

CONDÉ NAST

House & Garden

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THE GREAT SA DESIGN ISSUE

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THE EDIT

SUPERB HOMES AND GARDENS AND THE STORIES
AND STYLE THAT MAKE THEM



PHOTOGRAPH: MICKY HOYLE

AN INFORMAL ARRANGEMENT OF PATRICIA URQUIOLA FOR PETER MABEO TABLE AND STOOLS AND MID-CENTURY CHAIR AND SOFA LET THE OWNERS OF THIS CONTEMPORARY CAPE TOWN HOME APPRECIATE MOUNTAIN, CITY AND HARBOUR VIEWS FROM THE BEDROOM LEVEL



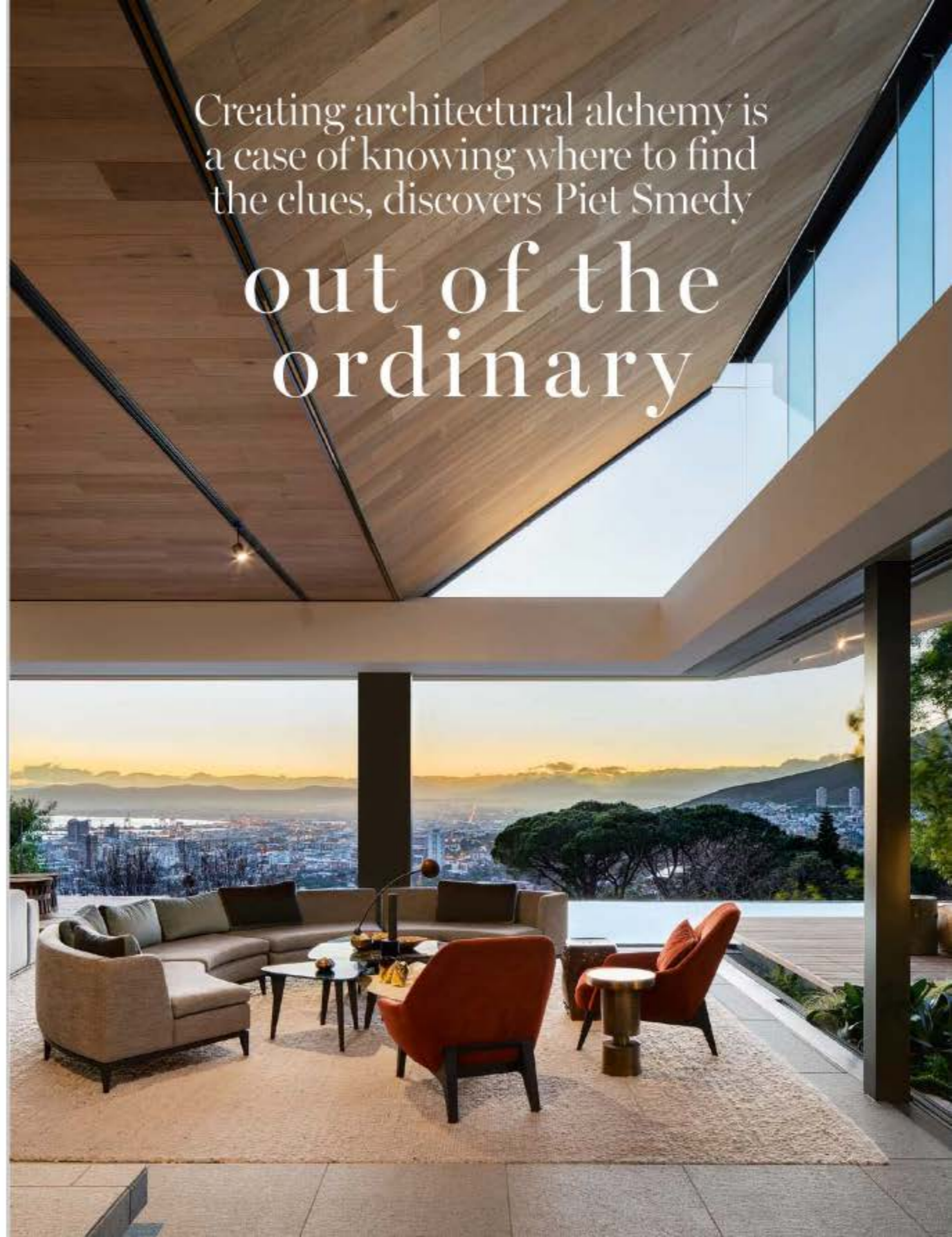
ON ENTRY, A GLASS AND STONE WALL COURTYARD IS A PAUSE ZONE BETWEEN THE STREET AND THE VIEWS WHICH FOLLOW.

