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House VZ re-interprets beach house archetype

Metropole Architects' House VZ is a 490m² modern 4-bedroom home situated in Umdloti on KwaZulu-Natal's North Coast of South Africa.

The house is a contemporary architectural design set into coastal suburbia with a spectacular backdrop of uninterrupted beach and ocean views

The initial premise for the design was to 're-interpret' the beach house archetype by integrating materials of masonry, corrugated metal, fibre cement shiplap cladding and expressed structural steel elements onto a contemporary and dynamic shape.

The house stands proud on its steep site and is a progressive cantilever form arranged over three levels, proclaiming its presence and challenging the typical coastal aesthetic of its surrounding context.

The upper levels of the home hover gently as a light grey and white object, whilst the lower level is a dark sea grey 'shadow'. A large mono-pitch roof with extensive overhangs tops off the composition, angled to match the natural fall of the land and to inspire a 'sense of flight', for soaring visual effect.

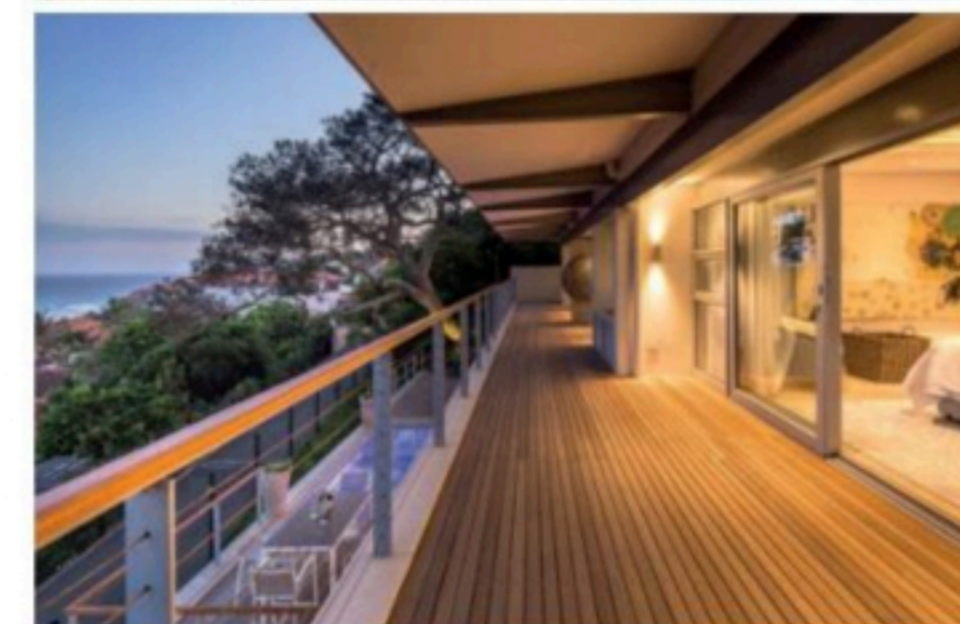
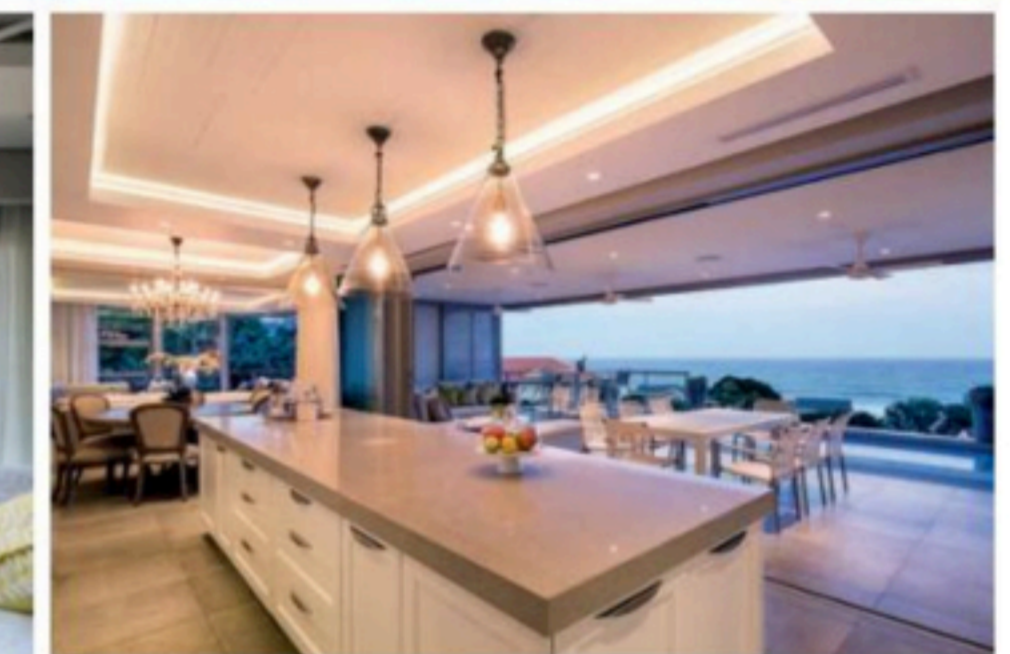
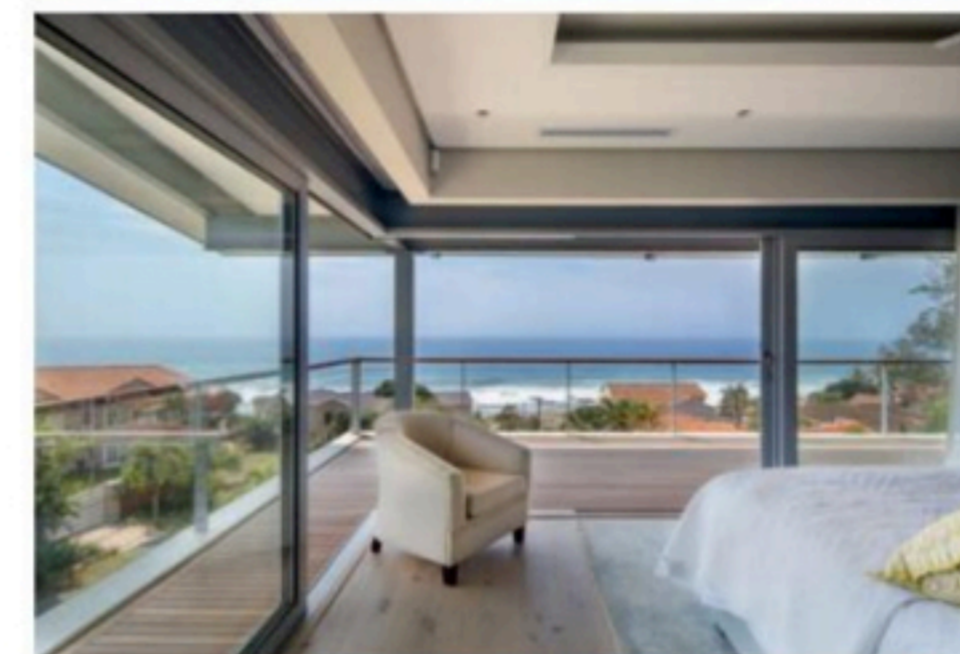
Designed to complement the coastal surrounds, the middle level (living, dining and entertainment area with pool) is dedicated to open-plan living that

