

RESTLESS LIVING

"... restlessly dedicated to contemporary living."





CASA DEL ÁRBOL

San Mateo, Costa Rica

Conceptualized as a budget-friendly shelter in the Costa Rican forest, Casa del Árbol provides refuge from the overwhelming urban life. The dwelling is arranged across two levels connected to the natural landscape through open terraces and balconies, crafting a tale of integration.

“Through a co-creative process with our clients, we got inspired on creating a treehouse experience within a compact home that articulates open terraces with intimate natural environments”, Director at Entre Nos Atelier, Michael Smith Masis, begins. “It allowed us to explore integration with nature, the tree canopy and in articulation with openness; evoking tranquility throughout transitional spaces.” Casa del Árbol – translated to treehouse in English – is designed as an open tropical house built on stilts to absorb natural rain water below the foot print and carefully respond to the humid climate. “Part of its local identity comes from budget constraints, facilitating local labor skills over a lightweight steel construction system in combination with timber”, Michael continues. “The Treehouse incorporates on its exterior a ‘glazing’ type





screen with local teak wood that defines a secondary access to the pool and terrace, providing privacy to common spaces and generating a feature of identity with simple geometries found in the tradition of our ancestral peoples.” This way, the screen allows the breeze to pass through while reinforcing the wooden aesthetics; becoming “a constructive element that catalyzes spatial warmth, combining with reed cane ceilings, structural metal grids and stone veneers found on the site” as Michael puts it. On the ground floor, the kitchen and a compact bedroom are connected to the common terrace with a small plunge pool. Above, a common room and the master bedroom are linked by a balcony following the perimeter of the structure. The reoccurring theme, however, is how Casa del Árbol always frames views – regardless of vantage point.

Casa del Árbol is not alone in providing eco-friendly living experiences to the area. In fact, one of the main assets of the treehouse is that it is part of the Alegría Village which is a new eco-friendly neighborhood in the rural hills of San Mateo. Here, best practices in design and regenerative living are being cultivated and are sparking the attention of a nature-centric lifestyle.

Architecture by **Entre Nos Atelier**

Photography by **Ingrid Johanning**



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HARMONY WITH NATURE Taiwan

Inspired by the forms and curves of the local mountain and the ocean, Harmony with Nature is a traditional old house renovation transforming an eldercare residence into a range of dynamic spaces seamlessly connecting to nature through large French windows.

“The delicate flow and partition design blur the boundary between the inside and outside of the building, as the architecture was naturally formed by the flow of water and the mountains”, Director at Yuan Architects, Wenyuan Peng, tells. “By guiding the viewer with light, the space’s axis and layering are highlighted, culminating in a breathtaking scene.” Harmony with Nature House features a kitchen extending into a living space for music and art collections where organic forms and natural elements of wood and earth tones establish comfort and stability. “The space has been transformed to provide a harmonious pace of life with the rhythm of music and sunlight that flows naturally through the diverse space”, Peng explains. By puncturing the walls with circular shapes, light can pass through and connect spaces on both sides of the monumental staircase. While adding functional value, the architecture simultaneously becomes a piece of art; pushing the boundaries of residential design.

Although Harmony with Nature House is a bold statement, the comfort and the warmth has not been compromised for a second. The house is incredibly balanced in the way it translate nature into the choice and implementation of materials. It feels like living in a beautiful gallery where the thoughts and creativity flow freely.

Architecture by **Yuan Architects**

Photography by **YuChen Chao**





CASA Á BEIRAMAR

Simbithi Eco Estate, South Africa

Situated in the prestigious Simbithi Golf Estate on KwaZulu Natal's north coast of South Africa, Casa á Beiramar is a grand, modern four-bedroom home of 750 m² designed by Metropole Architects as a bold testament to refined modernism. The project takes advantage of materials like steel, glass, and concrete to establish clean lines with timber and stone adding contrast and underline the sophisticated yet understated ambiance of the project.

