



MODERN MASTERPIECE

In an upmarket beachside suburb in Israel's Tel Aviv, the architects of this family home have taken minimalism to new heights, as Joanna Tovia discovers.

From the street, this ultra-modern marvel presents as something of a mystery. A concrete monolith rises up behind a handsome cedar screen, but passersby are offered little more than an enticing glimpse of the luxurious family home that lies beyond.

Those granted access step into an entrance courtyard where expanses of stone 'suspended' in water serve as stepping stones to the front door.

"The entrance from the street prepares the visitor for the 'space vessel' with the aid of shutter-like walls of wood that form an outdoor lobby barely visible from the street, but open to the interior of the house," says architect Pitsou Kedem.

The solid pivot front door, flanked by glass walls, is one of Kedem's favourite features of the house – it opens to reveal unimpeded views through the light-filled living room and out to the garden and pool.

"At first our clients were afraid of this idea, but now they're in love with it," Kedem says. "It makes the living room appear to float in between the entry courtyard and the garden."

The 750-square-metre house is home to a family of two adults and four children, and is located in the beachside suburb of Herzliya Pituach in the Tel Aviv District, one of Israel's most affluent neighbourhoods.

The owners, who work in real estate, were attracted to the area for its proximity to the beach and asked their architect to design a modern home with a holiday feel.

At first glance the house appears to be a series of boxes hovering on top of one another, and that was



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01 The ultra-contemporary home is sleek and sophisticated, inside and out 02 The kitchen stools and dining setting are from MDF Italia 03 The home can open up entirely to the backyard and pool 04 A wall of pivoting glass doors opens to welcome in the sea breezes 05 A cedar screen shields the home's living areas from the street



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precisely the architect's intention. Built with raw materials such as concrete, iron, steel, glass and cedar, and designed with clean lines in mind, the home is ultra-contemporary – but it also manages to be relaxed and very liveable. There are inviting public spaces for the family to gather, but also secluded private areas that give family members their own space when needed.

The ground floor, which can open completely to the enclosed back garden and pool via walls of glass doors (perfect during the warm days of an Israeli summer), contains a vast living area, spacious kitchen and dining area, and a luxurious master suite. The kitchen may be an exercise in minimalism, but with its wall of floor-to-ceiling storage cupboards facing the expansive island bench, it manages to also be practical for family living.

A 12-seat dining table next to the kitchen sits opposite a similar set-up outside, making it easy for the owners to entertain a crowd: with the glass doors open, the area becomes one big indoor/outdoor zone. "The public spaces of the home – the dining room, kitchen, living room, garden and decorative pool – have their inner and outer boundaries entirely blurred," Kedem says.

A bedroom and ensuite for each of the four children fill the upper level, while the basement contains two guest bedrooms, a study, gym, laundry and an additional living area. A notable absence of clutter – achievable with the help of extensive storage areas secreted throughout the house – enhances the home's minimalist appeal.

The secret, Kedem says, to a successful decorating scheme is "to create one strong and consistent design language", and that's certainly the case with this house. Punctuations of black ground a sea of calming white and grey, and the cedar screen that's as visible from inside as it is from the street adds warmth. It is, quite simply, a masterpiece. ♦

CREDITS

Initial design and planning: Irene Goldberg, Pitsou Kedem (www.pitsou.com)

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