



SALT x CAMILLE WALALA

Camille Walala designs new SALT of Palmar hotel in Mauritius

Now open



SALT of Palmar's palette balances natural hues and Walala's signature vibrant pop notes and features a recurrent motif of black and white stripes. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin

Earlier this month, on 1 November, the doors opened to a new and refreshingly forward-thinking hotel on the east coast of Mauritius. SALT of Palmar is the first in a new family of hotels from LUX* Resorts & Hotels located in the Indian Ocean (Mauritius, Reunion Island and Mauritius) as well as Turkey and China. Conceived to champion sustainability, connect with the local community and introduce culturally curious travellers to the real, unvarnished Mauritius, the first SALT hotel occupies a dramatic, geometric riad-like building first created in 2005 by renowned Mauritian architect Maurice Giraud – now designed inside and out by the always-resplendent artist and colour evangelist Camille Walala.

Camille was invited to take charge of SALT's interiors following her work at LUX* Grand Gaube last year, when she and her team created a spectacular mural for the resort's Beach Rouge beach club. The Lux Collective CEO and SALT creator Paul Jones was struck by the affinity between Camille's passion for colour and pattern, and the importance of colour in Mauritian culture. When it came to developing a design language for the SALT brand, she was the obvious – and only – choice.

WALALA



Camille Walala worked closely with Mauritian architect John-François Adams to realise her interiors vision for the hotel's rooms and public areas. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin

'Camille Walala's relationship with colour is precisely the same as most Mauritians' – for both, colour is a vehicle for joy and a means of expressing positivity. She is the ideal artist for SALT of Palmar; I must have been in the hotel 100 times as it developed over the last few months but, whenever I see them, her designs still make me smile.'

– Paul Jones, CEO, The Lux Collective

WALALA



Camille Walala's interior scheme runs through the hotel's 59 rooms and public areas. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin

Given that the entire concept of SALT is rooted in the authentic expression of the destination and helping guests forge a meaningful connection with their surroundings, the most important aspect of Camille's brief was to draw inspiration from the country itself – to weave strands of a distinctly Mauritian aesthetic into the fabric of the interior.

Starting in January 2018, Camille and her long-standing collaborator Julia Jomaa set out to explore the island to find ideas for the SALT colour palette, looking both to the natural landscape and the man-made environment for cues. The resultant palette balances natural hues and Walala's signature vibrant pop notes, and features a recurrent motif of black and white stripes.

WALALA



SALT of Palmar beach view room with daybed. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin

'I was blown away with how many vibrant and bold colours you find around the island. People paint their houses in the most amazing tones that really stand out against the lush tropical setting. From the emerald green of the plants to the ever changing colours of the sky, I wanted to marry these warm natural tones to my signature pop colours'

– Camille Walala

SALT of Palmar is also Camille Walala's first architectural collaboration. She worked closely with Mauritian architect John-François Adams to realise her interiors vision for the hotel's 59 rooms and public areas, translating the ideas on Camille's mood boards into vibrant, show-stopping reality.

Camille and Julia also drew on Adams' local expertise in order to recruit the area's most talented craftspeople to design bespoke pieces for the project (including the likes of basket-weaver Reotee Buleeram, potter Janine Espitalier-Noel, and father-and-son rattan artisans Mawlabaccus and Said Moosbally).



From left: Local Mauritian, rattan artisan Said Moosbally and potter Janine Espitalier-Noel. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin

WALALA

The culmination of this collaboration between artist, architect and artisans is a hotel that looks unlike any other on the island. Where most resorts take their own design template and transplant it into their setting, SALT has done the reverse, channelling the colours and community of its surroundings to shape its look and feel. Camille's task was to find the perfect balance between her own creative impulse and the authentic expression of the island's character – fresh, playful and irresistibly positive in outlook.

