

habitat

T H E A R T O F L I V I N G



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ARCHITECTURE

Angles in Geneva
Sculpted Form in Cape Town

DESIGN

Sandton Country Revamp
Modern Classic in Ohio

FOCUS

Kitchens & Bathrooms
Walls & Windows

ART

The Winsome Works of
Shany van den Berg



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NON-RESTRICTED ANGLES

location: Geneva
 architect: Raphaël Nussbaumer
 interior design: Raphaël Nussbaumer / Annette Roserens
 photography: Lionel Henriod / mc2 agency

THE CLIENT AND HIS FAMILY WITH TWO CHILDREN WERE LIVING IN AN EXISTING OLD PROPERTY SITUATED ON THE UPPER LEVEL OF THIS SCENIC PLOT. IT'S LOCATED IN A SUBURB OF GENEVA, QUITE CLOSE TO THE CENTRE OF THE CITY, AT THE EDGE OF A RURAL VILLAGE.



these pages: Local building regulations effected the design of this contemporary home in rural Switzerland. The result is both innovative and appealing.

They required a larger, new home and as the client co-owned the land with his brother, they divided this narrow rectangular plot into two smaller portions situated one below the other. He was to move into the new structure, leaving the old house to his brother after its refurbishment. The sloping site faces south and towards the impressive mountain called Salève, which majestically overlooks the area.

Says architect Raphaël Nussbaumer: 'As is the case with most Swiss rural regions today, the zone is under design protection, which was to represent quite a challenge for a residence featuring patently contemporary architecture. >



these pages: Interior finishes are finely tailored and very well chosen. Furniture choices include a number of modern classics from the Bauhaus period and key design decades after.

‘We sited the new structure at the top of the plot so that the old house should retain its views to the south. Access was only allowed from the south-west corner, and once the regulations were established, we were given permission to design a house of moderate height, placed on the steepest part of the slope and where the entrance for cars and pedestrians is within the main façade.

‘The dramatic landscape is dominated by Salève mountain, and this huge, rocky presence led us to find an answer to the design of the new house. Salève’s is a solid, autonomous, natural volume and it indicated that the house had to be built of concrete; a material that could be sculpted in free-form yet which commands a monolithic expression. The resulting stepped, angular profile somehow echoes the mountain.’ >



these pages: Architecture has dictated interior spaces, which are light and carefully proportioned. The attic style roof lights are key to natural illumination. Recessed downlights are aesthetic supplements.



All exterior walls are of concrete and were built at a common height to avoid any horizontal division, visually. The interior structure is based on steel columns that support the ceiling and the upper bedroom level, above which has a wooden roof. Soft, lightly textured tones serve to amplify the natural ambience that this new building manages to impart.

The concept of space was a prerequisite for architect Nussbaumer. He explains: 'The design regulations demanded a solution whereby the light would flow in from the roof to the heart of the house, privacy in relation to the neighbouring houses was a vital consideration.'



Angled roof-lights made lateral façades possible without any windows and added to the unusually deep volumes within. Says Raphaël Nussbaumer: 'The client's first thoughts were to unconsciously mirror the floorplan of the old house they were living in – a very classical layout of the mid '30s.'

'Finally, the project's organisation became a matrix of 3 x 3 units with a hall and staircase in the centre. This matrix allows different combinations of units together and offers more flexibility, both during the design procedure and subsequently, in functionality for the user.'

'The split level solution of the staircase not only reflects the position of >



these pages: *The main suite enjoys a private balcony that overlooks the garden and the dominant Salève mountain.*

the house on the slope but it procures diverse grades of privacy within. This sustains the maxim of flexible use for undefined spaces, like those which are on the intermediate storey; examples being the TV room and studio. The balcony situated on the first floor above the garden, provides a private outdoor space for the bedrooms.'

The outstanding features of this innovative house are based on three distinct space structures: the 'glasshouse' for the most public areas which access the garden on the ground floor; the 'cave' for all service areas - excavated into the slope. And the 'lived-in roof' with its attic-type roof-lights for bedrooms, bathrooms, dressing room, TV room and studio. These elements synergise into a simply beautiful solution. □