



A HOME BUILT AROUND *space and light*

People tend to think that architecture is all about building structures out of geometrical shapes when in reality it is more about creating living environments out of space and light. Those who master this skill are the makers of true architecture.

WORDS MICHEL CRUZ PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF P4 ARQUITECTOS AND KEVIN HORN

Architecture is a fascinating, creative field in which the designer is in the privileged position of giving shape to the buildings in which we live, work and are entertained. In this way each architect contributes to the urban landscape and leaves a mark not just of his or her own, but also of the era they work in. But it isn't all creativity and free expression, for professionals in this field also carry the responsibility for designing spaces that are visually engaging, optimally functional and practical. What's more, they usually have to do it to a brief and within budgetary, planning and technical constraints. Defined as such, we have arrived at the playing field in which most of our buildings, from villas and apartments to public buildings, are conceived.

It is with all these parameters in mind that an architect sets out to embody the vision of the client, be the latter a commercial or public entity, or a private individual. Which of these it is will again affect the project and the ultimate design and details of the structure in question. To be commissioned to develop the complete concept for a luxurious modern villa in a prime setting such as Sierra Blanca ranks high on the wish list of most architects, including Eulalia Polo and Joaquín Amores of P4 Arquitectos. As a team combining architecture and engineering, they offer the ideal complement of services in a project such as this, ensuring that the aesthetic value of their designs is matched by functionality and technical excellence.



The elegant lines of the villa and pool

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The gallery is a study in architectural geometry



Luxurious interior spaces surrounded by pure greenery



The interplay of angles and natural elements



Making a carport an architectural masterpiece

Creating a Modern Design Reference in Marbella

And yet it is quite an undertaking to sit down and design a stunning modern home that is not only visually captivating but also fulfils all the functions expected of such a property these days with style. "Ultimately, our function goes beyond this, to creating a living environment that people want to be in and call their home," says Lali. She's right, a villa can have an endless list of luxuries and amenities to satisfy even the most demanding of tick lists, but if it doesn't present all of this within a setting that is inspiring and highly desirable it will have missed its true mission.

"The starting point is the brief and how it fits into the physical setting of the plot," says Lali, who has the advantage of having been designing modern style homes since long before it became the norm. As a result, she is a specialist in this field, with over 15 years of creating avant-garde designs. Does this mean she has a very particular style? "We all have a certain touch born of our design philosophy and methodology, but following a style template is as far removed from our way of thinking as you can be." Instead, she and Joaquín prefer to focus on the unique and indeed distinguishing elements of each individual project. "The site and orientation are different each time, as are the client and his brief," says Joaquín.

Styling details are enhanced by the architectural surroundings



"A lot of the villas we design are for Northern Europeans and in particular Scandinavian clients. They are highly demanding of technical standards and have a sophisticated appreciation of modern design. Over the years we have learned a lot from each other, combining Northern living principles with Southern design flair to produce some truly memorable homes." The latest of these is this superb contemporary villa in the upper reaches of Sierra Blanca. Approaching the home, its clean-cut geometry immediately captivates the eye, offering more and more subtle architectural detail as you scan its sleek, crisp white lines. A brise soleil in noble Iroko wood softens this look, adding personality and aesthetic appeal with a touch of fifties modernism that only serves to enrich today's architectural styles.

Glass and steel are further elements in this interplay of manmade shapes and textures, optimising natural light, space and views that glide along a verdant lawn towards the expansive Mediterranean horizon. Turn the other way and the deep greenery and rocky majesty of La Concha Mountain engulf you, and thanks to the way the home is positioned and laid out, sea views can be enjoyed from almost all rooms, and both sea and mountain vistas from within the main living areas.

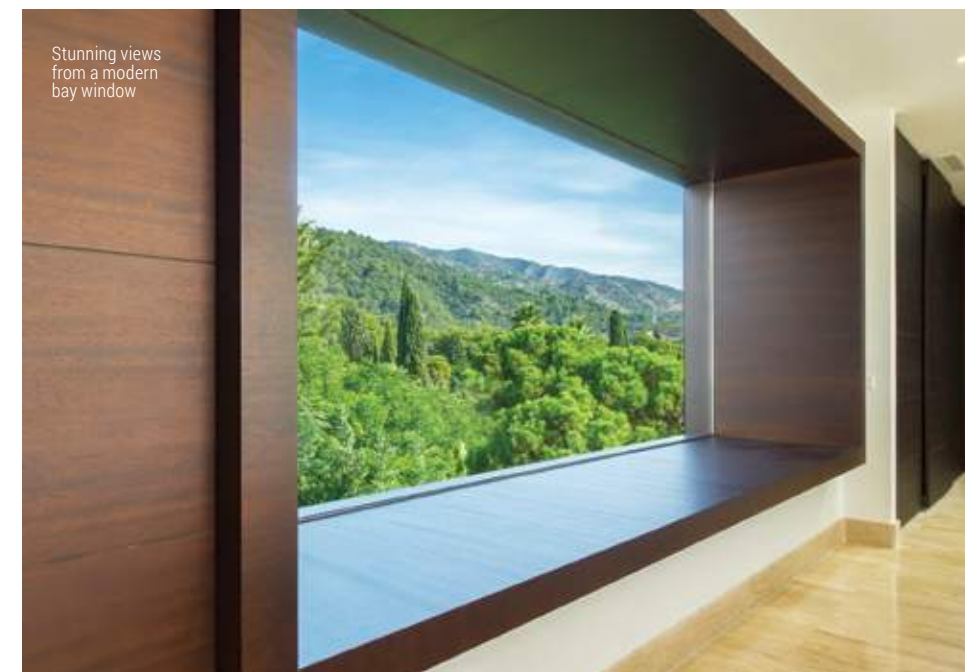
Light, views and comfortable proportions



