Manouchehri House

*Kashan, Iran*

**Architect**
Akbar Helli, Shahnaz Nader

**Client**
Saba Manouchehri Kashani

**Design**
2008

**Completed**
2010
Manouchehri House

Kashan, Iran

I. Introduction

Manouchehri House is an exemplary project of renovation of a Qajar merchant residence in the historic city of Kashan, province of Isfahan, Iran. Being among the first projects to enliven an obsolete residence of Kashan, a long-neglected and decayed historic city, it has ignited a whole trend of reviving this whole city through private civil actions. This project has also pushed the realm of conservation from mere restoration to adapting abandoned residences to new contemporary housing and tourist needs. As such, Manouchehri House has gone through an advanced adaptive reuse programme of establishing a guesthouse with crafts and arts activities. This successful transformation from a ruined building to a vibrant house attracts visitors, students, researchers, tourists and professionals, national and international, to discover not only its Qajar architecture but also to experience the Persian art of living.

II. Contextual Information

A. Brief historical background

The historic city of Kashan is located in the province of Isfahan, and settlements there date back 9’000 years. With its oldest landmark being the Jameh Mosque from 1074 AD., this unique historic urban centre went through different developments, mainly in the Safavid period, when monuments like the Sultan Amir Ahmad Mosque and the Bagh-e Fin Garden added much to its architectural grandeur. During the reign of Abbas I, Kashan was already a hub of advanced crafts such as glazed pottery and tiles (kashi) and copperware. The textile industry reached its zenith with brocades of silk and velvet that reached the imperial courts of Europe and Asia. However, with the earthquake of 1778, most of the material heritage of Kashan was destroyed and the city lost half of its inhabitants.

It is noteworthy to mention that the current existing architectural and urban heritage of Kashan goes back only to the Qajar period. From that time on, Kashan has been home some the most exquisite residences in comparison with other cities. These are indeed unique, with their architectural structural systems of sophisticated brick masonry and well-advanced ornamentation. The most unique among these residences are the Boroujerdiha, Tabatabaie and Ameriha houses. However, if these grand residences reflect the influence of the bourgeoisie of Kashan, its small houses have also their own cultural and aesthetic value.

These grand residences and houses have undergone a serious decay process, and with the modern style of life several were abandoned because they were not updated to integrate contemporary services and amenities. In addition, with the migration of original Kashani families to other modern cities and outside Iran, poor households occupied these houses and they were often fragmented into several housing units. The current project of Manouchehri House is thus an example of recuperating these valuable houses from disappearance, and proving that they can be renovated and updated to deal with contemporary housing needs while sustaining the Persian art of living.
B. Local architectural character

The nature of the climate of Kashan is a desert one and its harsh landscape prompted a typical urban and architectural typology where several techniques of cooling air were devised throughout history. The introverted system of creating a central void around which houses were constructed offers a myriad of means for protection from the outside hot air. In addition to the cultural code of privacy, the houses consisted of several pavilions connected with corridors and bent-alleys (hashti) in order to allow permeability but also keep fresh air and intimacy. This typology of interiorising the residential spaces has also engendered interesting spatial articulation, with advanced ornamentation, that is often an intricate part of complex structural systems. This spatial articulation provides a private section for family (andarouni) and a more open section for guests (birouni). The most interesting element of the Kashani houses is the (sirdab), a basement sitting room, that is often cooled through a series of wind-catchers (barjeel).

The geometrical order of the courtyard is unique, as it impacts the whole organisation of the house. Thus, the important rooms are of regular shape, and have a view on the central courtyard that is often an environmental zone, where vegetation, air and water combine so as to create a cooling ecological micro-system.

