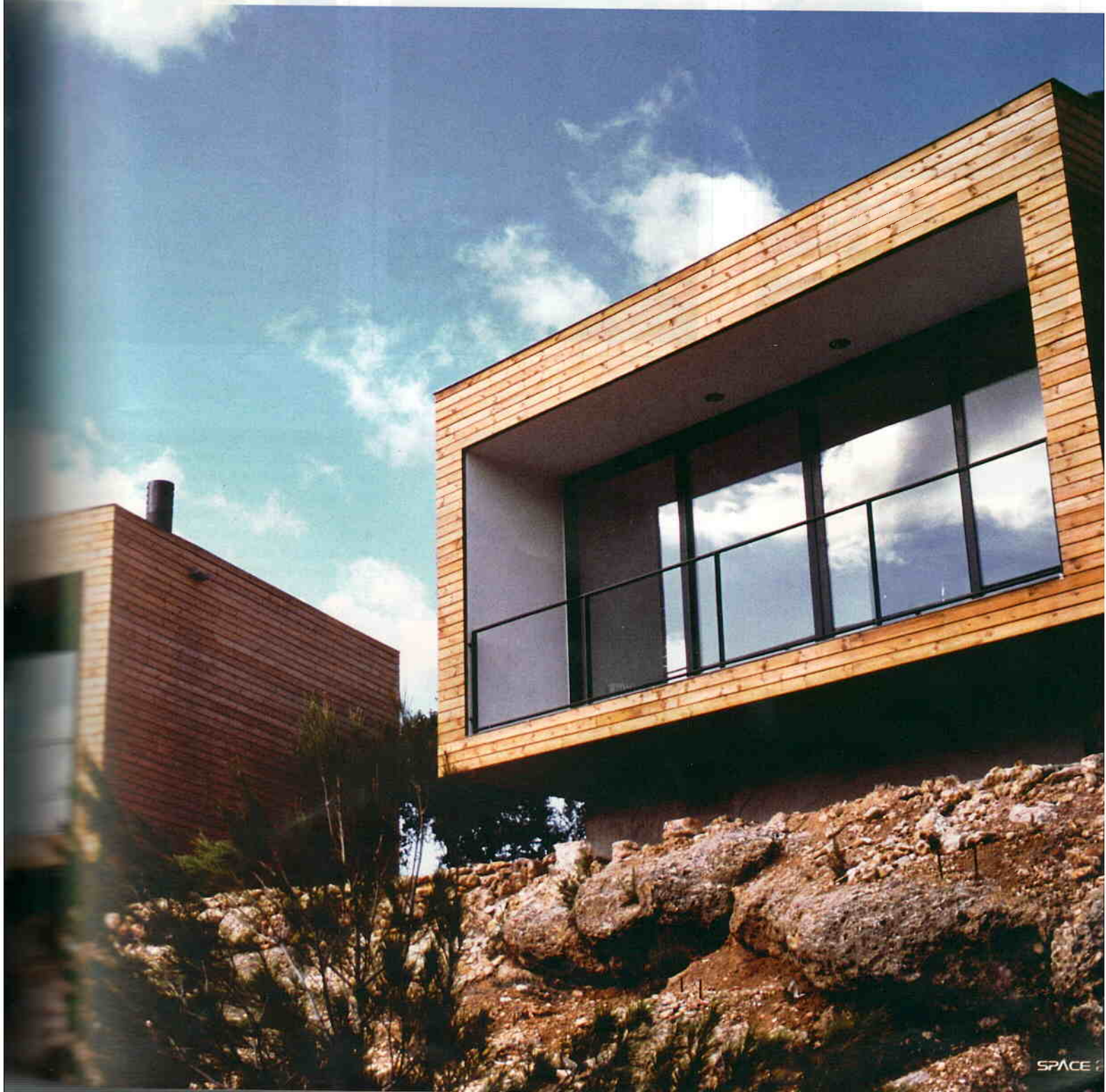
TEN INDIVIDUAL CUBES ON A RIDGE IN THE SPANISH COUNTRYSIDE REPRESENT A MODERN INTERPRETATION OF THE PRIVATE RETREAT IN THE MIDST OF NATURE: SECLUDED YET SECURE, SELF-CONTAINED YET CONNECTED TO COMMON AREAS

It will no longer be so easy to overlook Monroyo, in the heart of the county of Matarraña in Teruel (Spain). The usual stopovers to buy some of its ham or pick some wild mushrooms or truffles in season can now be lengthened thanks to a striking new hotel on the outskirts of the town, next to the Consolación Hermitage.

