

**sterling**  
magazine

issue 04 may / june 2007 your free copy

**untamed beauty**  
where the wild places are

**crete revisited**  
heraklion's new look

**omar marzouk**  
courting controversy

# coasting

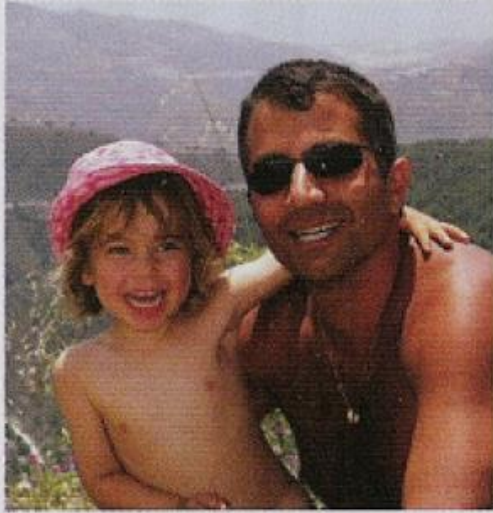
black sea road trip



[Sterling.dk](http://Sterling.dk)



When Kim and Lotte Kashi met in Denmark in 1999, they discovered they shared a dream: to move abroad to a sunny spot by the sea. Their search took in Iran and Greece, but they finally found all they were looking for on Spain's Costa del Sol



"We want to sit in Finca Isabel and look out on the mountains when we're old and grey," says Lotte Kashi, speaking fondly of her and her husband's home in the Costa del Sol area of Spain. It's hardly surprising she's so devoted to the place: the couple have spent over

three years building their dream home in the sun – and even longer locating the perfect plot.

It all started in 1999, when Lotte and Kim met and fell in love. It didn't take them long to realise they wanted to spend the rest of their lives together, or that they shared a dream of one day emigrating to a warmer country than Denmark.





# Kim built 75% of the house completely on his own, with his bare hands. For the rest of it, he used local builders. It really is a home-built house

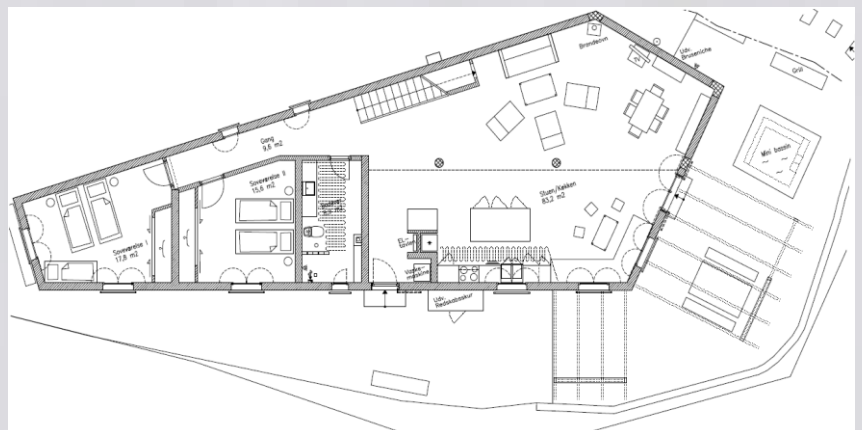
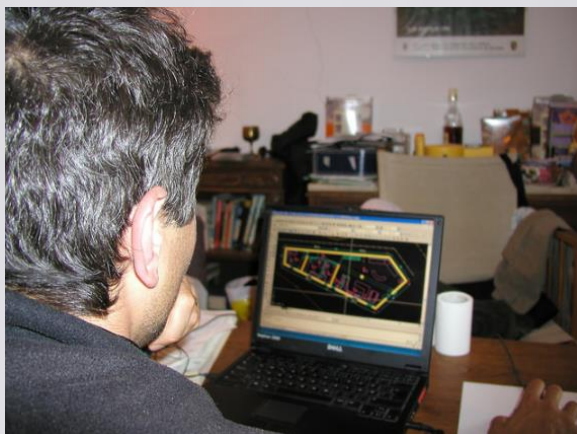
Kim is originally from Iran, so they began by looking for land to buy and build on in his homeland. That, however, didn't work out. "Kim had some wonderful memories of Iran, but after we'd visited some sites on the Caspian Sea, we realised that the area is too remote for us," explains Lotte.

They briefly considered Greece, but realised how important language is. And since Lotte speaks Spanish, it seemed logical for them to continue their search in Spain.

"We went down to the south of the country and, after only a week, were already dealing with estate agents," Lotte says.

But there were quite a few failed attempts to buy a piece of land before they found the ideal spot.

