

SOUL SURVIVOR

A historic Belgian seaside villa serves as the flagship for Maison Osain's philosophy of restoration, where heritage architecture meets a deeply personal, immersive approach to design.

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This view of the basement looks out onto the outdoor swimming pool to the left and a lift to the right, which provides access to the rest of the home. The space features a sculptural lounge chair and an organic wall artwork by Katrien Doms, curated via KALPA Art Living.



The central living space features a sunken seating area, or *zitput*, finished in elegant travertine. A large-scale triptych artwork by Eleanor Herbosch from KALPA ART Living hangs on the far wall, creating a sophisticated backdrop to the original brick fireplace.



Designed as the centrepiece of the home, the kitchen features a minimalist aesthetic paired with artwork by Annelies Toussaint from KALPA ART Living and functional tableware by Maison Osain.



The light-filled living room is decorated with a sculptural vase by Akiko Hirai and a curated selection of furniture from Les Campanules, including a comfortable loveseat, a low coffee table, and classic safari chairs.

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Travertine surfaces
meet dark timber and
lime-washed walls in
the kitchen, celebrating
the 'soft-minimalism'
movement, where every
curve of stone and
every shadow on the
wall feels intentional.



An informal hallway features another striking piece of artwork by Eleanor Herbosch, set against neutral walls and a dark-beamed ceiling, which complements a simple wooden bench.

In the coastal town of Knokke, where the North Sea light has long inspired masters of Belgian modernism, a historic monument has undergone a quiet metamorphosis. Villa Sous Tous Vent, originally commissioned in 1926 by the painter Albert Saverys and designed by architect Valentin Vaerwyck, was once a vibrant nexus of art and domesticity. When Ann Butaye and Thomas Maria Verschuren, the founders of Maison Osaïn, came across the property, it stood dilapidated and fragmented. It was also divided into two separate homes under one roof, its small rooms stifling the very light Saverys once sought to capture.

For Butaye and Verschuren, the project became more than a renovation; it marked a deeply personal homecoming. Following a trajectory-shifting period during the pandemic, compounded by a significant health challenge, the couple began to re-evaluate not only what they did, but how they lived. Butaye, formerly in fashion, and Verschuren, an architect who left the firm he had founded to partner with his wife, became their own client – a methodology that has defined their studio since its inception in 2022. The name Osaïn derives from the Yoruba deity of plants and healing, a nod to the brand’s commitment to restoration and nature-led well-being.

“We had to figure out how to make this partnership work,” they reflect, noting the delicate balance required to merge their professional lives without allowing work to consume their private world. Their approach is uniquely immersive: by living within their projects – whether this villa or a chalet in the Alps – they forge a true connection to each space.

At Villa Sous Tous Vent, this hands-on rigour proved essential. As a listed monument, every intervention was subject to close scrutiny by the province’s conservation authorities. “We had someone from the province following the entire process very

closely; we had to check every single aspect, down to the type of screws we needed to use,” Verschuren recalls.

This close collaboration ultimately yielded significant results. The kitchen and fireplace originally sat on the awkward border of the two former dwellings; today, that boundary has been erased. The ceiling above the kitchen was opened, flooding the heart of the home with light. And when the original ceramic floor tiles proved unsalvageable, travertine was introduced – a choice that honours the home’s heritage while grounding it in a timeless warmth.

Maison Osaïn’s model is somewhat unique: they acquire structures, reinvent them with meticulous care and contemporary comfort, and eventually pass them on to new owners. They’re particularly drawn to houses with a soul – extraordinary properties that lend themselves well to their mission to breathe new life into these ‘tired’ buildings, elevating them into total works of art.

This vision, a deeply shared passion, is one they extend to a wider community of creators. For the villa’s art curation, they travelled to Tuscany to build a close relationship with Olga Niescier of KALPA. In turn, the KALPA team came to Knokke to carefully select and place contemporary paintings and sculptures. The result is a fully integrated environment, with the house offered as a complete narrative: furnished in its entirety, art included.

With a garden by Piet Oudolf that marks the passing seasons, and interiors defined by natural stone and mineral surfaces, Villa Sous Tous Vent stands as a testament to what they describe as “sincere living.” “There is so much fulfilment in achieving something like this together,” Butaye reflects. “We have grown as a team and are now developing our own objects, so that it becomes a complete story.”

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Architecture is as much about what you take away as what you add. For this project, the ceiling was opened up to create a dramatic sense of height, ensuring that, even with the original small window apertures, the heart of the home feels expansive.



The primary bedroom offers a tranquil retreat featuring luxurious bed linens from Maison Osain and a delicate wall ceramic sculpture by Sabine Pagliarulo, curated via KALPA ART Living.



This series of images showcases the home's most refined details: the dressing room for the master bedroom to the left, the main entrance featuring a travertine-finished swimming pool above, and the master bathroom to the right.



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