



WATER WORLD

location: Sandhurst, JHB.
architect: Aurelio Cimito
interior by owners with Twiice International and p.maldini
report by: Marie-Emilie Froment
photography: Colin Sharp

THIS SINGLE STOREY HOUSE IS OF GREAT INTEREST FOR SEVERAL SOPHISTICATED REASONS. IT EVOKES THE IDEA OF A PLAYGROUND OF SUBTLE FLAMBOYANCY FOR A VERY RICH ENTERTAINER AND TAKES THE MINIMALIST APPROACH: ABSTRACT, CLEAN AND MODERN.





The design communicates the ideas and emotions related to space, glamour, privacy, sufficiency and of course, luxury. Elements and materials are allowed to 'tell the truth' – and not to be concealed or cluttered. Its neighbouring residence is owned by the same couple and was featured in

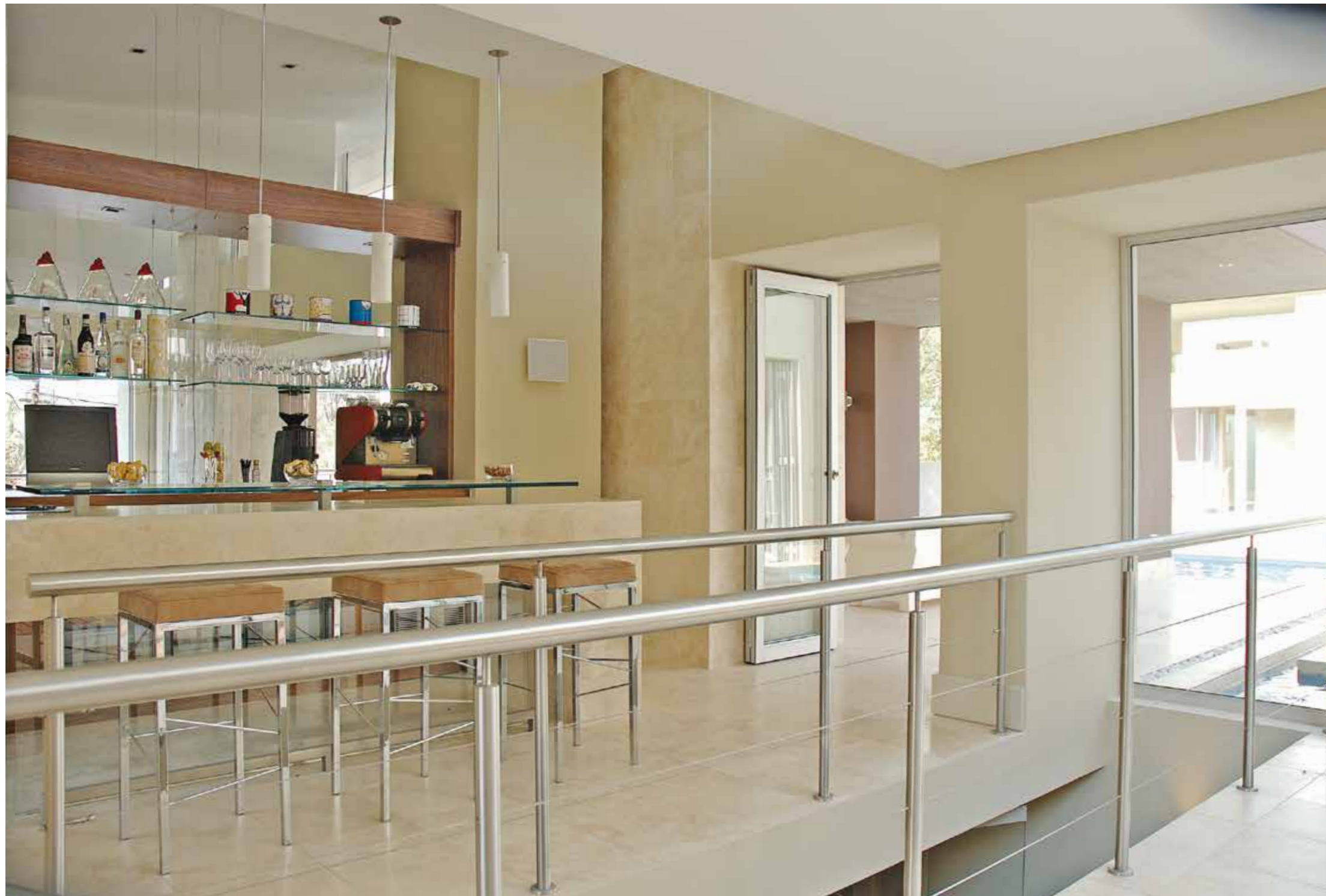
Habitat,s May/June 2005 issue, an article entitled 'Modern Mexican'. The latter was constructed vertically with great double and triple volume spaces. This, on the other hand, was developed by using the concept of planes over 900m². Everything has a plane. If you stand in the bar you look through the atrium into the kitchen, if you stand in the

kitchen you look through the atrium, into the bar, into the dining room and into the lounge. Inside and outside, the spaces flow from one to another. The result, a spectacular series of planes, has been the innovative solution to the lack of volume.

The house is styled along the architectural characteris-

these pages: This house makes use of all available space through multi-purpose living and recreation areas. The main bedroom suite is located in a separate wing beyond the pool and reached via courtyards, water features and a generous corridor.





tics of the 1950's Mexican architect Louis Barragan and his protégé Ricardo Legoretta. Barragan was fond of using thin pools of water long before the lap pool was ever popular, combining these with obelisks and waterfalls. All his houses have a lot of water surrounding them and there are three distinct sets of ponds here. Other distinctive features include the cantilevered free-standing bar, a new design with its foot rail mounted on a piece of glass, deceiving one into believing that the counter is balancing on the fragile slice of glass alone. The glass counter itself is cantilevered off the top of the travertine marble counter which allows you to sit comfortably and place your knees underneath.

