



LIVE / cote d'azur

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riviera residence





This expansive home,
perched high above the bay
overlooking the Côte d'Azur
in the south of France, honours
the owner's deep-rooted
connection to the region
through a series of spaces
that are intimately connected
with the outdoors.

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Previous spreads The property spills down the hillside into the bay, emphasising the home's connection to its location. A rim-flow swimming pool and copper-clad tub creates the illusion of hovering above the bay, with views stretching out to the horizon. **Right** The terraced site presented opportunities to create private garden courtyards, turning smaller areas into light-filled spaces that engage with the lush gardens.





A contemporary private residence in the south of France embraces the Cote d'Azur's natural beauty and dramatic landscapes, serving as an elegant backdrop to intimate gatherings for close family and friends to bond and enjoy endless summers on the Med. It reflects its discerning owner's love of design and nature, and honours his deep-rooted connection to the region.

Working with an existing footprint, award-winning South African architecture firm SAOTA, along with then associate Amé Venter (now the founder of Amé Architects), transformed the property into a unique holiday retreat. The villa captures breathtaking views and lends itself to a harmonious blend of peaceful seclusion and easy access to the vibrancy of Nice, Monaco and St Tropez.

In reimagining the site, they worked closely with the owner to navigate the complexities of the location, improving upon initial design concepts as the project progressed to bring in the French Riviera's soft light and carefully framing coastline views to make nature part of the living experience.

'SAOTA's design aimed to capture a sense of place with light-filled, poetic volumes and functional yet beautiful spaces that connected seamlessly with the surrounding landscape,' says Phillippe Fouché, principal at SAOTA.

The home comprises five bedrooms and expansive indoor entertainment spaces including a beautiful wine cellar, cinema, games room with a bar, a garden gym and two guest houses for visiting family and friends. Distinct spaces throughout the garden function as 'outdoor rooms' for a range of activities including intimate family gatherings, lounging, and al fresco dining. Large, covered terraces were also prioritised in the design process, providing shaded retreats to fully enjoy long hot days and balmy nights, taking full advantage of the region's ideal climate for year-round open-air living. The outdoor dining area, sheltered by an orchard, is the heart of the home. It provides shade and frames breathtaking views of the ocean, a serene setting for gatherings and relaxing while surrounded by nature.

Nature is also experienced through sound, from deep

within the abundant gardens that connect to the bay's natural ecosystem and provide a welcome refuge to cicadas, bees and birds, and through an elevated sound system hidden across outdoor spaces, continuously connecting indoors and out.

Additional features such as an infinity lap pool and outdoor pétanque court with a shaded daybed lend themselves to unwinding, while tranquil koi ponds add to the atmosphere of peace and reflection. Each of these areas was designed to enhance outdoor living, inviting residents and guests to enjoy the rugged beauty of the Riviera in a variety of ways. A world-class padel court clinging to the cliffside also takes advantage of the site's dramatic topography.

'The residence features expansive glass façades and open-plan interiors, allowing the house to merge with the landscape and capture the Mediterranean's stunning views. The architecture reflects SAOTA's signature: clean lines, open spaces, and a refined material palette that enhances rather than competes with the natural surroundings,' says Amé.

One of the most interesting aspects of the terraced property is its dramatic seven-level drop, which offers a variety of perspectives as you move through the home. Entering from the highest point and descending through the levels creates a dynamic experience, with each floor revealing a new aspect of the landscape and constantly shifting views of the bay, harbour and beach. On entering the main house, a sinuous, sculptural staircase simplifies the building's circulation and flow while serving as a gallery for the owner's extensive collection of books and travel artefacts. This dramatic space is illuminated by an oblong skylight, creating a light-filled experience for anyone descending the stairs.

This home serves not only as a sanctuary, but also as an immersive gallery, where the beauty of art and architecture converge, celebrating the owner's collection in a breathtaking setting. Strategically positioned artworks throughout the property create striking focal points that invite curiosity. Notable artists and makers found across the property include Vincenzo De Cotiis, Maarten Baas, Jeanerette, Philippe Hiquily and Nazar Bilyk. ● [@_saota](#) [@ame.venter_](#)

Left Every design decision, from the careful placement of windows to the strategic orientation of the living spaces, ensured framed views while maintaining a sense of seclusion and privacy for the homeowners.



This spread The interior design of the home was thoughtfully curated, featuring a serene neutral color palette and luxurious, tactile fabrics that invite relaxation. **Next spread** The owner is an avid art collector and strategically placed pieces allow for moments of pause and reflection both indoors and out, such as a photograph of Stephanie Seymour by Richard Avedon (left) and a ‘Marathonienne’ outdoor sculpture (right) by Philippe Hiquily.