The building techniques and materials vary from one house to another according to the degree of wealth of the inhabitants. The walls are often made out of baked bricks in the foundations and unbaked ones in the upper levels. Floors are made of a mixture of earth and rubble and are finished with mud bricks in all exterior areas as well as the basements. Ceilings are constructed with mud tiles and brick and are finished with a mud and stucco mixture, cob or painted decoration. The geometric structures of karbandi and yazdibandi are done both in stucco and cob. Doors and windows are made of solid local maple wood and may be fitted with clear or coloured glass.

C. Climatic conditions

The sub-province of Kashan is located between the Karkas Mountains to the west and the Central Desert to the east. This creates a unique landscape of contrasts between highlands and desert lowlands.

The warm season experiences an average daily high temperature of above 34°C while the cold season has an average below 15°C. Annual rain and snowfall reaches an average of 137 mm and precipitations are subject to temperature variations, most being in the winter. Kashan has very long and harsh summers and cold winters, and these are the only two seasons of the year.

![Daily high and low temperature](image)

The daily average low (blue) and high (red) temperature with percentile bands (inner band from 25th to 75th percentile, outer band from 10th to 90th percentile).

Average max. temperatures in the summer: 40-50°C
Average min. temperatures in the winter: 0-5°C
Altitude: 955 m
Longitude: 51.27
Latitude: 33.50
Average rainfall: 142.2 cm
Average number of frost days: 48.8
Average comparative humidity: 44.81%
Average air temperature: 19.29°C

Data source: https://weatherspark.com/averages/32804/Kashan-Esfahan-Iran
D. **Site and surroundings**

The House under evaluation is located in the Mohtasham neighbourhood, and this contains most high-value historic houses. It is also the area where several alleys cross to generate interesting nodal points that position the project well vis-à-vis other residences that are easy to access. These alleys are like those in other *medinas*: austere with blank walls except for some arched gates and vaulted or covered streets. The neighbourhood urban pattern is still intact but some plots have been transformed to open spaces when historic buildings collapsed. Most of these outside facades and alleys were decayed before the initiative of restoring residences that brought much attention from the Restoration Office of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development resulting in a citywide rehabilitation scheme. The owner of Manouchehri House had undertaken major rehabilitation works of the outside built environment of her house in order to set a trend of addressing the sense of neglect of alleys and to transform them to a space of living and sharing among people. With its two entrances (north and south), the house has access from two sides and that shows its social and cultural value.

E. **Topography**

Kashan, from its cityscape while entering the city, seems very flat, as it is not far from the Central Desert. However, Manouchehri House does present some different levels from the low central pool of the courtyard to the main entrance that is high with stair-steps going down to this pool. Thus, the central pool level is below the street level by almost eight metres. Such a feature adds much to the visual and spatial experience of the house.

III. **Programme**

A. **History of the inception of the project**

The client of Manouchehri House, Saba Manouchehri Kashani, is originally from a Kashani family who migrated to Tehran. Being aware of the value of Kashan’s architectural and cultural heritage, Ms Manouchehri has taken action to save not only the house under evaluation, that was named Reshadi House, but initiated a whole trend by influencing her friends with Kashani roots to come and invest in the historic city of Kashan. However, being a textile expert and a committed heritage defender, Ms Manouchehri wanted to start the adventure of rejuvenating the neglected house, and expand the conservation of the heritage of Kashan by setting it up as a model.