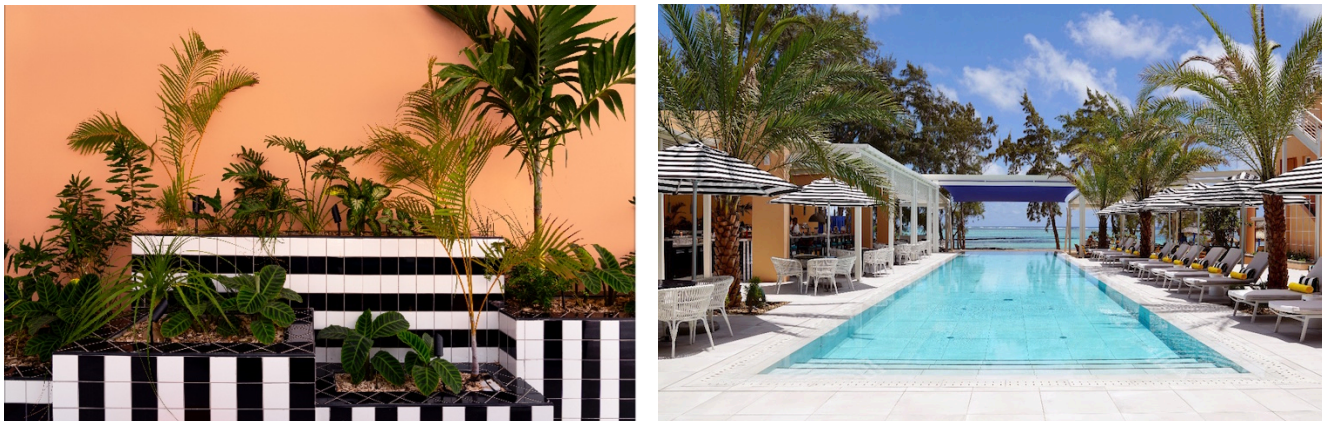
But that was far from the only challenge. Although Walala has been tackling projects and installations of increasing scale and complexity in recent years (such as the 20-storey facelift of a Brooklyn building for WantedDesign earlier this year, and the giant inflatable Villa Walala for London Design Festival 2017), designing SALT represented an altogether more complicated prospect:



The hotel's pool bar and welcome room. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin

'What was different for me this time is the sheer quantity of things to take into consideration when designing; not only do colours and pattern have to complement each other, but fabrics, textures, surfaces, light, functionality and moods are also critically important to consider. In addition, Mauritius is a remote country, and although the selection of products and materials is wide, I had to think of many alternatives to things that I would have loved to use in the styling and build. Because SALT is by the sea and under a strong sun, we had to work with materials which could not be damaged by wind, heat, water or light. However, I did grow to enjoy the challenge of finding alternatives in the local area – that, after all, is what the SALT philosophy is all about.'

– Camille Walala



SALT of Palmar's pool area complete with Walala's signature black and white stripes. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin



SALT of Palmar's design journey and Camille and Julia's colour adventures in Mauritius form one of a series of stories told in a collection of short films created by Zetteler Films to shed light on the unique blend of personalities, talents and ideas that have gone into the creation of this pioneering new hotel brand. Camille's film is available to [view here](#).

CONTACT

For more information about Camille's work on SALT of Palmar, high-res imagery or details of the SALT film collection, please contact Jessica Knowles at Zetteler: j.knowles@zetteler.co.uk or on +44 (0)20 3735 5855.

For more information about SALT of Palmar, please contact Freya Costello at Bird PR: freya@birdtravelpr.com or on +44 (0)20 7112 8824.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

About SALT

Launched in Mauritius in November 2018, SALT is a new family of experience-led, sustainability-focused hotels, each steered and shaped by its location. Instead of creating a bubble of luxury in a beautiful setting, SALT forges meaningful and authentic connections with the community around it, enabling guests to explore the pure, unvarnished reality of culture and landscape, meet the people who define it, and share their own skills with local residents. SALT takes sustainability seriously: No buffets, fixed TV screens, or single-use plastics, and everything locally sourced – from the staff to the sun loungers. The first hotel, SALT of Palmar, opened right on the Mauritian beach in November 2018. SALT of Wolong, in China, is set to follow soon...

saltresorts.com

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#WeAreSALT #SALTShakers

About Camille Walala

A graduate in textile design from the University of Brighton, Camille Walala established her studio and brand in East London in 2009 and has since evolved from textile-based work to art direction, interior design and large-scale civic art and installation projects. Drawing on influences including the Memphis Movement, the Ndebele tribe and Victor Vasarely, Walala has an irrepressible enthusiasm for playful, graphic patterns that invoke a smile. Her dedication to positivity, optimistic typography and bold use of pattern and colour have seen her transform urban landscapes across the world, and earned her clients ranging from Converse and Armani to Nintendo and Facebook.

camillewalala.com

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