

THE EDIT

SUPERB HOMES AND STYLISH GARDENS



THE LIVING ROOM AREA OF THIS SAOTA-DESIGNED PRINGLE BAY HOME JOINS SEAMLESSLY WITH A TERRACE WHERE A GLASS BALUSTRADE ALLOWS UNINTERRUPTED VIEWS OF THE BUFFELS RIVER. THE MID-CENTURY LEATHER CHAIR IS BY PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA. *Full story overleaf*

setting the tone

A Pringle Bay home strikes the perfect balance between indoor-outdoor living

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THE HORIZONTAL LINE OF THE ROOF FLOATS INTO THE VIEWS OF THE LANDSCAPE WHILE CREATING A COVERED TERRACE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LIVING ROOM

PHOTOGRAPHY: GREG COX @GREGCOX





Pringle Bay may be less than an hour-and-a-half's drive from Cape Town, but they're worlds apart. The combination of beach and riverside, and the distinctive fynbos-covered mountains and valley, make it uniquely beautiful and give it a primal gravitas.

'We went on holiday to Pringle Bay one year and stayed in a little cottage,' says Philip Olmesdahl, a director of architecture firm SAOTA. 'It was during our stay that we fell in love with this holiday destination.' During a walk along the beach they spotted what would become their holiday home. 'We saw a for-sale sign outside a wonderful old beach house and we instantly fell in love with it and the site,' he recalls. The Olmesdahls jumped at the opportunity, and for the next seven years they escaped there from the city at least two weekends a month and every second school holiday.

Philip says the old brick house was characterful, but run down. 'It was dilapidated, the landscape was degraded and the house was in the wrong place on site,' he explains. He might have been there on holiday, but as an architect, he spent a lot of time pondering designs for a new house. He watched the path of the sun, thought about the views, and devised ideas to deal with the extremes of the weather that characterises the area.

When the time came to build a new house, he thought about how to 'shake off the salty winds' and let in the sun and views. ▶

THE DINING AREA FEATURES A CUSTOM-MADE TABLE BY JAMES MUDGE THAT IS ACCENTUATED BY A LINDSEY ADELMAN PENDANT LIGHT. THE BLACK 'MAGIS' CHAIRS, DESIGNED BY KONSTANTIN GRČIĆ, ARE SOFTENED WITH SHEEPSKIN THROWS

OPPOSITE PAGE. FROM TOP THE OPEN-PLAN ARRANGEMENT OF THE LIVING AREAS FORMS ONE EXTENDED LIVING ZONE. FOR PHILIP, THIS DESIGN CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF HOLIDAY LIVING; SIMPLE, ROBUST MATERIALS SUCH AS RHINEZINC EXTERNAL WALL CLADDING, OFF-SHUTTER CONCRETE AND BAGGED BRICKWORK HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR THE EXTERIOR





THE KITCHEN ISLAND IS STAINLESS STEEL WITH A FLAMED GRANITE CANTILEVER TOP. THE BAR STOOLS ARE BY JAMES MUDGE

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP THE HOUSE FACES DUE NORTH, AND THE TWISTING STEEL STAIRCASE ON THE EAST SIDE IS DESIGNED TO ALLOW LIGHT TO FLOOD INTO THE KITCHEN AREA IN THE MORNING; A SECOND LIVING ROOM AREA ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE HOUSE OPENS UP ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF THE LANDSCAPE, LOOKING OVER THE RIVER, FYNBOS-COVERED VALLEY AND MOUNTAINS BEYOND

As breathtaking as the views were, the aggressive extremes of the climate meant any effective design had to strike a fine balance between the impulse to open up, and the need for sheltered spaces.

Philip designed the house to effectively turn its back on the wind, and create a protected courtyard enabling the particular inside-outside lifestyle that defines the South-African holiday experience.

Despite the sleekness and modernist refinement of its forms, the house had to be robust. Philip stuck to simple materials such as raw concrete and bagged brickwork, with Rhine zinc cladding on the first floor, for the exterior. He carried these finishes through to the interiors, too, which gives the house a grounded character. The floors are polished concrete, making an unobtrusive transition from the outside in. Philip calls it 'barefoot luxury' – less preoccupied with luxurious finishes and architectural

'THE HOUSE REMAINS UNOBTRUSIVE AND SENSITIVE TO ITS SETTING'

expression and more about putting the holiday experience first. The open plan arrangement of the living areas also helps to create a relaxed atmosphere, encouraging casual interaction between spaces.

The upstairs bedrooms pop up a level in glass boxes to create more fantastic views. Because of the slope and the horizontal emphasis of the design, however, the house remains unobtrusive and sensitive to its setting, nestled in the landscape.

The kitchen is Philip's favourite room. It is integrated with a breakfast lounge, which has a sofa that can seat the whole family. 'It's the centre point of the home where we connect as a family, especially in the mornings or watching the sunset,' he says.

The living spaces all connect with outdoor areas, and the landscaping brings the setting right up to the house – even into it. The central courtyard becomes part of the living space when you open the sliding doors, and it's planted with fynbos and trees that push through an opening in the roof. ▶





CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT THE WRAPAROUND WINDOWS IN THE MASTER BEDROOM ARE DESIGNED TO CAPTURE THE PANORAMIC VIEWS; THE MAIN EN-SUITE BATHROOM; SIMPLE, MODEST FURNISHINGS IN ONE OF THE CHILDREN'S BEDROOM



'That also helps to bring light into the core of the home,' says Philip, 'and meaningfully integrates the landscape into the home.'

Being a director of an architecture firm that has an interiors and furniture design dimension – ARRCC Interiors – has its advantages, too. The sofas and dining table are custom made and the rest of the furnishings, a combined effort by ARRCC and the family, is an eclectic mix of local and international designs.

Soft leathers, white linens and sheepskins bring additional comfort and rich textures to the casual beach style. Fabrics in shades of white and grey create an immediate sense of calm, accented with original Moroccan Berber rugs and colourful kelims. Beautiful details such as the punched brass cladding of the living room fireplace are warm and playful, and the art is restricted to certain areas of the home 'for maximum impact'. The furnishings in the bedrooms were also kept modest and neutral, serving the views rather than drawing attention to itself.

'The wild and unspoilt features and natural beauty of Pringle Bay are what make it so special for us,' says Philip. 'I love this part of the Cape.' He's designed a holiday home that expresses exactly that – a retreat that, through its sensitivity and deference to its setting, is a subtle machine for the appreciation and enjoyment of time spent there. ■ SAOTA saota.com