



INTERIOR

ARCHITECTURE

NOW

Jennifer Hudson

(Top)

Calle 54, Madrid (in collaboration with Javier Mariscal) (2002)

A thematic restaurant inspired by the world of Latin music. The idea was to create a dark, authentic space with references from the streets of Havana. The floor and bar is in black granite. The space is dominated by a graphic mural showcasing the names of famous jazz artistes.



(Below)

Custo, Barcelona (2001)

Located in an historic building, the interior is lined with light and transparent materials (aluminium, transparent glass and methacrylate) to emphasize the products.

(Opposite page)

Restaurant Ikea, Vitoria (2005)

Not to be confused with the Swedish brand, Ikea in Spanish means small hill. The restaurant was conceived as a small country house surrounded by oak and beech trees. Salas brought the forest inside, using natural woods for the floor and a branch-like wooden construction on the ceiling which allows artificial light to filter through.



Fernando Salas

Fernando Salas was born in 1950 in Santa Cruz de Mudela, Ciudad Real, Spain. His father worked on the railways and the family moved to Andalucía and Barcelona as his career progressed. Salas' childhood was a mixture of influences from the wild countryside of the south of Spain to the Barrio of Barcelona. He had a natural talent for draughtsmanship and the luck to be noticed by an observant high school teacher who recognized his potential and guided him in the right direction.

Salas had no formal architectural training, serving an apprenticeship from the age of 14 with MBM Architects under Oriol Bohigas, José María Martorell and David Mackay. He opened his own company, Salas Studio, in 1975, since when he has built up an international reputation for his atmospheric, simple and down-to-earth designs, making him the leading interior architect working in Spain today.

He has completed a number of commercial, retail, hospitality and restaurant designs, including fashion boutiques (Ekseption, Torremolinos; Zastwo, Barcelona and Zas, Barcelona), franchises (Robert Verino, Love Store and Custo), offices (Silver Sanz, Barcelona; Barcelona Empren and Twenti showroom and office, Barcelona), bars, restaurants and hotels in collaboration with Javier Mariscal (Calle 54, Madrid; Ikea restaurant, Vitoria; Domina Hotel, Bilbao, and a floor in the Hotel Puerta América, Madrid). The occasional collaboration between Mariscal and Salas combines their experience: Mariscal's creative, fresh art and Salas' interior-design experience. The result is a

creative boiling pot, which combines the passions of both of them and produces some very special results

Salas' influences are varied: his love of Bauhaus which he considers the 'father' of modern architecture; his respect for the Mediterranean vernacular which creates spaces specific to the geographic and climatic needs of the user; the functionalism of the 1950s – architecture which liberated Spain from the 'grey, boring and formal architecture of Franco's rule, but above all his love and respect for nature which he says is fundamental to his work, instructing as it does his choice of colours, textures, atmosphere and aesthetics.

Salas believes that architecture should be intuitive and not be too concerned with stylistic artifice. 'A plastic result can be achieved without being opportunistic. An interior can be beautiful without having a signature style. An intrinsic sublime value can be created by harnessing, for example, natural light, using it to add brilliance and texture. We have a wealth of "materials" in sensation and experiences which we should employ to come up with a solution which will work well for the end user.

Natural comfort is important. Often these days architecture has become too modified and has lost touch with the human element. For example, the climatic elements of a building are often missing; the consideration of air currents and the aroma that a gardenia from the back porch might give to the interior of your house. The Romans and the Arabs had this sensibility and knew how to live. I think it is important to re-learn some of these basic qualities. Sometimes I feel that

(Right)
Hotel Domina (in collaboration with **Javier Mariscal**, Bilbao) (2002) The interior of the hotel is a gathering of different styles. The main atrium is dominated by a giant sculpture of stone.



(Right)
Hotel Puerta América
 (in collaboration with
 Javier Mariscal) Madrid
 (2005) Eighteen architects
 and designers were invited
 to create inspirational
 spaces. Salas' floor
 takes its theme from the
 functionalism of the 1950s.
 The rooms are designed
 to look long, the view
 over the city reinforcing
 the deception.



(Below left)
Silver Sanz offices,
 Barcelona (1993)
 The construction of the
 stairway is made from
 one single piece of metal
 covered in the same
 marble as the floor. The
 concept for the interior was
 to be as simple as possible
 without showing excessive
 design intervention.



(Opposite, below right)
Twenti showroom,
 Barcelona (1986) Twenti
 is the showroom for
 Marthe François Girbaud
 and remains the project
 of which Salas is most
 proud. Located in a dingy
 basement, the interior was
 opened up by placing a
 glass panel at entrance
 level, allowing daylight to
 pour into the space below.
 The offices are entered by
 way of glass doors.
 The reception desk sits
 in front of a stone wall
 which is a continuation
 from the floor above.

(Right)
Restaurant Formica,
 Barcelona (2004) The
 bar and restaurant were
 created for the company
 Formica for Casadecor.
 The idea was to use the
 classic material in as
 many innovative ways as
 possible. The walls of the
 restaurant are covered
 by different panels of
 Formica, 'Solid' and
 'Digitform'. A translucent
 pelosis (Formica Solid,
 Birch) allows light to shine
 through creating a warm
 and pleasant atmosphere.



architects have the wrong sense of progress
 and have lost the knowledge of what
 "proper" architecture is all about.'

Salas' design is understated. He does
 not intervene unnecessarily and has lost
 projects because for some his work is
 over-simple. 'Clients have told me this is
 very poor in the sense that it is lacking or
 missing something that appears to make
 it plain. I don't feel my approach has
 changed much from the start of my career.
 I keep fresh by exploring the properties of
 new materials, but the way of understand-
 ing things is still the same – sincere and
 first-hand. I don't put cherries on top. If
 you make a great cake, why decorate it?'

Proof of his success, however, has
 come in countless citations and awards,

including many FAD prizes, the latest
 given in 2005 for the interior of the
 Formica restaurant in Barcelona. Peer
 recognition is important to Salas. 'It
 means so much to me as I work and
 have created a style, an attitude which
 has remained coherent for the last 35
 years. It is important to be given the
 reassurance that I haven't been wrong
 and that I haven't been making stabs
 in the dark.'

As well as architecture, Salas is active in
 exhibition and graphic design. He paints,
 and recently held an exhibition of his own
 photographs. His current projects include
 a series of warehouses for wine merchants
 Ribera del Duero, and hotels in southern
 Spain and in Canada.