B. **How were the architects and specialists chosen?**

This project could not be achieved without exploring the local know-how of Kashan, as Iran is well known for its skilful handicrafts in all sectors. So the client resorted to the expertise of a locally well-known architect who specialised in the restoration and renovation of historic buildings of Kashan. Architect Seyyed Akbar Helli is indeed a talented expert who initiated a new school in the field of training specialised masons and workers, and his portfolio of projects is outstanding. In this case, Mr Helli also played the role of general contractor due to the nature of restoration works. He started at a very early age as an apprentice mason, and he launched his architectural career as a known master builder who was commissioned to build private and public buildings. In 1983, he visibly ignited a major wave of renovation projects of historic residences in Kashan: Tabatabie House, Ameriha House, Abbasian House, Sultan Amir Ahmad Bathhouse and Boroujerdi House.
On the other hand, the great contribution of Shahnaz Nader Esfahani, the interior designer of the project who was selected for her knowledge of and expertise in Iranian furnishings and historic objects as well as her design skills, cannot be ignored. Mrs Esfahani is highly creative in integrating the contemporary in the redesign of Iranian furniture crafts. Her international travels and residence in several European countries enabled her to explore international standards in reviving local know-how in her design process. Born in Tehran, she was schooled in Japan at an early age and went on to boarding schools in England. She finished her interior design studies in New York and upon her return to Iran started work at the local branch of Knoll Furniture Company. She later lived and worked in France and Spain and has been dividing her time between Tehran and Paris for the past 18 years. Since her involvement in this project, Mrs Isfahani has purchased and renovated another historic house, and joined this momentum of renovation of similar projects that is underway in the whole city of Kashan.

Thus, the whole team worked with a spirit that can be described as “thinking global and acting local”.

C. General program objectives

According to the project’s record, the project has a set of objectives as follows:

• Renovation, restoration and revitalisation of a historic house and its surrounding neighbourhood in order to enhance this trend in the whole historic city of Kashan.

• Revival of the traditional hand-woven textile tradition of Kashan, under the threat of extinction, through an integrated workshop in the house.

• Raising awareness of the cultural, artistic and architectural heritage of Kashan by proving it can be updated to meet the challenges of contemporary lifestyles.

• Cultivation of a strong sense of belonging in Kashan by enhancing the sense of neighbourhood through renovation works in the outside-public space of the project, and contributing to local sustainable development.

D. Functional requirements

The functional requirements of the project were set to meet two challenges: how to restore an obsolete and decayed historic house according to a certain standard, and how to establish an adaptive reuse programme of transforming it into a guesthouse and a textile-craft workshop. It is also about aiming to revive the art of living of Kashan at a very contemporary standard to attract visitors and tourists to stay in a city that has been very enclosed and not exposed to the rest of the country and the world. Therefore, all rooms in the house were adapted to the comfort of guests without altering their architectural and aesthetic original value; indeed, in some case this value was enhanced. The insertion of the technical exigencies of electricity, air-conditioning, bathrooms, laundry, kitchens, and offices has been done with high sense of respect for historic structures.

It is noteworthy to mention that with a textile-revival plan in mind, the textile-craft unit was first set in the sardab in the basement but after was moved to the old kitchen of the original house, where craftsmen are weaving various textile materials according to the tradition of prevalent original fabrics of Kashan as sharbafi (very fine cotton and silk weaving), velvet, and brocade weaving. The workshop uses very traditional looms, and has an additional gift shop where these craftsmen sell the fabrics made in situ. Hence, this integration of
a real craft workshop into the body of the house was a challenging functional requirement, but it added much to the cultural value of the house as a hotel that fosters arts and contributes to the sustainable development of local crafts of Kashan.

IV. Description

A. Building data

The project covers an area of 1’370 m² of building on three (northern, eastern and southern) wings of a central courtyard. The area of the main floor is 875 m², and 320 m² in the upper floors, which make the constructed area reach 1'495 m². It is important to mention that 60 m² were added to the lower floor as construction in order to boost service areas for this lower floor to move from 240 m² to reach 300 m².

The typology of the house is a historic building with an external envelope built out of load-bearing walls and, through system of vaults, dome, and flat roofs, it is connected to the load-bearing walls of the central courtyard. The construction systems of Kashan are very ingenious in terms of providing structural solidity while, in the meantime, being highly aesthetic structures.

