

VILLAGES

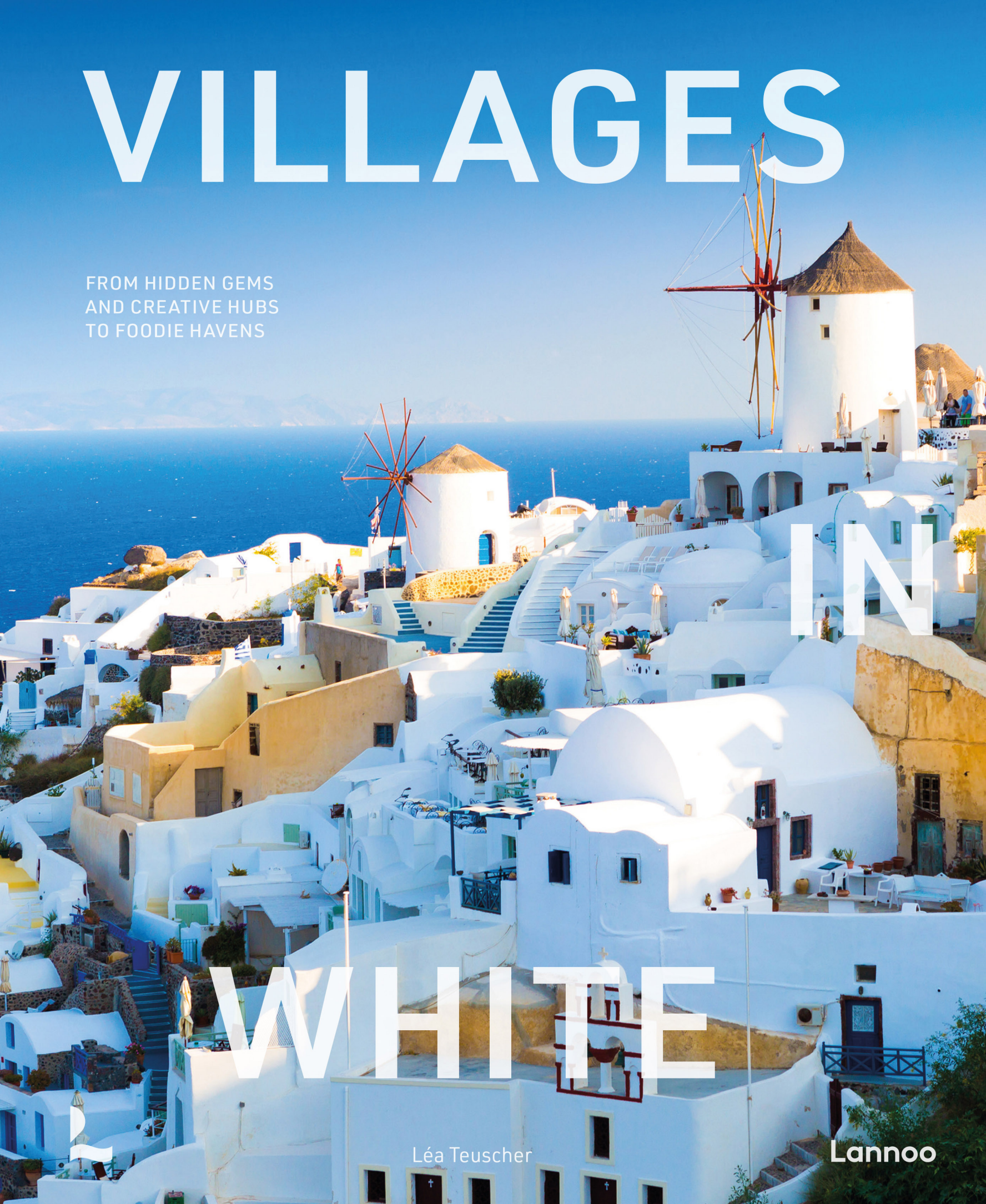
FROM HIDDEN GEMS
AND CREATIVE HUBS
TO FOODIE HAVENS

IN

WHITE

Léa Teuscher

Lannoo



Making memories

JEAN-LOUIS DENIOT

French designer Jean-Louis Deniot creates elegant interiors from London's Chelsea to Miami's South Beach, but this project on Île de Ré is much closer to home. A holiday retreat for his nieces and nephews, it is located in a 1940s townhouse and aims to be the ideal backdrop for wonderful childhood holiday memories. Many details are inspired by the island: the entire house, from the walls to the ceiling beams, is white (with only primary blues and a touch of red and yellow as accent colours). The risers on the staircase feature a mural painted by Florence Girette depicting ocean spray, while a macramé canopy bed in the main bedroom refers to the local craft of crochet, and bunting-inspired cushions and a mix of vintage furniture add seaside charm and surf vibes. In the living room, a 1950s coffee table in the shape of a diving board is paired with a fish sculpture by Ernie Abdelnour and blue glassware. 'Every time you look at this room, you discover a new shade of blue, like the ocean,' says Deniot. deniot.com



Thierry Florentin

OYSTER FARMER

A former professional skipper, Thierry Florentin left Île de Ré to pursue a career in journalism and cartography. But the call of the island was too strong to resist, and about a decade ago, he came back to start a family and retrain as an oyster farmer. From his base in the heart of the island's Bergapson Salt Marsh, Florentin produces oysters, clams and shrimp, which you can taste all summer long at his carefully restored cabane, L'Huître du Saunier. His oysters grow in the sea for about three years before undergoing affinage en claire, a technique local to the area that involves leaving the molluscs to grow in shallow basins, rich with plankton. The cabane is best reached by bicycle, and you'll be rewarded for your effort with not only fresh oysters but also local wines, homemade desserts and panoramic views over the sea and salt marshes. huitredusaunier.fr

Which three words would you say best describe Île de Ré?

Unspoilt, peaceful and biodiverse.

What is it like to live on the island?

I've lived here since I was eight years old. I was considered a 'Parigot' [Parisian] at first, before the bridge was built, but I've since become a Rétais. Life here follows the weather, the wind, the waves and the low tide.

You changed careers to become an oyster farmer - was it worth it?

Yes - the best part of my job is working in the great outdoors, following the rhythm of the seasons - or, more specifically, seasonal work: in winter, working on the oysters and selling to the islanders; in summer, welcoming French and foreign tourists for tastings.

Where do you live?

I live in a long house, built with the help of my family, with a garage full of surfboards and wings for kite- and windsurfing.



Where should first-time visitors go?

The salt marshes to the north of the island, the harbours and beaches, and the locks at low tide. And of course, they should try some gambas à la plancha from my marsh.

What do you do on a typical Sunday?

I go to the market in the morning, with a coffee to start, and a beer with my friends afterwards. In the afternoon I often go and support my son at a rugby game in La Flotte and return the oysters to the water with my dog Rackam.

What do you miss most when you go away?

The peace and quiet, and the ocean spray.