OPPOSITE PAGE
THE 20-METRE-WIDE WRAPAROUND VIEW DUE EAST FROM THE LIVING AREA OVERLOOKS THE POOL, THE CITY AND AS FAR AS HELSHOOGTE

PHOTOGRAPHS: RICKY HOVIE AND ADAH LETICH

Creating architectural alchemy is a case of knowing where to find the clues, discovers Piet Smedy

out of the ordinary



Perched high above Cape Town, what started out as an interesting idea to revision a dated house on a dazzling



THE ENTRANCE VISTA ARTICULATED ON SEVERAL FLOOR LEVELS, A POWERFULLY STRUCTURED CEILING AND STONE, CONCRETE AND WOOD TEXTURES CREATED A COMPELLING ARRIVAL SPACE

OPPOSITE PAGE DINING AND KITCHEN AREAS WITH THE INVERTED PYRAMID CEILING SHOWING LIONS HEAD THROUGH THE GLASS CLERESTORY

site evolved into an ambitious, dramatic reinvention of the spaces and the living experience that is as inspired as it is unexpected

What existed on the site was an ordinary building over two levels,' explains architect Greg Truen of SAOTA, who designed the home. However, as construction work commenced it would become evident that the original structure had room for improvement that would take the project in a new direction. Today the house is configured over three levels: the first accommodates public spaces (living areas, kitchen, pool deck), the second is a mix of en suite bedrooms and a study and library and, on the third floor, guest rooms, a gym and a home cinema. 'The key thing about this house is, of course, its setting,' says Greg, whose first mandate was to maximise the views and immerse the home in its natural surroundings. He would achieve this in two key ways. ▶



THE KITCHEN IS A LARGE GALLEY CONFIGURATION CUSTOM FITTED BY ROMA KITCHENS. WITH A BULLNOSE BRASS COUNTERTOP BY BAD MACHINE. A PIZZA OVEN IS TO THE RIGHT

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT THE FRONT DOOR APPROACH IS AN INTRIGUING CONTRACTED SPACE OF HALF LIGHT AND HEAVY MATERIALS TO PROVOKE A MOMENT OF PAUSE BEFORE DISCOVERING THE LIGHT-FILLED VOLUMES INSIDE. A JUSTINE MAHONEY SCULPTURE AND PLANTER FROM INDIGENOUS ON THE LANDING; A SALT-WATER POOL RUNS THE LENGTH OF THE TOP-LEVEL FAÇADE



First, by reconfiguring the upper two levels with north and south-facing glass façades, views of the city and surrounding mountains are now positioned front and centre. Extending these levels to include garden decks that merge into the surrounding flora completed the immersive effect. 'Now it feels like the garden continues infinitely,' he says. Two open courtyards were also introduced. The resulting architecture – glass-clad slabs floating over a glittering cityscape – is a rectilinear expression of open cubes prostrating itself in the presence of nature.

His second design move was the completely new engineering of what is certainly the house's most striking feature, an inverted pyramid roof structure that dominates the entire upper-level ceiling, clad in a glass box. By lifting the original hipped roof on three sides the homeowners are now afforded views of Table Mountain and the harbour in front and Lions Head and Signal Hill behind.

From street level there is an unmistakable intrigue to the building. From behind a stone wall built with the same materials and profile as old Cape-style masonwork that is still visible in the harbour breakwater walls, the roof appears to be a giant 'light box' with the immense oak-clad pyramid pointing downwards. These are the first of several plays to prepare you for entry and traversing the threshold between the street and the quiet interior of the home. From the gate that leads you not on an obvious route to the patinated brass front door past the ▶





intimate courtyard with delicate-leaved Leopard trees and, finally, around the corner – the showstopping reveal – views that stretch from Robben Island to Helshoogte.

Big, open-plan spaces need furniture planned and designed to fill those spaces. And so the pieces, many from Okha, oversized and organic in form, were used to not only create a sense of comfort but also to demarcate living zones. Take the circular sofa, its shape allows for easy views of the harbour and mountains, whereas the adjacent Z-shaped sofa is ideal for curling up in front of the TV.