B. Evolution of design concepts

Response to physical constraints

As in all restoration and renovation projects, the chief challenge is the insertion of contemporary mechanical and technical systems into the body of the historic building. The client integrated these systems in a smart way, resorting to talented technicians, together with craftsmen, without altering the structure and the vocabulary of the historic house. Heating, cooling, ventilation, plumbing and electrical requirements were all provided without causing damage to the design and the cultural value of the project. For instance, all the mechanical systems were successfully housed either on the roof or in the basement rooms with an underground channel, spanning the circumference of the courtyard, housing all the mechanical fittings and electrical cables. The bathroom spaces for the guest rooms were carved out of the back space of the original rooms, fan-coil units were placed inside the cavities made under the traditional niches in the rooms, and the electrical panels were located in places that are accessible but not directly in sight.

Another physical challenge that was faced was the delivery of construction materials and the way the construction site was managed. Due to the narrowness of the entrance and alleys, new mechanical systems were devised, such as mechanical belts and other means in order to ease the movement of building materials.

Response to user requirements

The user in this project is a central point in the design process. Because of the nature of the project, that it should provide a quality living experience in a Kashani house, the user’s experience was taken into consideration in all steps of the programme, such as smooth circulation paths, reception offices close to the entrance, the kitchen located in the former stables, and a secondary entrance set up for supply access. The bedrooms were designed according to historic room typologies, where all aesthetic values of structures, domes or vaults were preserved while exploring a contemporary organisation of furniture. All rooms have a view on the courtyard and that enhances the visual experiences of the user.
The spatial organisation of the project is optimised in order to best place all activities needed of a guest house. All previous obsolete spaces were explored and re-purposed, such as the former water cistern being turned into a movie theatre, and the previous lobby turned into an art gallery.

**Purely formal aspects**

The house typology follows a complex articulation so that, despite its overall irregular shape, all spaces are organised in a way to have regular-shaped rooms in conformity with the strict geometry of the courtyard. This strict geometry of the courtyard engenders a high sense of order that is enhanced with two symmetrical ornamented, arched facades. This is a typical architectural feature of Iranian architecture.

The building, oriented on a north/south axis, is a formally massive structure with rooms on the southern, eastern, and northern wings, with only one room on the western wing of the courtyard. The south wing of the main floor features a large balcony with a high vaulted ceiling, fronting the main room (now used as a lobby) The north wing consists of a large seven-door room with equally high vaulted ceilings with doors to the courtyard and high lattice windows above. The eastern wing, the former guest quarters of the house, with a yazdibandi geometric structure in the ceiling and coloured sash windows, now serves as the dining space.

The facade is not only a decorated surface, but is the outcome of the whole structural system. This has provided an embedded ornamentation that has a sense of a visual anchor. The muqarnas is explored on the east wing, and it does not dominate but rather enhances the transition from horizontal to vertical surfaces and provides a strong organic visual play for the very geometric order.

*Landscaping*

Being the only void in the house, the courtyard is a central environmental piece where all landscaping is done. As the courtyard of this house is of a great size, it has been explored in terms of landscaping without overdoing this aspect. With two gardens flanking its sides, the pool is an essential part of the courtyard as an aesthetic element, where the water is mirrors all facades, and also as a practical element as well, being a vital means for cooling the air of the whole house. The client explored local botanical features and used local trees such figs and pomegranates. This minimal intervention in vegetation, as explained by the client, is to let the visitor explore the architectural value of the house, and not to be obstructed by high and dense trees and vegetation. It is also worth keeping in mind that the house is in the hot Kashan climate, where only resilient trees and vegetation grow, and any other non-local ones from the north of Iran would hinder its sense of being in a desert climate.

**C. Structure, materials, technology**

*Structural systems*

The structural systems of the project were but the restoration of its original ones. The structural intervention consisted of restoring and renovating the traditional forms of the structure such as domes, vaults and flat roofs. In this project it is hard to state that all is restoration work in the standard of a museum-like restoration; it is rather a rehabilitation that renovates while adapting all to a programme of use.
Materials

The striking feature of this project is the degree of exploration of local materials and know-how. It is very clear also that the client and the architect explored all details of the Kashani house. Hence, structurally, the proportions of the space, and the perpendicular load of different ceiling-vaults determine the wall thickness. Infill materials are mud-brick tile and baked brick with lime and mud mortar, with wood beams for vault reinforcement.