is unconstructed and uncluttered, maximising the entertainment zones and views, and the benefit of refreshing ocean breezes that is able to open up and connect and extend to the outdoors.

At the upper level, both the master suite and secondary bedrooms are more intimate spaces for rest and relaxation, all with en-suite dressing rooms and bathrooms. Here the principal design intent is to provide comfortable spaces with access to the expansive sea views to the east. Private balconies off the master suite and secondary bedrooms allow one to venture outside and engage with the sun, sea and breeze.

The relatively solid and planar western façade provides effective privacy for the inhabitants, at the same time acting as an efficient barrier to bad weather and prevailing strong winds coming from the south west.

Horizontal fibre cement shiplap cladding is used as a subtle twist on the typical traditional shiplap planking of a beach cottage, but also provides texture and detail to what would otherwise be a large expanse of blank wall.



Minimalist horizontal cabled balustrades are used throughout for fall protection, enhancing transparency and minimising the impact on the ocean views.

Interior styling, furniture and finishes draw on a palette influenced by the tones and textures of sand, sea and sky, to create a light, relaxing and airy atmosphere that complements the architectural spaces and encourages 'laid back luxury' that

synergises with a contemporary beach aesthetic.

In House VZ, the architecture brings the great South African coastal outdoors in and in turn encourages the inhabitants to venture out into it. The palette of materials, colour tones and architectural components juxtapose with the bold and progressive architectural form making, creating a sea side home that is not only visually and spatially exciting, but also comfortable and intimate. ■

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