Rectangular Intersections

location: Zimbali, KwaZulu-Natal | architecture: Metropole Architects | interior design: Olala Interiors | photography: Alexis Diack

The architects for this project were given a clear brief insofar as the expectations of achieving a structure that presented as dynamic and exciting externally, yet which addressed specific internal requirements in terms of space planning and room allocation. The design process began in mid-2014 with construction commencing in April 2016; completion was in August 2018.

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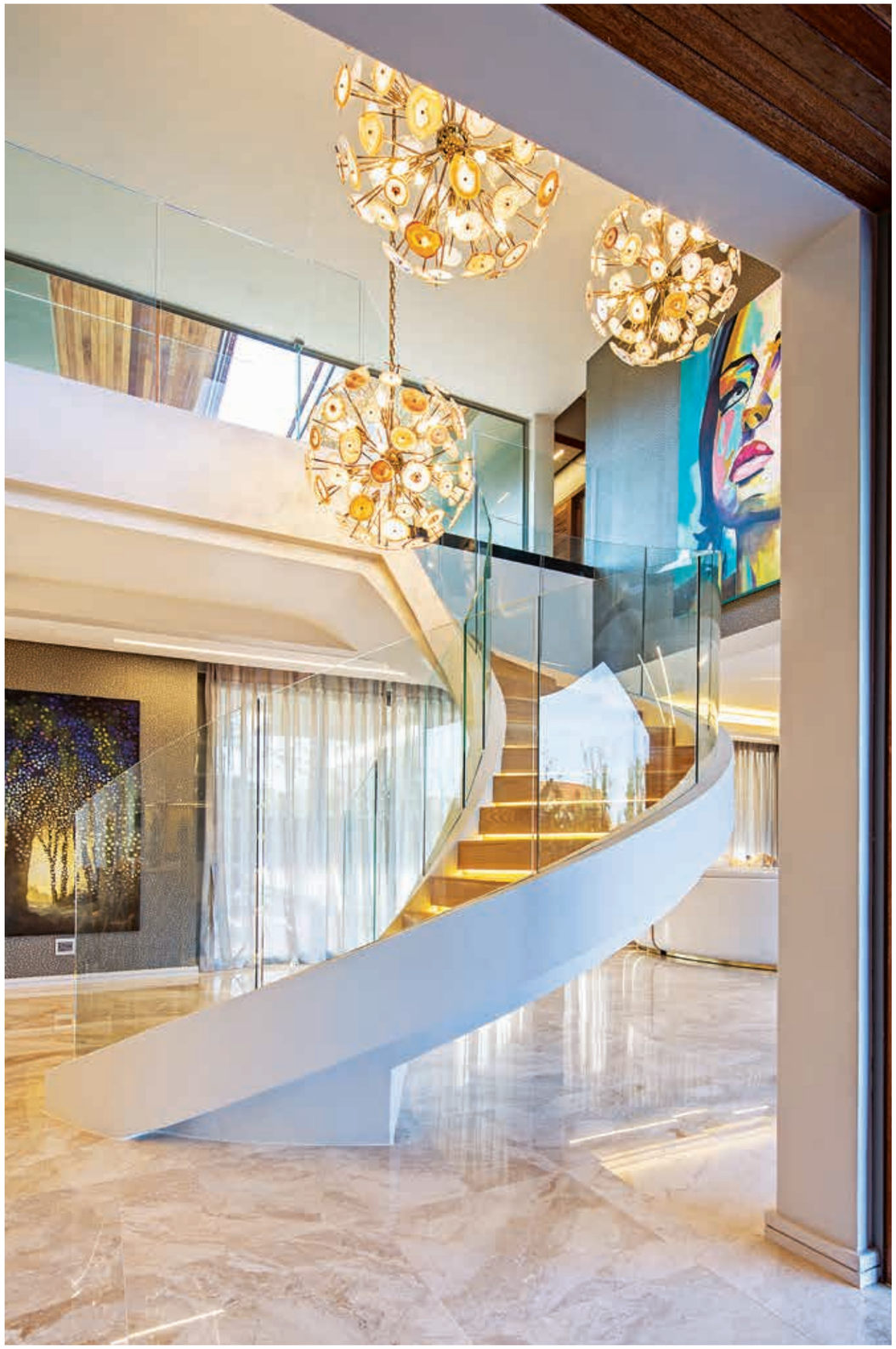
Carefully crafted overhangs and the sympathetic and creative use of natural materials pay dividends here. Design Architect Nigel Tarboton conceived three rectangular forms arranged so as to create opposing movement.



these pages: In the entrance, a large, representational and evocative colourful canvas, by Mabette Vermaak evokes an Eastern kaleidoscope portrait: *Virago*. Sculpture at the front door – *Fragmented 1* – is by Regardt van der Meulen. Agate Stone-finished Branquinho lights hang over the spiral staircase.