Rendering and finishes are as follows:

- Brick works and stucco and mud for exterior walls
- Mud and stucco for interior walls and ceilings
- Mud and hay cob for exterior walls
- Mud and fine straw cob for some interior walls and entrance corridor ceilings
- Original finish of the water cistern is preserved: lime, bamboo stalk and ash (sarouj)
- Industrial clay tiles for room floor finishes
- Mud-brick tiles for basement floors, courtyard and balcony grounds
- Brick and cobblestone paving for corridor floors
- Iranian saffron travertine (same colour as brick) for courtyard stairs
- Local solid maple wood for doors and windows
- Mirror work was added as decoration in some locations
- Coloured-glass windows in most doors and the dining-room sash window

Construction technology

As it is a historic house, the construction technology is more a local one; no heavy construction technology was devised or imported as in the case of the modern technology or engineering of the new buildings. If technology is taken from the sense of technē, the house explored a local technology of building that stems from the local know-how. This contextual construction technology added much value to the architectural, technical, and aesthetic value of the house. However, in terms of services, imported technologies for mechanical systems such as air-conditioning were used.

Building services, site utilities

Building services and utilities consist of:

- Power: three-phase electrical power with emergency UPS system
- Lighting: ceiling lighting in interior spaces with decorative niche lighting and recessed floor lighting throughout the courtyard and balconies
- Heating: boiler in basement mechanical room
- Cooling: chiller placed on the roof
- Air-conditioning units: fan-coil units
- Pool-filtration system: physical filtration
- General water purification: physical filtration for general use and reverse osmosis for drinking water
- Sewage disposal: local septic wells
D. **Origin of Technology**

Technology explored in this project is local, and all the techniques are contextual. The project provides a laboratory for reviving building techniques of vault construction, wall reinforcement, bricklaying, and finishing. However, as stated earlier, the technologies necessary to have modern amenities such as mechanical, heating and ventilation are not local, but widely used throughout the country since the advent of modern construction in Iran.

**Materials**

The origin of all building materials including the mud brick and baked bricks, stucco, straw and mud is local. Maple wood comes from the greater Isfahan area, the galvanised mesh cables used in vault reinforcement are imported and the coloured glass for the window comes mainly from Europe.

**Labour force**

The labour force is entirely local, and the project has been a real school for educating a new generation of workers and craftsmen in restoration and intervention in the historic monuments and buildings. It has been also exemplary in creating jobs in a neglected city where the degree of poverty is very high.

**Professionals**

Among the key professionals, who worked in this project, are Farhad Tehrani, the renowned Iranian authority in restoration, and the interior designer of the project, Shahnaz Nader, who was brought from Tehran. All other project consultants, architects, contractors were brought together locally, from Kashan and its vicinity.

V. **Construction Schedule and Costs**

A. **History of project design and implementation**

The project was commissioned in February of 2008, with design work beginning in March of the same year. This being a renovation and restoration project, construction work virtually started at the same time as design work, with tasks such as debris removal and roof and foundation reinforcement happening alongside the development of the design scheme. Construction work was completed in February of 2011 and the textile workshops and the hotel opened its doors to public in spring of 2011.

B. **Total costs and main sources of financing**

The total cost of the project, including the cost of land (56’000 USD) and the construction cost (1’000’000 USD), was 1’056’000 USD and was entirely privately funded by the client without the help of governmental organisations or bank loans.