'The interior design is constantly being refined, it's not a formulaic process of dressing but of providing progressive points of experience,' says the homeowner, who initially opted for pale tones that would not distract from the architecture or views but later realised that the spaces needed punctuation so introduced colour. Subtle mineral tones of oxide red, flint grey and verdite green echo the surroundings. Texture becomes an antidote to the smoothness of the architectural environment with chunky Karoo mohair rugs, an abundance of copper and brass cladding and a large collection of modern art.

And yes, despite its ingenious architectural power plays and its high-comfort appointment, the home never loses sight of its goal: to champion its surroundings. 'You sit in these spaces looking at how extraordinary your connection is with the city, the mountain and the people below,' says the homeowner. In every way they too have also become a part of this place.

• SAOTA saota.com



TAKE A BEHIND-THE-SCENES TOUR OF THIS ARCHITECTURAL HOME ON VIMEO.COM/HOUSEGARDENSA

THE GARDEN-FACING MAIN BEDROOM IS A GENTLE COCOON IN LIGHT AND DARK FINISHES. ARTWORK BY PETER EASTMAN

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP ON THE SECOND AND THIRD LEVEL, EN SUITE BEDROOMS CONVERGE ON A COMMUNAL FAMILY SPACE OF LIBRARY, STUDY, GARDEN, COURTYARD AND PYJAMA LOUNGE; A BATHROOM, FILLED WITH SOFT NATURAL LIGHT, LEADS OFF THE DRESSING ROOM AND MAIN BEDROOM



THE GUEST BATHROOM



FLOS 'FOGLIO' SCONCE IN SHINY BLACK, POR, ELDC



VINTAGE CASSINA BAR STOOLS, 1STDIBS



'BELLA ONICI' MARBLE, POR, CANNATA

'NERO MARQUINA' POLISHED MARBLE SLAB IN CHARCOAL, R3 420 PER SQUARE METRE, WOMAG



OLUCE 'ATOLLO 238' TABLE LAMP IN BLACK, R19 100, CASARREDO



CECIL SKOTNES' PRINT SERIES DEATH OF SHAKA, FRAMED BY FRAMED, CREATES IMPACT DISPLAYED ON CUSTOM SHELVING



DOUGLAS JONES CERAMIC TILES, FIND SIMILAR AT ITALCOTTO



FLOS 'IC LIGHTS F' FLOOR LAMP, FROM R11 444, SPAZIO

WALL INSTALLATION OF FOLDED AND BURNISHED BRASS AND STEEL RIBBONS BY RODAN KANE HART



'PLANALTO' DINING TABLE WITH POLISHED MARBLE TOP AND POWDER-COATED MILD STEEL BASE, R93 910, OKHA

TAMING THE SPACE

Furniture and lighting with bold-scale organic, modernist forms worked best to evoke a nourishing sense of place on a human scale. Mid-century style references mixed with shots of gem colour, plus sleek and artisanal textures, created a sense palette of comfort and containment.



JUSTINE MAHONEY 'BLOLO SPACE TRAVELLER'



VILLA NOVA MIRA TREVIRA CS VELVET IN RUSSET, R2 377 PER METRE, ROMO SOUTH AFRICA



VILLA NOVA MIRA TREVIRA CS VELVET IN LAPIS, R2 377 PER METRE, ROMO SOUTH AFRICA



'NICCI NOUVEAU' CHAIR WITH POWDER-COATED MILD STEEL BASE, R40 812 (EXCLUDING FABRIC), OKHA

PRODUCTION: JEN GOUGH, FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHS: NICKY HOYLE AND ADAM LETCH; STILL PHOTOGRAPHS: KARL ROGERS, SUPPLIED



'NEW SARDO' GRANITE TILE IN GREY, R499 PER SQUARE METRE, WOMAG

100-PERCENT HAND-WOVEN KAROO WOOL RUG IN CREAM WITH NATURAL FLECK, R5 016 PER SQUARE METRE, FIBRE DESIGNS

LEGNO 'LIVING' UNFINISHED OAK FLOORING IN WHITE, R798 PER SQUARE METRE, OGGIE

Rhythms of reflective and matte surfaces animate the natural light