The hotel designed by the firm of Camprubí i Santacana Arquitectes is an innovative project comprising a central house containing the services and communal areas, plus ten rooms built independently.

The hotel, which has borrowed the name of the hermitage, is notable for its close links with the natural world. For a start, the rooms are not classical hotel bedrooms but individual cubes clad with wood, set 100 m from the hotel's central nucleus on a hillside reached via a natural garden of rosemary and thyme. They are called kubes: 36 sq m of simple, almost minimalist architecture. Black slate floor, a bathtub dug out of the selfsame floor, a bathroom with a separate shower, a suspended chimney, an armchair and a reading lamp.

photos and information courtesy of **camprubí i santacana arquitectes** additional text by **lee u joe**





Each kube has a large west-facing window and terrace, framing a view exclusively confined to rolling hills shrouded in pine trees, with not a single building in sight. Total privacy.

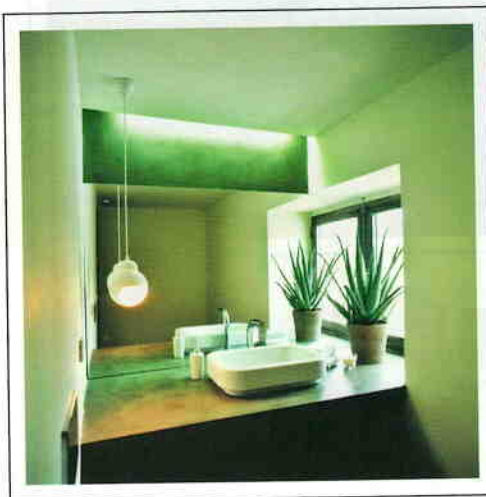
Once inside the Consolación, it is difficult to leave. All the spaces in the central nucleus are flexible, as well as being interconnected to establish a sense of overall unity. Thus, the rest area can be used as a lounge or meeting room, while the reception turns into a bar at night.

The kitchen, which is usually out of bounds in a hotel, is a meeting point in the Consolación. It is open at all times and there is always food and drink available on the counter. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served in an old outhouse that has been converted into a dining room made of stone, wood, steel and glass. The dishes are based on seasonal produce from Matarraña.

The interior design in the Consolación is marked by its essentiality and comfort. Most of the fixed furniture forms part of the architecture. Warm, noble materials such as slate, copper-treated pine, wengue and metal sheeting dominate both the bedrooms and the central nucleus.

The Consolación is a small hotel with just twelve rooms. Ten of these are kubes and the other two occupy the first floor of the

After several years of joint collaborations, in 2004 the architects Estela Camprubí Amat (born Barcelona, 1966) and Eugènia Santacana (born Barcelona, 1967) formed the firm Camprubí i Santacana Arquitectes. Their long list of projects embraces both housing and city planning. The firm also won first prize in the Masia de Can Vic Young Architects' Competition in 2006 and first prize in the INCASOL competition - 50 homes in Cambrils (in collaboration with Oriol i Eduard Bosch Arquitectes).



hermitage's old residence - a baroque building like the church, although the hermitage is much older (14th century). The dimensions, the organisation of the space and, above all, the concept of a hotel geared towards its guests are ideally suited to the organisation of meetings of small groups or seminars.

The project is rounded off by an outdoor swimming pool overlooking the entire landscape, in a setting of the utmost privacy and peacefulness. This degree of isolation would be impossible in a normal hotel. The Consolación, however, was built with a view friendly and enjoyable tranquillity, inspired by the architecture of Craig Ellwood, a mixture of the Germanic rationalism of Mies van der Roë and the informality of southern California.

If guests want to leave the hotel, what better than the Way of Santiago, which runs through the hermitage gate on the section between Tortosa and Zaragoza? There are, however, many other routes nearby, for both walkers and bikers, and these are popular with hunters and painters. Many of these paths lead to the River Matarraña, which can be crossed on walkways spanning the narrower canyons. Other routes come to an end in caves with prehistoric paintings that have been declared heritage sites. **SP**

www.consolacion.com.es
www.camprubisantacana.com

