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HOUSE
& Garden

AND MORE!

PREFAB IN PORTUGAL

At this vacation home near Lisbon—a modern log cabin open to the countryside—relaxation takes a seat of honor.
By Renaud Legrand. Photographed by Julien Oppenheim.



An enormous, custom-designed sofa extends the living room outdoors onto a balcony of garapa wood.
Produced by Sylvie Thébaud.



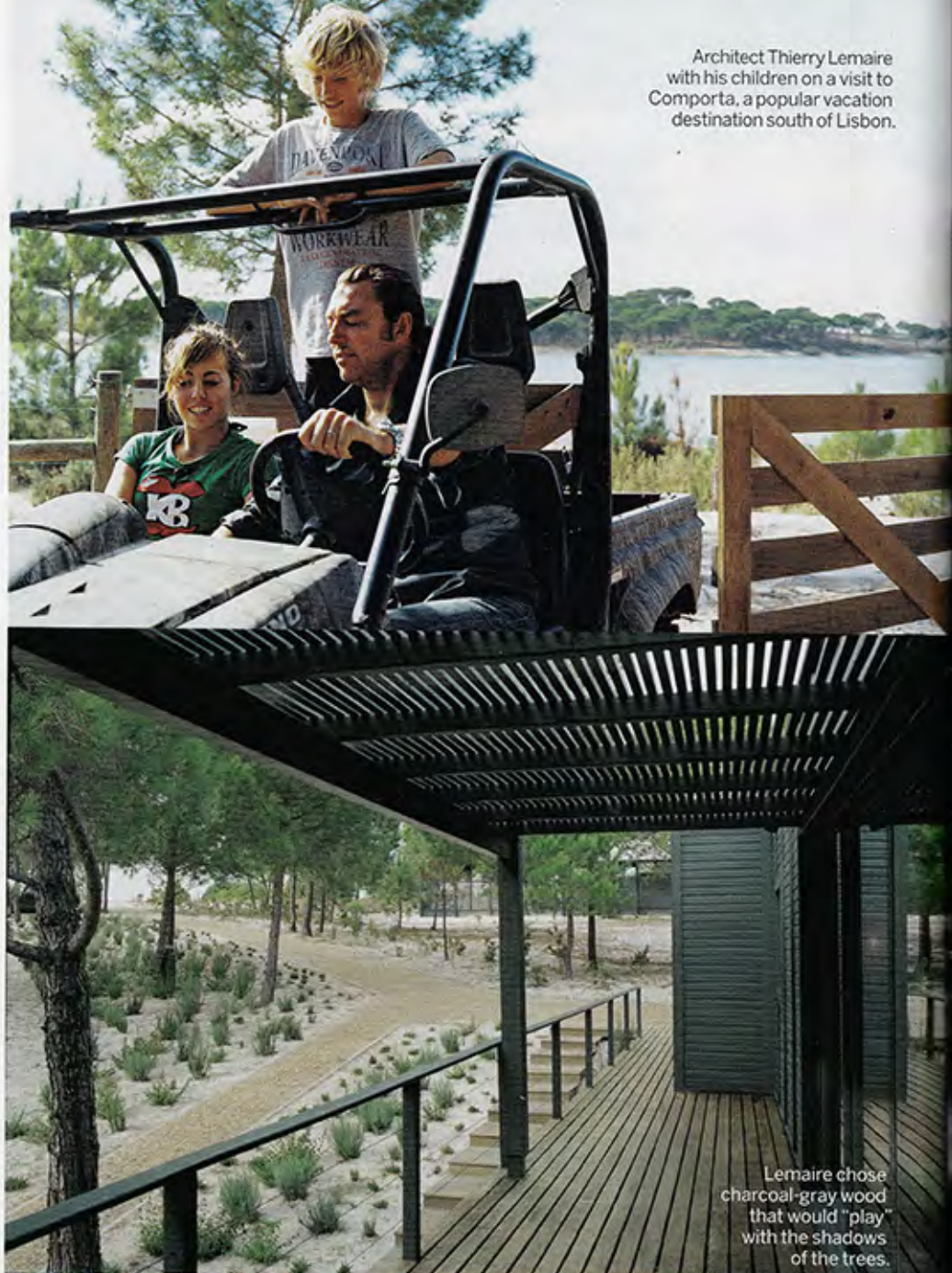
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moorh sand, dunes, pines, and tamarisk trees. Then a lake and, just after it, the ocean. Everywhere, sun and perfect solitude. Who could ask for more? A house, perfectly situated amid these delights, sweeping, subtle, and wide open to the sea air.

This dream come true belongs to a family from Lisbon, who chose Comporta, an idyllic getaway about 60 miles south of the capital, as the site of their vacation home. Designed by architect Thierry Lemaire to satisfy his clients' desire for an inexpensive, easy-to-build structure that blends seamlessly into the landscape, the house is made from prefabricated, factory-assembled components "reimagined" by Lemaire. The owners wanted a construction site that would intrude as little as possible on the environment, hence the stilts: minimal impact on the soil, no heavy foundation. Hence, too, Lemaire's design—like a crystalline cube, all transparency and big bay windows and open space. In certain places, the house appears hollowed out; you see nothing but the elegant metal framework, nestled into the surrounding foliage.

A house like a discreet whisper. "I wanted a place of rest, peace, and quiet, where time would stop," says the owner. He wanted vintage decor, too. That came with the interior decoration, also by Lemaire. They decided on a vibrant, cheerful color scheme: red and anise-green chairs by Eames, an orange Chromatique sofa, a Pierre Paulin armchair, a Knoll table, joined by several signature Lemaire pieces of furniture—new, but in perfect harmony with the old. Not a bombardment but a subtle hint of color to define the interior space of a house that otherwise floats, suspended in the landscape.

Architect Thierry Lemaire with his children on a visit to Comporta, a popular vacation destination south of Lisbon.



Lemaire chose charcoal-gray wood that would "play" with the shadows of the trees.

The prefabricated house was originally lodging for the builders before Lemaire reconceived it.



The construction of the house—a network of balconies and platforms perched on the sand—had little impact on the environment.