Intimacy and space in one



Spacious, open-flowing living



Stunning views from a modern bay window

Luxury Living for a New Era

Having caught your attention as you approach, the villa casts its spell as the gate glides open to reveal the inner domain. The perspectives and interwoven angles created by the geometry of modern architecture dance on the eye as you approach a home in which even the multi-car carport represents an imposing architectural detail that is particularly evocative when lit at night. Enter the property through the solid Iroko front door and you see the crisp modernity of its interior warmed by this beautiful hardwood and floors covered in Spanish travertine marble.

The effect is of space, light and tasteful opulence as you survey the entrance hall, leading on to a spacious open-plan living area in which a lounge with intimate sitting corners take pride of place. A double height ceiling and floor-to-ceiling windows define the heart of this home, where an elegant dining room flows on in an open plan style to a modern designer kitchen. Each of these spaces has its own exterior equivalent, so open the sliding doors and you enter an outdoor extension of the villa's main living rooms set beneath a covered structure that adds further architectural distinction.

From here the eye is trained along the stylised swimming pool and deck to a sweeping lawn that runs up to the edge of the 1.4 acre grounds. "We positioned the villa in such a way as to maximise the views and created a gentle slope that produces a perspective straight to the broad expanse of sea," says Lali. From this position it is highly gratifying to turn back and gaze upon the villa in all its glory, with the mountain rising up behind it. But the living room does not communicate with the front alone, as is normally the case. In this villa the lawn extends around the back to surround the house in greenery and allow natural light and a diversity of vistas to flow into the living spaces.



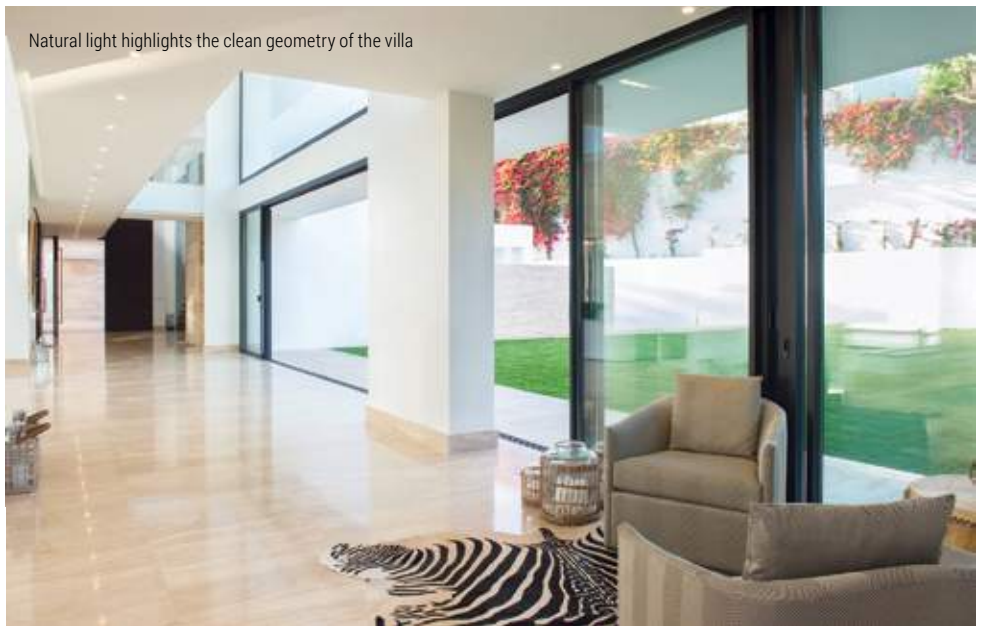
Slide the doors open in summer and a gentle breeze negates the need for air conditioning, though it goes without saying that the home automation system includes full climate control as well. The brise soleil that adds such character to the villa's façade provides a greater sense of privacy in the five bedroom suites by offering its occupants lovely views combined with optimal privacy. Two of these form a private wing on the ground floor that can also be used as a home study or office, while the larger three suites are found on the first floor. Take the lift or the open stairs up to the floating atrium that crosses above the main living area and you come to the luxurious master suite.

The latter is complete with an atrium lounge or reading space bordering a private suite with dressing room, modern marble bathroom and luxury details along with some of the finest vistas over Marbella and the sea, and a modern variant on the bay window that affords a wonderful perspective across intense greenery. The lower level contains a multi-car garage in the modern mould – in other words, a gallery in which to display your cars in style if you so choose. It also has space for a private guest apartment, staff quarters, home cinema and games room, completing 2,500 square metres of modern opulence supremely crafted out of space and light.

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Indulge yourself in pampering luxury



Natural light highlights the clean geometry of the villa



A forecourt for the 21st century



Space, light and style as a palette for luxury living

