

Israel

Shadow and Light

RIGOROUS VOLUMES AND GARDEN VIEWS INTERSECT NEAR TEL AVIV

Architecture and Interior and Landscape Design by Pitsou Kedem

Text by Judith Thurman | Photography by Amit Geron/Arcaid



Pitsou Kedem is a prize-winning Israeli architect who likes to cut corners. Literally, that is. In his residence for a family in Herzeliya, an upscale coastal enclave 10 miles from Tel Aviv, he played with the geometry of two stacked boxes—an upper bedroom story of Italian stone, and a lower living story of glass and teak—and deftly perforated their mass. A buttressed wall between the main structure and the garden creates a stately “bridgeway” from the street to the front door. Wraparound windows take a bite from the corner of the master suite. Steel girders punctuate transparent walls, and a floating metal staircase—a piece of abstract sculpture—conjoins the two floors. The result is an intricate modernist puzzle with open, light-flooded interiors, but a façade so discreet that it reveals little of the drama behind it. “Land is a great luxury in Israel,” Kedem notes, “and even in an exclusive neighborhood like this one you don’t have a lot of breathing room. Because there are houses on both sides, I wanted to create a sense of privacy and enclosure in a relatively modest space—4,300 square feet—but without sacrificing its seamless flow. You can see the garden from every room, and sliding doors blur the boundaries between inside and out.”

The clients had been living in an apartment overlooking the marina before they found an appropriate building plot, and work on the house took about a year and a half. It went without a hitch, Kedem says, largely thanks to his penchant for meticulous drawings (“paper suffers the abuse you give it without complaint”)

LEFT: Israeli architect Pitsou Kedem chose an edited mix of materials—chiefly *pietra sierra*, teak and glass—for his clients’ house near Tel Aviv. A tree, planted on the basement level, grows up between the cactus garden (which Kedem describes as “sculptural”) and the pool.