

habitat

T H E A R T O F L I V I N G



Architecture: Avant-Garde Farmhouse in Gauteng | Modern Tropic in Zimbali KZN

Design: Black on white cubism in Madrid | An eclectic signature for a Moscow apartment

Focus: ARCHITECTURE '16 | The winsome art of Gavin Collins



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these pages:

A-cero's penchant for cladding is seen here as large limestone panels. Another is black glass, also very evident.

Park House

location: Madrid | architecture: A-cero: Joaquín Torres & Rafael Llamazares | interior design: A-cero IN & owners |
photography: Roi Alonso

Architectural signatures are very evident in key works, both in South Africa and internationally. Like interior designers, architects are professionals who are able to stamp their personal handwriting on built structure; with good reason. The best of this practice is recognised and evaluated – and most often valued – by those who retain and appreciate their services. This has been a global phenomenon since the time of Leonardo da Vinci and his peers. ➤



We admire the work of the Spanish architectural firm A-cero and have featured a number of their innovative builds over the past few years. This is one of their latest projects, a family house completed in March 2015. Located in Madrid, it's an angular contemporary residence of 1 250 square metres built on a plot of 1 700 square metres.

Access from the street is gained via an entrance that caters for both vehicles and people, but with separate application. The perimeter of the plot is enclosed with a fence designed by A-cero, fabricated in indigenous stone and black galvanised steel.

The house has a well-manicured garden, notable for its practicality and aesthetic synergy with the architecture of the house, and a façade clad with limestone and black glass. In this case, and as per the brief, Joaquín Torres and Rafael Llamazares projected a more orthogonal design, which followed their clients' preferences; although the essence of the A-cero style is very evident. Remarkable volumes, stone-cladding overhangs and large glass panels in black predominate. ➤

these pages:

The black and white decorative signature moves from the exterior to the interior spaces. Austere and yet comfortable, it is a practically appealing solution.



these pages:

The master bedroom suite is luxuriously equipped and expertly finished. Dressing room and bathroom are custom designed.



The entrance door is of generous dimensions and is a custom design in black glass and steel. Immediately within is a spacious hall, further accentuated by its double volume dimensions and a particular luminosity. Here, there is evident simplicity, focused by an imposing spiral staircase in white cement and glass that supplements a purpose-designed elevator connecting the three levels of the house.

On this floor the most public recreational, entertainment and living areas are configured by a spacious living area, dining room and kitchen – with pantry and guest loo – cinema room and office. Both the living room and the kitchen have access to the exterior: the terrace and pool area; via large, sliding, recessed windows.

The top floor is reserved for bedrooms and there are five suites, each with their own bathroom, plus a playroom for the children. The large master bedroom has individual

dressing rooms and a spacious en suite bathroom. The interior of the house is of high standard, evident in very fine finishes. Key shell elements include stone and wood floors and lacquered paint on many walls.

Overall, the interior palette is white with black and dark wood accents. It's an uncomplicated, uncluttered solution that allows visual flow from one area to the next, and to the exterior. Vista-wise, one can see through the house due to a decoration program that allowed this as a prerequisite, yet the result remains stylish and interesting.

Only the children's areas show more use of colour than that of the overall palette, and yet these too maintain a certain sobriety. On the basement level is an indoor pool, sauna, gym, service area, garage and utilities – and the entire house is equipped with advanced automation solutions. This is an international build of enviable design and quality. [h]