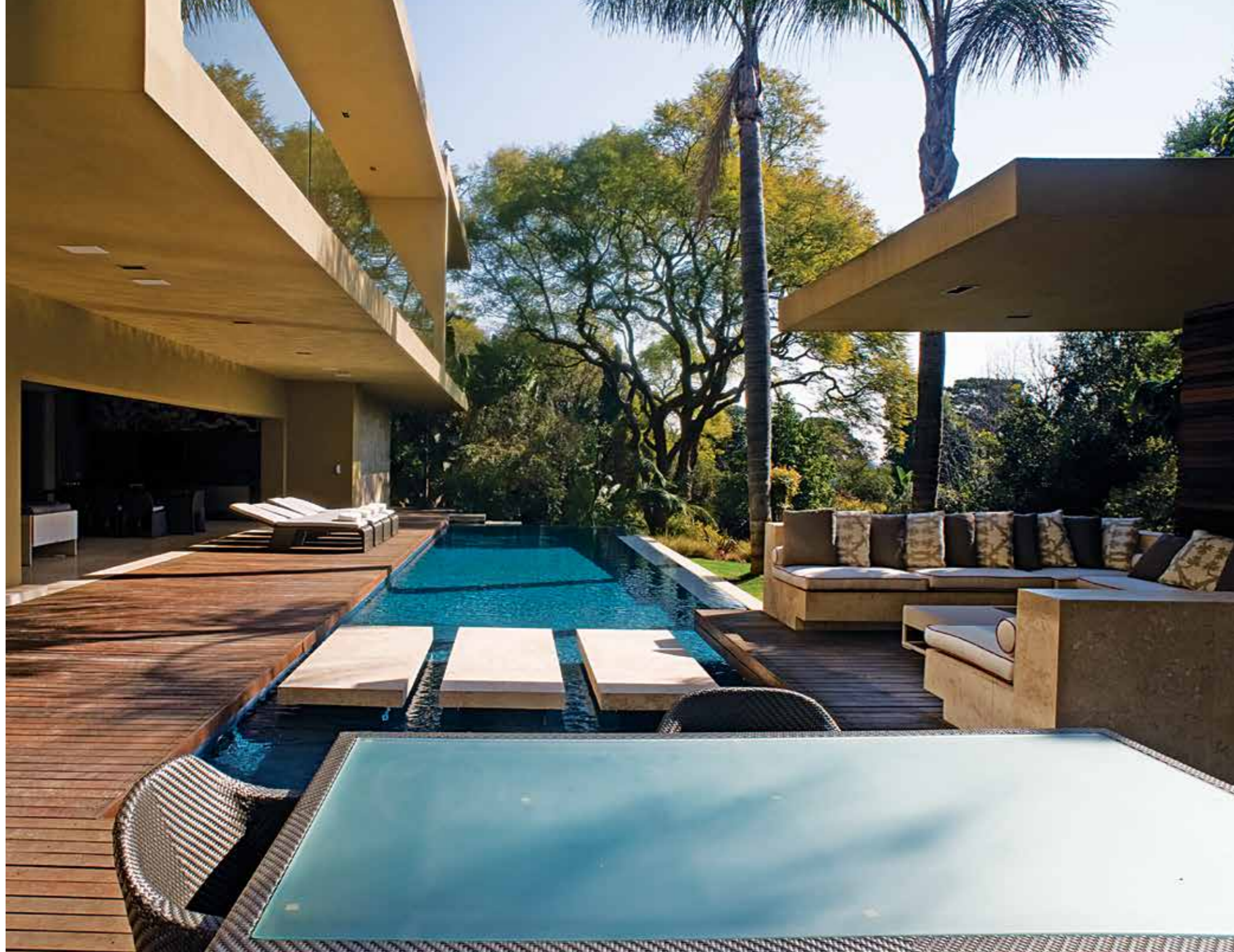




Ultimate Suburbia

location: Sandhurst, Sandton
photography: Elsa Young & Colin Sharp
architects: Aurelio Cimato, CM Architects.
interior architects: Antoni Associates (Mark Rielly & Jon Case) in collaboration with Arlene Rottanburg of Summersun Property Designs.
interior decoration: Arlene Rottanburg

WITH PRICES OF REAL ESTATE REACHING EPIC LEVELS IN SANDHURST, EVEN IN A GLOBAL RECESSION, THIS SUBURB REMAINS THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS IN SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS HOME TO POLITICIANS, STATESMEN AND THE DONS OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. ►



Says architect Aurelio Cimato, who was responsible for this notable home: 'When my clients purchased this large piece of land it had a '70s house, set in a magnificent forest-like garden with large established trees, good lawns and lush vegetation.

'Their brief was to keep this forest-like environment where possible and erect a contemporary structure, almost with the feel of a modern boutique hotel or lodge. Key requisites were for a family home with elegance, comfort and sanctuary, projecting a high echelon lifestyle. They wanted to capture the essence of modernism, whilst at the same time preserving the landscape of this property.'

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Pool deck, gazebo and outdoor decking was furnished utilising two ranges of the renowned Dedon weather-resistant fibre furniture. The Slimline range in Chalk and the Stream range in Titanium complement the travertine and Balau decking in these areas.