“Upon approach, the house commands attention, perched proudly on its site with a cantilevered form that emphasizes horizontality, making a distinct statement in the streetscape”, Principal Architect at Metropole Architects, Tyrone Reardon says. “An elegant, gently sloping driveway ushers one from the estate road towards the home onto a stylishly arranged driveway court adorned with polished aggregate concrete panels and strips of artificial turf, setting the stage for an aesthetically pleasing arrival experience.” From the public entrance to the property, Casa á Beiramar presents an intentionally low and minimalist façade subtly hiding away the grandiosity of the programme. “The intentional solidity of the entrance façade serves multiple purposes. It not only provides an element of surprise to the act of entering, it enhances privacy for the inhabitants but also provides effective protection against the elements, particularly the prevailing strong winds from the south-west”, Tyrone explains. As a result, the open and private spaces beyond comfortably provides a house of absolute enjoyment. “Moving through the entrance, the architecture unfolds into a voluminous space at the upper level. An open-plan living,





kitchen, and dining area seamlessly integrate with the outdoor spaces through sliding glass doors”, Tyrone tells. In extension, a covered verandah is supported by a striking steel ‘spider’ column providing shelter for entertainment with a braai space, pool, and a small garden. “The master suite at this level is orientated towards the sea view and is a haven for private rest and relaxation complete with walk in dressing room and opulent full master en-suite bathroom. An adjacent balcony allows one to venture outside to the edges of the cantilever on a veritable ‘lookout point’ and engage with the sun, sea and breeze”, Tyrone continues. To allow natural light to penetrate deep into the spaces, a sensual organic curved oak timber-clad ceiling in combination with clerestory windows create a visually engaging experience. “This provides the ‘wow factor’ on entry, enhancing the vertical volume of the entrance hall and open plan living areas”, Tyrone adds. Descending one level below, three en-suite bedrooms relate to the outside with garden access and a contemporary TV lounge appears with a double-sided Neolith clad fireplace, emphasizing the focus on contemporary aesthetics. As Tyrone concludes: “Casa á Beiramar transcends mere functionality. It offers a visually captivating, comfortable, and intimate living experience that seamlessly integrates with its natural surroundings.”

Architecture by **Metropole Architects**

Photography by **Grant Pitcher**







GARU HOUSE

Buenos Aires, Argentina

In a quest to preserve the character of the classic Buenos Aires 'casa chorizo'-typology from the late 19th century, the Garu House introduces a renovation project fusing the original casa chorizo identity with contemporary aesthetics restoring floors and ceilings while mitigating clutter.

"The original spaces in Casa Garu were dark and disconnected, prompting us to infuse light, spaciousness, and a connection to the outdoors", Co-Founder at Estudio Tecla, Leila Mihura, says. "Our goal was to renovate the house with contemporary features while preserving the essence of the original construction." Leila and the team at Estudio Tecla achieved this vision by demolishing walls to integrate space and in turn install large floor-to-ceiling windows connecting the interior to the small garden. At the same time, whites were used to emphasize spaciousness and generate light. "The decision was made to preserve some original elements of architectural value, such as the wooden floors and the vaulted ceiling, which were restored, creating a contrast between the old and the new", Leila explains. The protagonist of the central space is a multi-functional, continuous furniture piece. It starts as a countertop in the kitchen and transforms into a staircase to the mezzanine above. Lastly, it turns into a functional element which has a variety of uses.

Besides comprehensive interior renovation, the façade was also restored. The original door was preserved and corrugated metal modules were added – able to open and close, alternating between states of solidness and perforation. "The harmonious dialogue between the new and the old is what sets this project apart. Those inhabiting the space recognize it as a contemporary construction due to its minimalist, spacious, and luminous design, yet they also feel the warm essence of the old Buenos Aires houses", Leila concludes.

Architecture by **Estudio Tecla**

Photography by **Malena Fradkin**

Words of the Week



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Following last week's continuation on Active Design and the sub-theme of 'supporting active travel', I will now turn to the theme of 'Active, high-quality places and spaces'.

Quality and functionality become incredibly important when trying to activate people physically. Multi-functional spaces can give freedom and opportunity. In my childhood home, we had a basement room serving this purpose, and we could play football or handball in there – although the space had a very moderate size. Yet, quality must follow. If the floor is dilapidated, there is no light, and humidity cause the walls to decay, then there is very little incentive to spend time there. However, if quality is secured and activity infrastructure is implemented there are less excuses to use it. As an example, my dad built home-made football goals of wood which we could then use. It made my brother and I spend time in the basement every single day. While the basement was – in all honesty – quite underwhelming and in need of renovation, we considered the space as an active destination. During the summer, we could bring the goals to the garden, reusing the activity infrastructure both inside and out.

Although the example from my childhood was sub-optimal at best, we got the most out of it. To succeed in ensuring 'active, high-quality places and spaces', durable materials, safety, and flexibility should be considered at all times. Next week, I will dive into the final theme of 'creating and maintaining activity'.



CHRISTIAN TRAMPEDACH
FOUNDER, RESTLESS

