

COLOUR MATCH

Casa Huayocari, Peru, by Barclay & Crousse

THE HOUSE'S COLOURED CONCRETE IS A NOD TO THE LOCAL MOUNTAINS' ANDESITE STONE, WHICH IS USED TO LINE THE LOWER PORTION OF THE WALLS. IRREGULAR GEOMETRIC WINDOWS RECALL THOSE OF LE CORBUSIER'S RONCHAMP CHAPEL





Peru's Urubamba valley is a fertile agricultural region, best known for the production of corn, quinoa and other grains. Populated with native Andean trees, such as queñuas and pisonays, the valley sits at the foot of mountains that are part of the Cordillera Oriental - the easternmost range before the Amazon region. It is often known as *el Valle Sagrado* (the Sacred Valley) because the Incas believed the mountains overlooking it to be celestial beings. It was this landscape that architect Jean-Pierre Crousse - of Lima-based duo Barclay & Crousse - first thought of when he was approached by an old school friend to build on an empty plot in Urubamba's Huayocari area.

The client had lived in the Andes for many years, working as a mediator between the indigenous local communities and industrial corporations. Now based in Lima, he still longed for the mountains, and looked to Crousse and his partner, Sandra Barclay, to build a weekend retreat.

The result is Casa Huayocari, a four-bedroom home that sits on a plot within a housing cooperative, where residents share common services such as water and electricity. About an hour's drive from Cusco airport, the new property is a spectacular rural hideaway, constructed to provide breathtaking views of Mount Pituisiray and other peaks in the Urubamba range. 'It's no wonder the Incas thought of these mountains as sacred - they are hugely powerful,' says Crousse. 'With its geometric shapes, the house is like yet another piece of mountain placed in the landscape.'

The valley forms part of the route towards Machu Picchu from Cusco but, being at lower altitude, the air here is light. The pleasant, temperate climate has made this area a popular one for holiday homes and hotels, a base for trips up to the famous Inca citadel and to other nearby archaeological ruins and natural sites.

Casa Huayocari's striking colour palette is an homage to the reddish hues of the mountains' andesite stone, glimpsed wherever the rock emerges beneath

ABOVE, THE HOUSE NESTLES INTO THE VALLEY FLOOR, WITH STONE WALLS DIVIDING THE PLOT AND CREATING A SYSTEM OF TERRACES, SIMILAR TO THAT USED BY THE INCAS IN THE 15TH CENTURY

BELOW, THE LIVING ROOM OPENS ONTO A COVERED SITTING AREA WITH AN OUTDOOR FIREPLACE

its cover of greenery. 'The objective was to create a monochromatic house that imitates the colour of the mountains,' say the architects, who used local andesite to line the lower part of the building's walls.

Because this is a seismic area, the house is built almost entirely of concrete, left exposed on the upper parts of the building. This is made of a pozzolanic cement that also has a reddish tint, owing to its high iron content. The architects enhanced this tone further by applying a dye to the cement mix. 'In the sunlight,' says Crousse, 'it begins to acquire this beautiful colour. It continues to darken over three or four years, and then stays as it is.' The stirring chromatic palette continues inside the house, with flooring made of ceramic *pastelero* tiles typical of Cusco, and the same andesite as the walls.

Upstairs, the bedroom's irregular, protruding windows echo Le Corbusier's famous chapel in the French town of Ronchamp. These, and the other eastern-facing windows, allow the morning sun to warm the house. The building's slanting roof is positioned to protect the interior from the strong afternoon sun, while its material captures heat, which slowly radiates to warm the building over the course of the evening.

After 16 years working in Paris, Barclay and Crousse relocated to Lima in 2006, drawn home by Peru's economic boom. They tend to resist imitating local architectural styles, and Casa Huayocari is no exception. 'We didn't want it to resemble traditional white, tile-roofed Andean houses,' says Crousse. 'Our inspiration wasn't the region's architecture - it was its natural landscape.' Nonetheless, the pair embrace Peru's abundance of independent craftspeople through close collaborations that they say are more common in architectural practice here than in Europe. They worked with local artisans and stonemasons on Casa Huayocari, inviting them to lend their own character to its design and construction.

'We like that the expression of the house corresponds to the techniques of the people who helped to make it,' says Crousse. 'It enriches the property's materiality. It also means that we are not imposing on the local way of constructing - instead, it's the other way around.' ✨

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