The brief from the client to their interior designers was equally succinct: To design and furnish a cohesive space, allowing individual preferences that included generous introductions of colour. A prerequisite was the retention and incorporation of key pieces and personal artworks collected over decades.

The interior design team recall: 'We were engaged as designers in 2015 right from inception of the project and worked closely with the architects during what was a two-year build. We are process driven, always starting with a functional furniture layout so that services such as electrical and plumbing solutions are upfront and accurately positioned – especially when working with slabs where it is not possible to move points later. So, we selected the sculptural light fittings at the outset to ensure provisions were made for correct positioning and height; floor specifications, soft selections and furnishings then commenced.

this page: The interior signature points to soft forms and fabrics as a foil for burnished brass and innovative lighting. The kitchen is practical, appealing and aesthetically conceived.

opposite: Sea Anemone-inspired golden Boivin spiked lights hang over the dining table.

'We chose to follow the rhythm of the focal point in the living area, a spiral staircase designed by Metropole Architects; the result being a custom-made, curved sofa in woven and tufted velvet with a brass foot band, made by a locally based artist / craftsman. We followed with hand-formed solid brass chair frames, using traditional artisan methods; this is in line with our exclusive employing of exceptional craftsmen for frame-making, upholstery and cabinetry produced in our own factory.

'The dining chairs have upholstered backs in an embroidered, abstract-woven, granular linen-based fabric in contrast to the tactile, soft and densely warped-pile velvet on the inside seat. As a foil, Olala manufactured the bespoke dining table using solid ash wood, finished with a charcoal oil stain.

'Here on the Natal coast we have high humidity, sometimes the moisture even feels like a soft pliable velvet layer on the skin. This may be why as designers we enjoy using velvets – they are always cool to the touch, yet with a tactility that is soft and lustrous. We feel this is akin to easy and luxurious living.'

COMMENT FROM THE ARCHITECTS:
The location here is prime: the Zimbali Coastal Estate on the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast. The Design Architect was Nigel Tarboton who is a partner at Durban-based Metropole Architects; his team included partner Tyrone Reardon as Project Architect and Chris Laird as Lead Technical and Project Coordinator. Current Metropole projects include work both locally in Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria and internationally in Rwanda, Israel and Cyprus.

Says Nigel Tarboton: 'This design is based on three rectangular forms arranged in such a way as to create the sense of opposing movement. The first is grounded in the site and orientated on an east-west axis, while the second and third forms are elevated above and positioned alongside each other in a north-south axis; one heading with purpose towards

this page: Floor layout and flow of the master bedroom was opened up to create a spacious and inviting en suite area. The clients wanted a relaxed, calm and peaceful bedroom, and as blues communicate tranquility and quietness, they favoured soft grey tones to hues of teal green and the more saturated Bermuda blues. Velvet is seen again in the master bedroom in teal and blue hues in buttoned velvets. Sphered Bolle lights add drama.

the ocean and the other to the golf course fairway in the opposite direction.

'The sense of movement on the upper level is created by intentional horizontal lines and cantilevers projected towards their respective targets. The point at which the three rectangular forms intersect in a transparent double volume space provided the perfect position for the sculptural staircase; a curved vertical element that forms the core of the design and is intended to be the primary focus on approach.

'The particular orientation and characteristics of the site presented a challenge as there was no rear end, leaving all four elevations vying for centre stage. Hence the back of house services had to be tastefully camouflaged behind curved stone walls with exciting structural acrobatics unfolding above.

'With the location being a coastal forest residential estate, the potential views from the home would always be competing with existing foliage and neighbouring properties. This contest was ultimately won by rotating the axis of the home at 45° to both the road frontage and adjacent houses, resulting in unobstructed views of both the ocean and golf course.'