In 2011, the exchange rate (which varies over time) was 1 dollar USD = 30’168 Iranian rial (IRR).
C. Maintenance costs

The monthly maintenance cost for utilities such as heating, cooling, electricity, phone, and Internet charges is, as per each item:

- Phone: 2'050 USD
- Electricity: 380 USD
- Water: 350 USD
- Gas: 350 USD

This adds up to about 3’130 USD per month

F. Ongoing costs and “life performance” of building

As the programme of the project is of a high-traffic nature, the cycle of maintenance and repair is an ongoing one, with continual repairs and upgrades to the mechanical and electrical systems, and upgrades to security and communication networks. The natural and soft building finishes such as stucco and mud mixture for interior and exterior walls, as well as the mud and straw cob finishes of the street walls that wash away with the rain, also call for constant repair and maintenance. An average figure of 1’500 USD per month is spent on ongoing maintenance and repairs in the project.

VI. Technical assessment

A. Functional assessment

The project has fulfilled all of its functional requirements (with some adaptations over time, such as adding guest accommodations and expanding the kitchen and service areas into the adjacent buildings purchased for the expansion of the project). It has been running for four years, and it is well-received by visitors. According to my interviews with guests in the house, the project is unique in terms of its programme and original ideas that have been implemented with a vision to revive the art of living in Kashani historic houses.

B. Climatic performance

The project provides high-standard services and comfort, and it has taken into consideration all the above features, including termite control that is done by expert companies that visit the site annually for inspection and treatment.

C. Response to treatment of water and rainfall

The project has applied advanced traditional and modern drainage systems both for discharge and sewer water. All floors, including roof surfaces, are highly waterproof. No capillary rise water is witnessed in any surfaces of the walls, and the pool has no effect on the surrounding foundation and walls despite its size.
D. **Environmental response**

The use of natural local materials such as mud bricks, stucco, lime, straw and wood acts as natural insulation against the elements, making these buildings sustainable against the harsh desert climate of the region. Further design feature such as double vaults and thick walls as well as the natural ventilation system of the wind-towers that work in conjunction with the garden elements add to this sustainable and environmentally adaptive feature of the structure.

E. **Choice of materials, level of technology**

As already discussed in Section IV. C. of this report, all materials and technology are local.

F. **Response to, and planning for, emergency situations**

Located in a dry and arid climatic area and away from any bodies of water, there are no risks of flood in Kashan. The original building orientation, construction material, massing and forms have accounted for the local winds. The main natural disaster risk in the area is that of earthquake. There is no known measure for further reinforcement of these historic buildings against earthquake, since incongruous building materials with higher densities and hardness than the original natural brick used in the construction (such as steel beams) in fact have the opposite effect and tend to act as wrecking balls by imposing a kick to the naturally soft and resilient building mass in the event of seismic activity. However, the innovative roof-reinforcement system devised for the first time in this project by the traditional architect, Seyyed Akbar Helli, is meant to prevent the collapse of the ceiling vaults and casualties in case of an earthquake.

Measures against fire include smoke and fire detectors in all interior spaces as well as fire hydrants at the doors.

G. **Ageing and maintenance problems**

Despite the fact that the project requires an ongoing programme of maintenance and repair because of its high-traffic nature, there are no visible signs of aging or disrepair, and this indicative the project’s successful maintenance programme.

H. **Design features**

As already discussed in Section IV. B., the historic massing and volume of the house have been explored in its articulation of spaces in order to convert a historic house to a contemporary guesthouse. This adaptive reuse programme has been successfully achieved.

I. **Impact of the project on the site**

The increasing number of tourists visiting the site calls for a serious solution to the problems of public parking in the area. However, given the historic nature of the streetscapes surrounding the site, any kind of major intervention in terms of widening the streets or creating new vehicular access is not desirable in such a valuable historic environment.
J. Durability and long-time viability of the project

This historic house has endured almost 200 years of presence in a harsh climate, and despite its neglect for a long period of time; it has sustained its key features. The nature of the organic building materials permits easy maintenance in comparison with concrete structures in modern buildings. In addition, the client of the project and the craftsmen hired boosted the durability of the house to last for the coming decades if maintenance is kept at the current ongoing standard.

