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Geometry of Form

location: Tel Aviv, Israel | architecture: Metropole Architects – Nigel Tarboton | project manager: Binom Ltd – Oded Ben-Ari |
 main contractor: Hajaj Ltd – Mustafa Taha | landscape design: Riki Sadeh | lighting design: Orly Avron Alkabetz |
 photography: Grant Pitcher

KZN-based Metropole Architects have recently completed this contemporary family home on the outskirts of Tel Aviv. The project represents the crowning achievement of a successful international collaboration between an Israeli client and project manager, an Arab-Israeli contractor, a Russian-Israeli engineer and a South African architect.

Designed and developed by Metropole Architects in Durban, the logistical challenge posed by international work was effectively managed by means of intermittent site visits, regular video conference calls, and a remotely controlled webcam mounted on site. This latter provided a virtual 'man on the ground' and enabled the architects to monitor progress on site at all times from South Africa. The further challenges presented by the language and contextual differences were overcome

by a collective spirit of mutual respect between the members of the team, that developed naturally as the project progressed.

Says architect Nigel Tarboton: 'With breathtaking vistas of downtown Tel Aviv to the west, and the spectacle of distant aircrafts ascending silently out of Ben Gurion International airport to the south, the 200-metre long rectilinear site presented amazing opportunities for a modern luxury home. ➤

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'The architecture of the dwelling is delineated by multiple layers of cantilevered horizontal planes, starting with the flat roof plane of the main house, and cascading down to the first-floor slab, carport pergola, freestanding gazebo and other cantilevered beams. This composition of floating planes is intended to create a sense of movement down the longitudinal axis of the site.'

'One of the most powerful and evocative experiential qualities of the site is that the setting sun seems to linger for an eternity before finally withdrawing behind the silhouette of downtown Tel Aviv's evolving skyline.'

'It was of critical importance that the outstanding quality of the natural light – as well as the play of light and shadow – was integrated

as a fundamental design consideration. The architectural form of the house is accentuated by this fluctuation throughout the course of the day, in a symphony of built form influenced by solar illumination. The large areas of glazing, as well as the considered design and placement of openings and screens – combined with the spacious volumes of the interior rooms – all contribute to the architecture's ability to capture the spectacular natural light.' ➤





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Of equal importance, due to the hot and humid Middle Eastern climate, was the design's ability to take advantage of the pleasant breeze coming off the Mediterranean ocean from the west, and filter it throughout the structure in order to create a comfortable living environment.

These important climatic considerations, together with the use of a diverse palette of materials and textures – including: natural stone, planked off-shutter concrete, timber doors and windows, aluminium screens and brass cladding – harmonise to create an environment that inspires a sense of wellness, and lifts the spirit. ➤



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Further, the design of the landscaping evokes a sense of tranquillity that sensitively complements rather than competes with the architecture. The muted tones of the olive grove synergise with the grey tones of the house to invoke a sense of simplicity and quiet. Says Nigel Tarboton: 'The colour, aroma and tactility offered by the fruit trees provides a feast for the senses, and the wind-induced motion of the grass gives the garden a sense of rhythm and movement.'

The cultural diversity of the team assembled for the project resulted in a contemporary home, which reveals a rich uniqueness that contrasts with the typical residential archetype experienced in Israel. The team believes that the relationships that have been formed as a result of this project will no doubt continue into the future. h