



## ARCHITECTURE



### Gorgeous Solar-Powered Blue Empire Cottage Filters Equatorial Light in Kenya

by **Tafline Laylin**, 04/03/13

filed under: [Architecture](#), [gallery](#), [Green Materials](#), [Solar Power](#)

[Mi piace](#) 5

5

[f](#) Mi piace

1

[g](#) +1

24

[t](#) Tweet

1

[f](#) Share



276

[tumblr](#)

24

[t](#) Tweet

1

[f](#) Share



276

[tumblr](#)

[submit](#)

[reddit](#)

[Email](#)

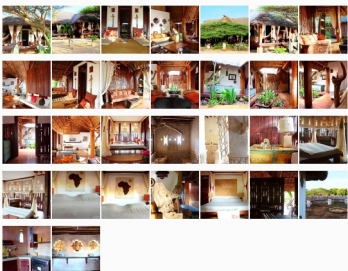
#### INHABITAT PHOTO GALLERY

[NEXT IMAGE](#) ►



**Claudio Modola** designed the Blue Empire Cottage in Manda - the latest stop on [our steamy Kenyan odyssey](#). Slightly elevated and constructed with locally-sourced African teak, this gorgeous holiday home for Italian physicians is so well integrated with its modest waterside plot that it's hard to know what is inside and what is out. All kinds of [natural materials](#) such as fossilized coral and driftwood are incorporated into the design, resulting in one of the most tasteful shrines to nature that we have ever seen, while intriguing cutouts in the facade create shadow play that infuses the home with a rich natural glow.

[READ MORE](#) ►



We traveled to the house by boat and were surprised to find it concealed from the shoreline, hidden as it is by a large acacia tree left intact by the designer. This complete adoration of nature is evident in all aspects of the Blue Empire cottage's design. Wrapped around an [indoor garden](#) planted with local species, the teak panels feature geometric cutouts that allows natural light to trickle in.

"Natural light in the equatorial belt is warmer, rounder almost softer than in other parts of the world," Modola told Inhabitat in an email, "and this was something I wanted to explore through different filters within the structure."

Capped with a [traditional makuti roof](#) built by local craftsmen and buttressed with driftwood discovered in the roots of the many mangroves found in this region of Kenya, and we were surprised to see coral incorporated into the 280 square meter dwelling.

"The [coral](#) used is all fossilised and sourced from various inland quarries in the region," said Modola, who added that "the bathrooms of Blue empire have a very tropical influence and the use of coral gives reference to a feeling of calm serenity which is important in a bathroom."

Many of the workers who constructed the home originate from the local area, according to the designer. "In particular Mohamed Juma and a select few Lamu craftsmen produced all of the traditional plasterwork seen in the bathrooms."

Albeit out of reach for many of our readers, this delightful home reflects a deep-seated love for both Africa and the natural world – two sentiments that we wholeheartedly share.

+ **Claudio Modola Architecture**

Images via Tafline Laylin for Inhabitat