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YEARS
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DESIGN

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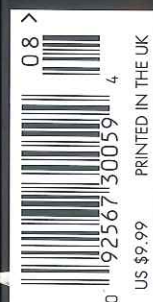
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BUMPER BATHROOM SPECIAL

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ABOVE IT ALL

Hidden among the treetops, this unique Tuscan abode is the ultimate retreat

Words TAMI CHRISTIANSEN Pictures NATHALIE KRAG/TAVERNE AGENCY



Exterior This outdoor house in the grounds of a family home in Tuscany is used as a guesthouse, playroom and restful refuge. Surrounded by olive, cyprus and pine trees, the rusted iron, glass and recycled wood structure seems utterly at one with its leafy environment ▶



Interior Flooring made from recycled scaffolding planks and a bed built from wooden storage boxes on castors lend the main indoor room a rustic feel. The blackboard behind the bed allows guests to leave their thoughts or graphic motifs. Vintage wall lamps light the space up at night, while Venetian blinds give the option of privacy

Veranda This space serves as an outdoor living area in the summer months. A pair of vintage French armchairs in leather and wood are perfectly placed to take in the stunning view
Exterior A sand box flanked by chairs from a local kindergarten evokes the original concept of the building as a children's play house



When Riccardo Barthel and his wife, Daniela, built their Florence home, it was their dream to construct a tree house for their children in the grounds. It was only years later, when those children had kids of their own, that the idea was finally realised – albeit in a modified form. For the expanded family, the tree house now had to be multi-functional: part playroom, part guesthouse and part quiet refuge.

There was a problem, too: none of the Barthels' trees was strong enough to support it. So, with the help of architect Vincenzo Trupo, a tall, free-standing structure – accessed by a stepladder on one side and an iron staircase on the other – was built instead. Rusted iron and wood flooring give the impression of a tree house and add a rustic, relaxed feel.

Inside, the space feels larger than it is thanks to the simple decor, huge windows and glass doors. The main room houses a wood-burning stove and a double bed, behind which is a blackboard wall 'where guests can draw or express their thoughts,' says Riccardo. This separates the room from a kitchenette, while on the other side of the house, a mirrored bathroom creates the illusion of open space. A terrace looks out over the spectacular Tuscan setting, while kindergarten chairs sit around a sand box below, evoking the original concept of a children's play house.

Standing in this magical abode among the olive, cypress and pine trees, you could almost believe you were in a bird's nest in the branches. *The tree house is available to rent, approx £1,220 per week; email info@riccardobarthel.it* **ED**



Standing in this magical, whimsical house among the olive, cyprus and pine trees, you could almost believe you were in a bird's nest high in the branches