All timber and cabinetry in the house is American walnut and an exotic wood called sobrani. Tiling is travertine marble, which is also used on accent walls. The owners have paid meticulous attention to the ceiling details and have enhanced the appeal by using hundreds of square metres of bulkheads to purposefully create ceilings with shadow lines and others with different shaped bulkheads. There are exclusive Italian light fittings, for example the wave fittings in the lounge and dining room, and comet fittings outside the atrium; all are of unusual shape and size. Skirtings are also shadow-lined so that it seems as though the wall floats a little above the floor. The travertine marble for the exterior was used on the



reverse to reveal its naked under-surface, the product thus looks bleached and rough with myriad little holes. This presents a completely different texture to smooth travertine and is the natural state in which it is quarried in Italy, before filling and polishing.

This is a 'smart' house, in terms of the fact that it runs on a system called Niles. Every room has its own keypad, meaning that it is wired to have television and digital sound, radio, DVD, VCR, satellite and CD player with separate volume control, all working off a centralised system. This operates off a dual-view decoder and five ordinary satellite decoders in order to achieve this flexibility, which allows every user in the

these pages: The bar/entertainment area is the hub of the house and adjoins outdoor living space/patio and small exterior dining atrium; the main dining area is to its rear. In the kitchen an Ilve gas/electric stove is complemented by a walk-in cold chiller room. Adjacent is a cellar humidifier wine cooler with extraction and air conditioning, blasted out of solid granite below ground level, an ideally cool facility.





above: Australian Jarra decking is used in the atrium between the bar entertainment area and the kitchen.

right: The rug used in the family room is by Paco; woven ivory leather chairs were imported from Italy by Bobby Breen,



house their personal choice of entertainment, in each room.

There are cantilevered gas fireplaces in the main bedroom and lounges; one end of each of the fireplaces is cantilevered and open and all one has to do is press a button to enjoy a warm, glowing fire. All cupboards are limiter units, which means that lights switch on automatically when you open the door. Most furniture here was supplied by Twiice International and p. maldini, importers and exporters of fine Italian furniture.

Patio furniture is equally carefully chosen and is moulded polypropolene – the whole chair is injected and moulded in one piece. The result is as comfortable and elegant as most interior furniture and while it is built to withstand the

outdoors, its soft contours and immaculate profiles mean it could look equally stylish inside. Doors are hillaldum top-hung, stack-away fittings in order to make wide open space more available.

The prerequisite here was to create a residence with an effect similar to that of a Five Star hotel, hence master suite and guest rooms feature private lounges. The master bedroom has a dressing room with a centre island of 24 drawers and a glass top in which ties, cufflinks and watches are revealed; yet this can be locked to secure valuables. As a foil, clothes hang as they would in a boutique. There are doors in the main bedroom which don't slide but rather just pivot to

above: Art here is by Karl Gustav, who has pioneered digital media in South Africa; a popular medium in the United States. He composes the work on computer, downloads it to A5 paper and consults with an omnigraphics team who print it. The final work is then assembled on Perspex and finally the artist breaks the CD-rom and in destroying it allows for the edition to be limited.



Comment from the architect: Single storey houses are something of a rarity in today's residential market, so it was rather surprising that we were commissioned by this particular client to design, as he put it, 'a different single level house..'. A structure that would appeal to young families, as single level houses were generally designed for more mature buyers, or as starter homes.

The site seemed to call for such a house and a positive factor was the slightly elevated view of Sandton CBD. The fall of land ensured a view from almost every space and even though another slope existed on site, we did not step the house down. The solution was to rather create double volume areas to the structure, opening out at garden level, because we had a great view above and loads of privacy from surrounding houses. We wanted a courtyard feel for this house however, with a lot of glass which would instantly put one in touch with all areas on entry; a glass house very much like Mies Van Der Rohe's Barcelona pavillion.

All passages are flanked by glass curtain walling, giving one the sensation of being outside when accessing the bedrooms. A dining courtyard separates formal areas from casual, but opens up on both sides which effectively fuses the two.

In the kitchen we used moveable opaque glass walling, so as to either incorporate or separate this area from the house. This concept was also employed in all en-suite bathrooms allowing them to be part of the bedrooms if one so desires.

The idea of transparency was, I would say, the underlying design signature as an interior/exterior synergy is present in all areas of the house. The boundaries seem to disappear when one moves from space to space, and I feel the scale of the house is both vertically and horizontally very much to human proportion. One does not feel overpowered or uncomfortable in this live-in sculpture.

these pages: Facilities in this house include a private movie theatre, car-wash, and a luxurious main bedroom suite with integral bathroom and an outside shower.

different angles, creating a fresh effect in four different arch-ways. Bathroom and bedroom blend seamlessly and one can relax in the bath whilst the other can lay on the bed, both being able to communicate.

There is a children's pool located separately from the main swimming pool, and yet it is integrated. It's design means that children can swim safely, yet be watched, whilst the adults can do laps adjacently. The element of water is a significant attraction in this house, several wonderful ponds create a serene, soft feel and a pleasing undercurrent of soothing sound. Added on board, is a cinema theatre and cellar/cigar lounge, a car wash and a walk-in cold/chiller room as part of the kitchen. This house fulfills the pre-requisites of unadulterated comfort and design. It's no surprise that this couple like to keep moving with the times and no secret that they like to do so in style. □