



blurred  
VISION

TEXT SHAI RAMA  
PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREA VAN DER SPUY

In Stellenbosch, VKDB Architects have created a home that – through its pared-back, honest design – assimilates its natural surroundings





# taking

advantage of a preferred northerly orientation and an existing oak tree, this magnificent family home designed by VKDB Architects engages with its landscape, culminating in a unique blend of nature and modern architecture. The use of a limited and simple material palette was key in unifying its interior and exterior, maximising the relationship to its location, as well as the distant views of the Simonsberg and Stellenbosch Mountain. This uncomplicated material palette portrays a sense of calm that echoes the garden landscape and provides a seamless transition between the indoor and outdoor spaces.

This intersection of architecture and nature served as the principal design inspiration for interior designer Maroan Gelderblom, who relished the opportunity to design and build a special family home on such a scenic site. 'As with all our projects, it was our intention to combine the architectural elements and interior spaces of this home into a complementary whole,' she says. 'The muted and warm materials alongside the crisp detailing of the architecture serve as a quiet background to accompany the carefully designed interior. It also allows the client's curated selection of artworks to truly shine as they inspired the pops of colour that add some playfulness for the youthful family.'

The exterior of the home makes use of a bold, opaque architectural facade expressed through Rheinzink cladding, juxtaposed with timber screens that provide light, privacy and sun protection. The interior of the home is designed to be an extension of the exterior, and the use of timber can be seen throughout to provide a sense of continuity and warmth. Other internal materials such as polished concrete, hardwood floors as well as cork- and timber-veneered panelled ceilings were chosen for their authenticity, tactility and contribution to the greater design narrative. These honest and raw materials were selected to be used internally or externally in transition areas to create a smooth flow, which is further emphasised by grouping appropriate spaces adjacent to one another, such as the covered terrace and the external terrace as well as the dining room that spills onto the courtyard. 'These relationships of complementary spaces and the manner in which they are used together serves to blur the distinction between inside and out,' Maroan adds.

While the robust and complementary material palette conveys the primary design intention of the home, the creative use of calming blues and greens in various tones help blur the boundary between the two spaces too. There are carefully considered open spaces inside the



home that are not occupied by furniture to give off an illusion of being outside in nature. This visually leads you to one of the many large sliding panels that, when opened, connect the house to the garden without visual interruption.

Embracing the natural beauty of the home's locale was fundamental in deciding the furniture and decor to be used. Pieces were hand-picked so they would never visually obstruct your line of sight of the outdoors, allowing the lush gardens and mountain views to always form part of the mood of the home – for instance, the open structure of the sculptural hanging light in the dining room or the wooden bar stools that have a sleek, modern silhouette. The infusion of natural materials and sculptural forms gives the home a tactile and handmade feel while the straight lines combined with the spacious layout epitomises contemporary style. ■

VKDB Architects [VKDB.co.za](http://VKDB.co.za)

‘COMPLEMENTARY  
*spaces and the*  
MANNER *in which*  
*they are used together*  
serves to BLUR the  
*distinction between*  
*inside and OUT*’

MAROAAN GELDERBLOM