K. Interior design and furnishing

The design and furniture and fitting choices of the project offer all the amenities required for a safe and comfortable stay in this guesthouse. The interior design and furniture scheme of the project, envisaged by Shahnaz Nader Esfahani consist of an innovative combination of modern simplicity and minimalism with carefully and deliberately selected traditional themes and furnishings that are often pared down from their original forms or schemes. The result is a harmonious marriage of two seemingly disparate design worlds: that of contemporary Western design and of the rich traditions of Persian design.

VII. Users

A. Description of those who use or benefit from the project

The hotel programme of the project has been well received by thousands of Iranian and foreign tourists who have not only enjoyed a stay in a historical Iranian house with state-of-the-art design and amenities, but also found the opportunity to explore Kashan and its surroundings. The restaurant and the coffee shop of the complex have benefited not only the hotel guests, but also the local population of Kashan and travellers en route between Tehran and Isfahan, who enjoy the ambience of the House.

In terms of the textile-revival programme of the project, craftsmen have found a base where they can innovate and sell their products to a higher-end national and international clientele. In addition to all that, the project created permanent jobs for young locals who are recruited to run this guesthouse.

B. Response to project by clients, users, community, etc.

What do architectural professionals and the cultural “intelligentsia” think about the project?

The Manouchehri House project has been discussed and well-received in a number of restoration seminars, such as the Tabriz “Critique of Restoration”, for its innovative system of lightening the roof load and unifying and reinforcing it through a light mesh system that prevents its collapse in the event of seismic activity. The project has also won awards of appreciation from the Cultural Heritage Organisation of Iran as well as the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

The project has been frequently visited by many architects from Tehran and other Iranian cities. Other members of the international intelligentsia have also visited the establishment for its architectural character as well as its textile-revival programme. Some of these names include: members of the Bogosian Foundation in Belgium (July, 2015); Ms Yumie Takashi, the curator of the Miho Museum in Japan and Mr Yoichi Nakajima, Japanese master weaver, on the occasion of their visit for research on ancient brocades of Kashan.
in April 2015; Professor Quin Dashu of Beijing University, a prominent expert in blue and white porcelain (November 2015); Mr. Germano Celant, director of Fondazione Prada and Ms. Venetia Porter, Curator of Islamic Art at the British Museum (on the occasion of the retrospective of Iranian artist, Farideh Lashaie (November 2015); as well as Ms Paloma Martin Llopis, international director at Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, NYC. Mr. Colin Wilde, editor of *Hali* magazine was one of the first journalists to pay a visit to Manouchehri House and his visit was followed by a feature about the client, Saba Manouchehri, and the revival of the textile arts of Kashan in the *Hali* magazine issue of April 2013.

Mr. Benjamin Genocchio, editor in chief of *Artnet News*, and executive director of the Armory Show was also a guest of the hotel.

Finally, the Mounchehri House is indeed well received by all professionals, and the care taken by its client is exemplary. It shows that if there is a determined person behind a project it will certainly succeed.

*What is the popular reaction to the project?*

An obvious indicator of popular reaction to the project is the many reviews found on popular travel site, TripAdvisor. Of the 135 reviews currently on the site, 96 indicate excellent reviews, 36 very good reviews, 3 average reviews, and no bad or poor reviews. With reviews titled “A must go in Iran”, Beautiful hotel with lovely staff”, “Excellent traditional restaurant”, “Complete and beautiful”, most people’s reaction is very positive. This reaction is in part due to the unique experience of staying, or dining, in a historic house that in the quality of its renovation and furnishing surpasses all other similar establishments in Iran, and partly due to the very high standard of service that the hotel offers its visitors.