Lifestyle, in this instance, means strolls in the forest-like garden and massages in the salon with indoor hot pool plus steam, sauna and Jacuzzi; there is also the floatation tank, a five litre per second rain shower and a state-of-the-art gym with TV. Conversely, one can relax on the spacious patio and / or the outdoor pool gazebo. Continuing the boutique hotel theme indoors is the custom-made 'ice bar'.

There is a boardroom table in the double-volume library and hundreds of books and publications lining the shelves of the mezzanine floor. Breakfast, lunch or dinner can be taken in the open-air atrium and for more formal occasions there's an expansive dining area and a custom-fitted cigar bar. There is also an



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The library shelves contain a private collection of pre-1947 South African Law Reports and other journals in original leather binding, from 1700 onwards. The mezzanine level is accessed by way of a spiral staircase; desk in glass and titanium is from the Luna collection designed by Pininfarina and is a signed edition. The chair from Vitra's Headline collection, is by Mario and Claudio Bellini, while the oval boardroom table is from Porada's retro collection and is made of Wenge. Chairs were custom-made to fit.



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Rich exotic woods, burnished metals and large expanses of glass were used to highlight elements of the interior architecture. This signature begins in the entrance hall where joinery and interior finishes are extremely detailed, and extends throughout this unique property.

18-seat movie house with custom-made cinema privé seating and concert-like surround-sound. From the entrance and ornamental pool, there's a glass elevator to the first floor.

Stacking glass doors open up the living areas and sunset views extend from any of the top floor rooms, over the forested garden. There is a children's study and computer centre in the living area and a private TV lounge off the main bedroom. Music is available at the push of a button from one of many conveniently located sound consoles and 17 flat screen TVs feature throughout, as do climate controls and motorised curtains in key areas.

Here, Arlene and Lou Rottanburg, the forces behind the Summersun Property Group, have pioneered a new style of home, which responds to its location in a unique but sensitive way. Commenting on the architecture, Aurelio Cimato says: 'There is a powerful contrast between great structural slabs of concrete, both anchored into the ground and cantilevered out from the main structure, with the deft fluidity of progression from interior to exterior space. The division between interior and exterior literally dissolves when the frameless glass doors retract almost into the walls allowing smooth progression out onto the patio, with the concrete slab roof above acting as a vast gravity-defying canopy.'

Set on more than an acre of land, the finished structure sits well within the established garden and the old and massive trees that exist.

Antoni & Associates collaborated with Arlene Rottanburg on the interior architecture. She adds: 'I wanted to internationalise the look of the interior, which involves new materials and very detailed and precise drawings when it comes to joinery, innovations and finishes. We think alike regarding these aspects, so it was easy and exciting to work together.'

This team reinterpreted traditional material such as stone and marble, whilst making use of new materials like engineered stone, techni-stone and onyx combined with new modern lighting effects. The ice bar was an innovation requiring much research and development. Its top counter comprises solid ice, much like a mini ice rink. Drinks are placed on the ice; this ice counter top can also be used as a buffet for entertaining. The under-bar area is formed in white onyx, backlit by concealed lighting to give the effect of a huge block of ice.

Whilst the architectural structure is simple, in the sense of strict minimalist geometry, the interior architecture is both simple and complex. The team used a limited palette of





these pages: The family room is situated in front of the ice bar with its mirror polished stainless steel bar stools upholstered in red. This is a sizeable space leading onto the patio where full height frameless stackable doors retract to provide interior / exterior flow. The Minotti corner unit in this area is from the Albers Range designed by Rudolfo Dordani, upholstered in charcoal Nero fabric, it was imported from Italy.

materials, both natural and man-made, yet the complexity is evident in a great deal of detailing in the finishes.

The effective use of huge unfilled travertine tiles on walls and floors, in the most strategic areas of the concrete shell, combines with complex and unusual random tiling pattern, used specifically in the main entrance, to unify and blend with other materials such as natural stone and timber.

Lighting and ceiling design is a key feature in any interior design; it remains the easiest way to transform a space and create a change of mood. On a practical level, special lighting techniques have been used here to highlight architectural features, art and work surfaces.

Mood lighting within the structure includes Italian crystal chandeliers above the ice bar and their red accent is continued in certain of the entertainment areas. The theme is mirrored in the dining area, here in clear white crystal.

The architects and designers strove to create a look that is unpredictable, that challenged their creativity as designers and that reflects their individual tastes.



this page: The main bedroom has a private balcony overlooking the 25m swimming pool. It has a custom-designed double headboard from floor to ceiling, in limewashed natural walnut and quilted fabric. Linen is by Frette, other spectacular textured linens, cottons and throws are included.



‘Our interpretation combines new design elements with those that have stood the test of time, to create a look that is at once modern yet in parts classical’, says Arlene Rottanburg.

Wall coverings, as well as paint finishes and textures, project neutral tones; bathrooms are spacious and utilise a large amount of natural stone – limestone, marble, onyx – and feature backlighting. Clustered rain-showers are set flush with the ceilings, yet another innovative design feature.

The brief for the interior was to create a European contemporary, yet simple interior utilising the concept of minimalism. The designer was specifically instructed to exclude any ethnic signatures, no Afro-Chic or African Renaissance genres. The feel of this house was that it should be able to stand anywhere in Europe as a modern contemporary home; there were to be no bright, clashing colours utilised. The designer was instructed to work off a neutral base and of the five bedrooms, two bedrooms were decorated as guest rooms emulating a 5-star boutique hotel. The client sums it up thus: ‘elegant, sophisticated yet relaxed and liveable’.