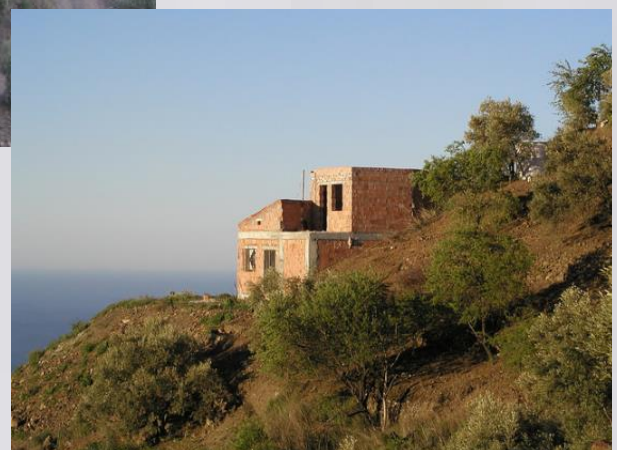
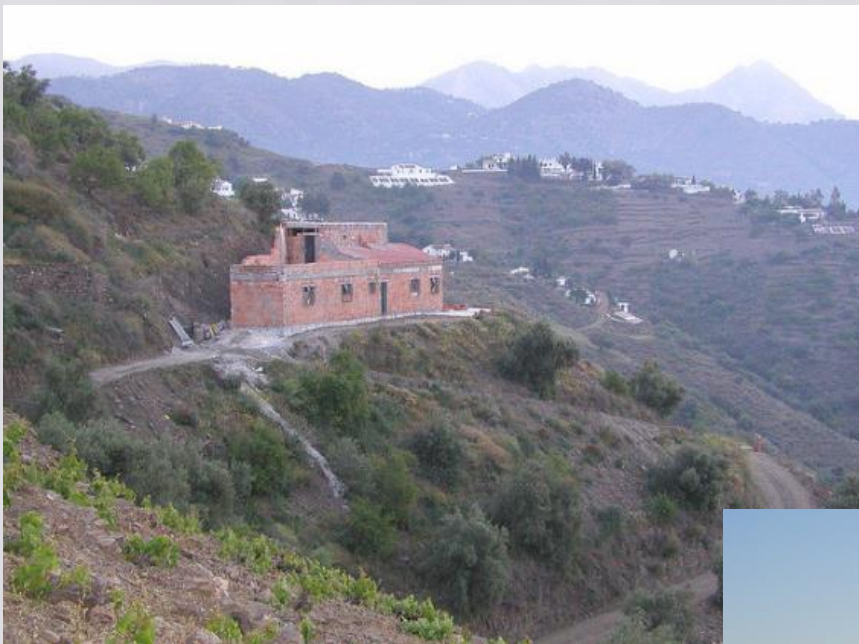
"It's very different purchasing real estate in Spain compared with the process in Denmark," she explains. "It's not hard to secure a villa or a flat, but when it comes to land and building your own house, it gets complicated. For a start, everything takes a lot longer in Spain.



"Worse, we discovered that a lot of those mountain sites for sale are not properly defined. So sometimes, when we went out to view one, the seller would drop a few stones around and tell us that the land in between the stones was the site for sale. But when we then got a lawyer on it and were ready to buy, the site would suddenly officially be a lot smaller."

Finally, the couple did find the place of their dreams: a site halfway up a mountain to the east of Malaga. It looked like the middle of nowhere, but in fact is fairly close to the village of Cómputa. And when they heard that the original dwelling on the site had been called Finca Isabel, they were sold. On Lotte's arm was their young daughter called – Isabel.

"I had goosebumps when I heard that. It just seemed so perfect," smiles Lotte. Because Kim is a civil constructor who's







worked for several leading architectural firms in Denmark, it was always the plan to do most of the actual building themselves.

"Kim spent all his spare time at the site," Lotte recalls, "and the children and I would go down as often as possible. All the maternity leave I got with our son was spent there. Kim built 75% of the house completely on his own, with his bare hands. For the rest of it, he used local builders. It really is a home-built house."

The Kashis bought their piece of land for about 400,000 kr (just over £50,000), and have since spent a lot of time, money and effort on building and decorating. But today they have their finished dream house in a place they've come to love.

"The locals have made us feel so welcome and the whole area feels really nice and safe,' Lotte says. "Moreover, we look as if we belong. Being Iranian, Kim is used to looking different in Denmark; whereas in Spain he looks much more like everyone else. And since the Spaniards are used to seeing blonde tourists, I feel fine, too. It feels like home – we really love being in our mountain retreat."






The original plan was to move permanently into the house as soon as Lotte had finished her degree as a specialist doctor. But then something made the family think twice...

"Isabel is starting school soon, so we looked into primaries in Spain for her. But we couldn't find anything suitable and the international school is two hours away. That's too far and a price I'm just not willing to pay."

So reluctantly she and Kim decided not to move to the finca permanently until the children are older. "As a result," she says, "for now we're using Finca Isabel just as a holiday house – albeit one we visit as much as we can. And when we can't be down there ourselves, we rent it out to our family and friends.

"Our dream's cost us a long wait, a lot of hard work and there has been a huge list of rules and regulations to learn."

So, all in all, has it been worth it?

"Absolutely. There have been highs and lows over the years, but it has definitely been worth it," Lotte confirms. 'Finca Isabel is our life project, and it's still well on track.' 

### **Fly me there...**

**Sterling flies to Málaga from Aalborg, Billund, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Oslo and Stockholm Arlanda. See page 95 or [www.sterling.dk](http://www.sterling.dk) for details**