*What do neighbours and those in the immediate vicinity think about the project?*

The neighbours, who were used to a very conservative environment that was inward-looking, appreciate the opportunity of opening up Kashan, especially the young individuals interviewed in the street. The major remark of all people of Kashan is that how a woman (Saba) can do all that. They are also perplexed by why such a woman would be interested in restoring a “ruin” in the current abandoned historic city of Kashan. However, after the completion of the project, they have realised that the vision of the woman and its business works well, while helping preserving their city.

VIII. Persons Involved

**A. Identification of project personnel and their roles in the project (e.g., client, architect, planner, consultant, craftsmen, etc.). Particular attention should be paid to ensure the correct spelling of names and titles.**

*Restoration team:*

Client: Saba Manouchehri Kashani  
Traditional architect: Seyyed Akbar Helli  
Interior designer: Shahnaz Nader Esfahani  
Restoration consultant: Farhad Fakhar Tehran, Mohammad Reza Haeri  
Project manager/Advisor: Abolfazl Shahi  
Restoration guidelines: Hamidreza Ziarati, Ali Adhami
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrical engineer:</td>
<td>Ahmad Seyyedi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical engineer:</td>
<td>Mohsen Moghaddam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General contractor:</td>
<td>Akbar Helli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical contractor:</td>
<td>Mohsen Akbarzadeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Contractor:</td>
<td>Mohsen Fellezi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor:</td>
<td>Ali Adhami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographer:</td>
<td>Abbas Fallah Kar, Hamid Eskandari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Manager:</td>
<td>Akbar Arezegar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excavation:</td>
<td>Habibollah Ahmadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforcement:</td>
<td>Reza Arezooie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault construction:</td>
<td>Abbas Golkar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick work:</td>
<td>Hassan Shamsaie, Ali Rahimi, Reza Bidgoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof block layer:</td>
<td>Ali Zahedi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick tiling:</td>
<td>Ali Jafari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter:</td>
<td>Hossein Shafaie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative stucco work (yazdibandi):</td>
<td>Abbas Salmani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative glass and stucco work:</td>
<td>Maryam Shakiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stucco finishing:</td>
<td>Mohammad Shagerdi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonework:</td>
<td>Mohammad Mirzapour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative tilework (moaaragh):</td>
<td>Mohammadali Shabani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copperwork:</td>
<td>Mohammad Aghajanzadeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative limework:</td>
<td>Mr. Bolbolmoghadam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revitalisation team:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Manager:</td>
<td>Amir Abbas Fahimi, Zainab Esmati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Manager:</td>
<td>Amirabbas Fahimi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant:</td>
<td>Majid EbrahimShahi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef:</td>
<td>Alireza Bakhshandeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile designer:</td>
<td>Marjan Koochaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master weaver:</td>
<td>Ghoramreza Hassanijhe (Mirza), Khalil Ya Allah, Ahmad Tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver:</td>
<td>Seyed Reza Ya Allah, Hassan Tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving apprentice:</td>
<td>Sajjad Tale, Mohsen Niazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and communications:</td>
<td>Parisa Manouchehri Kashani</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hassan Radoine
May 2016
Before, during and after restoration.
With two flanking gardens on the sides, the pool is an essential part of the courtyard as an aesthetic element where water is mirroring all facades, and being also a vital means for cooling the air of the whole house.

The project provides a laboratory of reviving building techniques of vault construction, wall reinforcement, brick laying, and finishing.
The façade is not only a decorated surface, but is the outcome of the whole structural system. This has provided an embedded ornamentation that has a sense of visual anchor. The muqarnas is explored on the eastern wing.

The bedrooms were designed according to historic room typologies where all aesthetic values of structures, domes or vaults were persevered while exploring contemporary organization of furniture.
In terms of the textile revival programme of the project, craftsmen have found a base where they can innovate and sell their products to national and international clients.

The eastern wing, the former guest quarters of the house with a yazdibandi geometric structure in the ceiling and colored sash windows, now serves as the dining space.