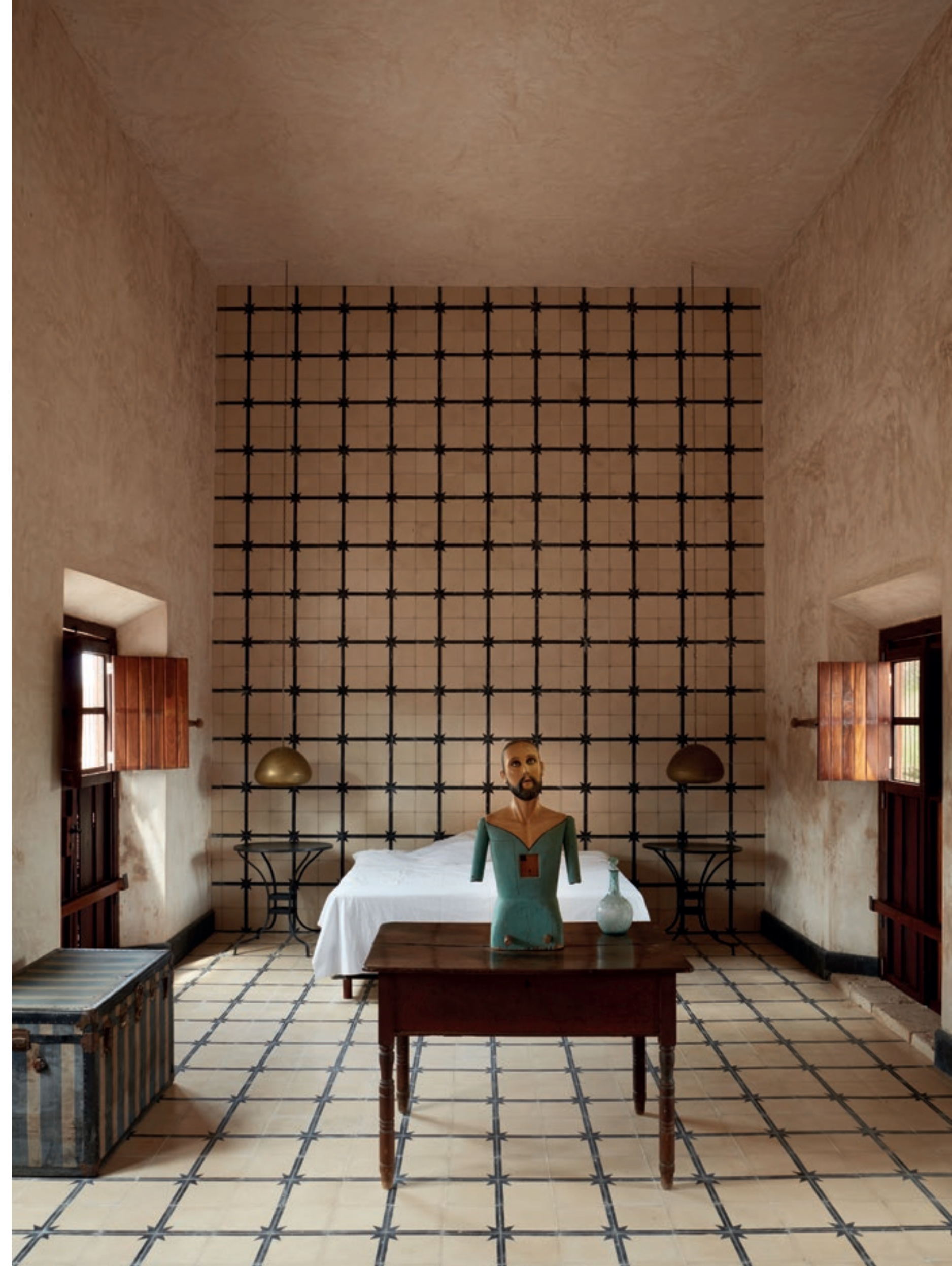


# HACIENDA XUCÚ

## A Recomposition of Place

*Designed by Chic by Accident*

Xucu, Yucatán, Mexico





Wherever possible, the original wall patina and tiles were preserved. The hacienda's San Antonio statue found its place within the minimalist decor.



The north facade with its triangular front and gothic-style arches provides a sense of grand tranquility.

In the Yucatán Peninsula of southeastern Mexico, an age-old hacienda sits hidden within the confines of the sprawling jungle. Seemingly forgotten, this relic of a bygone era appears untouched, as if it has remained a secret since the early nineteenth century. But if one looks closely, they will be able to see that the antiquated estate has been looked after, the stone mass restored, and the intricate inner-workings brought gently into the modern age.

In its prime, the hacienda served as a plantation for sisal and offered a place of respite to the workers of the grounds. But what made its construction so astounding was that it was wholly connected to the nature that surrounded it. When the building was deserted in the 1970s, that nature took over. Trees sprouted in every room, vines grew over doorways and windows, columns joined to the earth, and wildlife scattered throughout the abandoned architecture.

For 40 years it sat, sinking further and further into the jungle. That is until the day Emmanuel Picault came along.

The French-born designer and gallery owner had heard that a dilapidated hacienda was for sale, so he traveled from his home in Mexico City to view the rumored site. Upon arrival, he was given a machete and told to slash his way through the overgrown dwelling at will. After hours of expeditionary exploration, Picault left with a deep understanding of the possibilities of the place. Less than a week later, he met with the distant owner to discuss the property. He could see that the man did not necessarily have a desire to part with it, but that he simply did not know what to do with it. So Picault proposed something a little out of the ordinary. He told him that he should not sell—that, instead, he should commission Picault's studio, Chic by Accident, to save it.

The result would be something of another world.





Perspective view on three successive spaces. In the foreground, an installation by Emmanuel Picault features a carpet of wooden pyramids inspired by the spines of the sacred ceiba tree.

From the moment Picault took on the project, he knew that bringing the structure back to life was going to require a substantial amount of time, money, and labor, but he also understood that the result would be something of another world. The opportunity offered a way for the artist to give back to and honor the traditional Mexican design that he had been enamored by since he was a young boy, while also creating a dialogue between past and present, ruin and room, jungle and domesticity.

To help with the endeavor, Picault brought on a crew of 55 laborers—all of whom worked on-site every day for three years and eventually became both physically and emotionally invested in the experience. Together, they handled all of the gardening, construction, and careful design work—each of their roles switching form like a Swiss Army Knife. Room by room, the crew recovered both the original patina and feeling of the building, keeping all signs of age visible while reinterpreting the

interiors for twenty-first-century living. This considered approach is what resulted in the home's deeply poetic character.

Though the finished composition is undoubtedly striking—with its multitude of bedrooms and bathrooms, communal dining spaces, open-air living areas, outdoor lounges, and bespoke swimming pool—what makes it magical is the hushed wisdom and palpable connectivity that have been preserved at every bend. It is a home that expresses singularity, beauty, and aesthetic territory, while conserving the essence from which it was first erected.

Since its long-awaited completion, Hacienda Xucú has become an awe-inspiring example of Mexican heritage and a symbol of the Yucatán region. But, perhaps more importantly, it has become an example of thoughtful intervention—standing proof that design does not always require radical change, and that some things are better left intact. ●





A minimalist bathroom creates a visual contrast between natural wall stucco and black tiles that were produced specially for the project.

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Inside and out, the original patina creates an intimate connection to the past.