

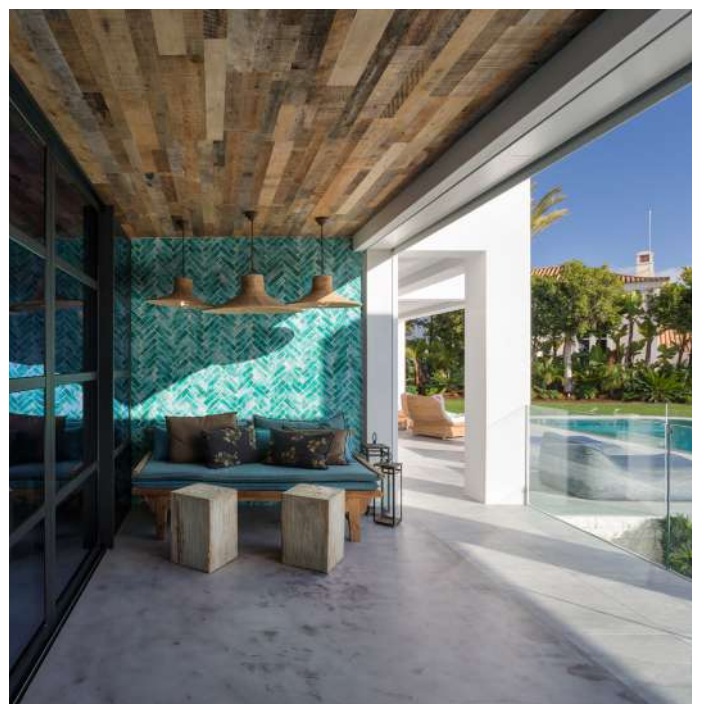
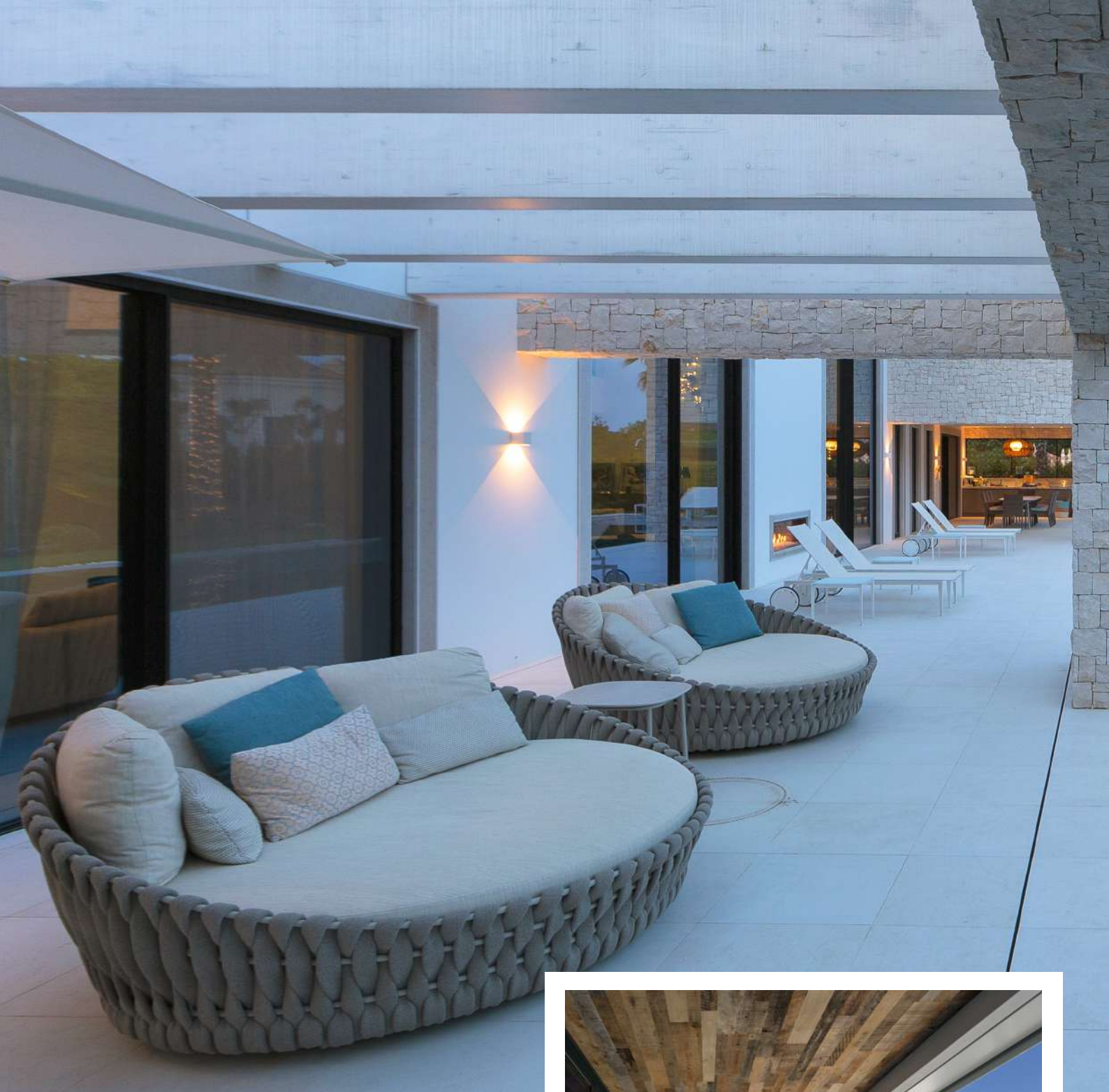


# *Singing the Blues*

**S**inging the blues, or feeling “blue,” as an expression of being sad or depressed has always puzzled me as an architect. Blue, as one of nature’s colours, is hugely attractive and, indeed, features largely in concept design, simply because the blue sea, the clear blue sky and the (most usual and popular) colour of outdoor swimming pools are sought after and are therefore key drivers.



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The change in colour tone throughout the day is so interesting, fascinating and attractive and it certainly adds a feeling of physical wellbeing. One only has to consider the condition of SAD (a degree of sunlight deficit) which is quite prevalent in Scandinavian countries, in order to understand how popular living in the Algarve is for Northern Europeans.

Sea views add huge value to houses in the Algarve, so we strive to orientate houses towards the sea (or in some cases a lake) and also, if possible, make them South or South West facing.

What is quite interesting (or it might just be slightly nerdy architects who find it so!), is that this important design approach is exactly opposite to how traditional houses in Portugal were built. They tended to have small windows and more frequently faced North. The obvious reason was that in the then agrarian society, most people worked in the olive, orange and cork groves and by the end of the day sought shade and cool.



A similar scenario existed in English aristocratic society, some centuries ago, in that as much as the nobles sought white skin, which was a sign that they were far too important to have to work in the fields. Nowadays, of course, it is chic to have a lovely (not too wrinkly) suntan.

The big change in how people from Northern Europe live here in the Algarve is the move towards “inside/outside” living, where huge sliding windows allow inside space and outside space to flow into each other, encouraging al fresco dining and lounging.

So the conclusion is that “blue” is not sad, but it is that when we wake up in the morning and look out at the sun shining in the clear blue sky, it makes us smile!

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