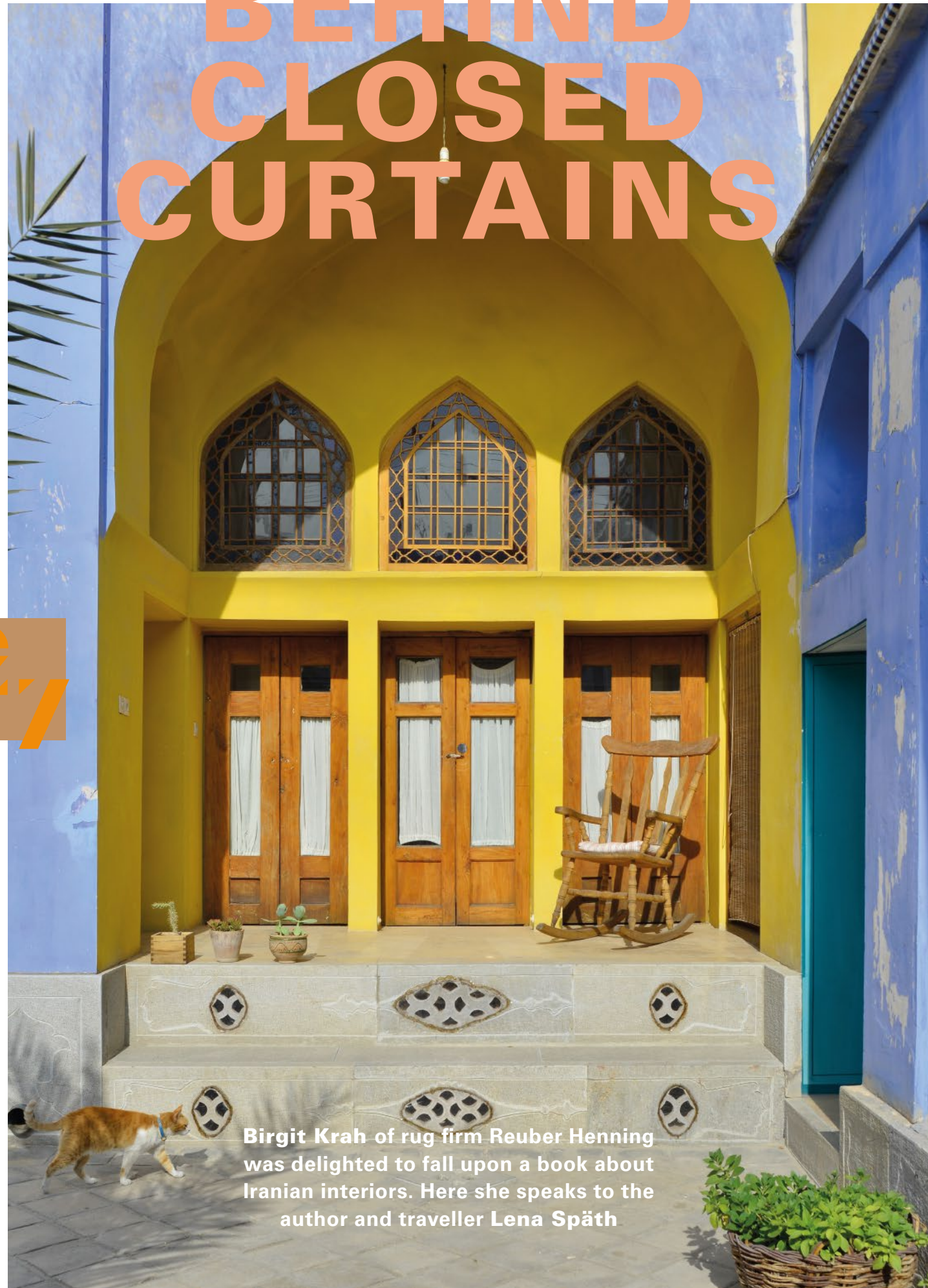


# BEHIND CLOSED CURTAINS



Birgit Krahe of rug firm Reuber Henning was delighted to fall upon a book about Iranian interiors. Here she speaks to the author and traveller Lena Späth

01 Home of Sufi Shahidzadeh Falsafi in Esfahan

02 Home of Shahnaz Nader in Kashan

03 *Behind Closed Curtains: Interior Design in Iran*

04 Home of Sufi Shahidzadeh Falsafi in Esfahan



Is it possible that this is the first book about interior design in Iran? Young German creative Lena Späth published *Behind Closed Curtains: Interior Design in Iran* in 2017 but it is not just another coffee-table book illustrating glossy interiors—you can really sense Lena's love for the country and its people on every single page. She was not looking for amazing houses with famous owners. She found wonderful authentic people that love their heritage and love to show it in the way they live. All are lovers of textiles, ceramics and craftsmanship.

So, how did Lena travel to Iran and develop this impressive project by herself? She is well-travelled but as she told me, her heart really belongs to Iran and she has been there many times. Importantly she is fluent in Farsi, which helped in creating the book. Talking brings you closer and opens doors and hearts: "Everyone was introducing me as "the German lady speaking Farsi like a nightingale", she explains.

Lena is a big fan of flea markets where she likes to find strange, old and surprising objects that offer delights and insight. "I love to discover a city and its history and people via flea markets," she says. "There are so many stories to be discovered. I always bring something back home. That's why my friends call me a gypsy." In Iran, she found amazing objects in peoples' houses and they taught her a great deal about the country. Generation to generation of people pass down things of personal value, objects that have a story to tell. Each interior was full of these belongings.

What better way to introduce a country than through the houses of the inhabitants? The reader can find so many wonderful details: pillows, wall paintings, materials, gardens and of course, rugs. Whenever Lena visited a new house all her Iranian friends would ask her about the rugs there (quantity, size, colour and age). I was amazed to hear from her that some houses were even constructed around the rugs. Have we not always said that the rug makes the room?

The featured carpets are beautiful in so many ways, come in various styles and sizes with unpredictable colours, and are sometimes combined with other textiles. Some are precious, some are just beautiful in the owner's eyes. The beauty in all items depends on how you display them, combine them and also how you view them. Many of these interiors were put together by women with a strong passion for decoration, not in a professional sense but in a way that suits normal living.

During our interview Lena commented, "When meeting people from other cultures we not only learn a lot about "the other" but also about ourselves and our own culture. It's a good way to receive new input, get thoughts going, reflect. And over and over again we realise that we are all humans with more similarities than differences." *Behind Closed Curtains* is a great book for opening our eyes to peoples' lives in Iran. It is healthy to gain insight into worlds we are not familiar with, before mass-produced furniture brands take over and minimises all of our differences that makes us so interesting to others. Congratulations to Lena for this thoughtful book that will hopefully be followed by more.

***Behind Closed Curtains*, €49.90, available at [www.lenaspath.com](http://www.lenaspath.com)**



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