

RESTLESS LIVING

"... restlessly dedicated to contemporary living."



VOLUME 218



LAKE TAI VILLA

Jiangsu, China

In a fusion between Southern Chinese and modernist aesthetics, Lake Tai Villa is a home with a courtyard visually and spatially connecting the interior and exterior; dissolving boundaries and creating a coherence between the natural features and the architecture. The site occupies a space of 1,000 m², yet the central courtyard takes up 600 of them in a composition of a covered modernist walkway and a series of pools.

“White pavilions, a gentle breeze, verdant grass and trees, covered bridges curving over clear water, picturesque scenery integrated with interior spaces: in classical Eastern aesthetic sensibilities, a courtyard provides peace and leisure, a place of joy and respite from the outside world”, architect Zhang Haihua says. Although Lake Tai Villa has been somewhat stripped from traditional oriental elements to provide a contemporary urban experience regarding style and form, Zhang and his team preserved the regional spirit. “[We] used minimalist principles to structure the project’s courtyard, removing any unneeded elements in order to create a space notable for its simplicity, elegance, and clarity. Although the architectural language is one of Western modernism, the courtyard design subtly incorporates a sense of oriental aesthetic





refinement and a multifaceted garden experience”, Zhang tells. Applying the idea of ‘being seduced’ by the architecture, Lake Tai Villa evokes the feeling of wandering through environments of beauty emphasized by an understated yet sophisticated attention to detail. A large spiral staircase of white marble immediately becomes a point of seduction highlighted by its elegance and its organic shape. “Opposite the spiral staircase at basement level is an extended kitchen island, which, besides providing a place to socialize or drink, also acts as a spatial buffer when entering the residence from the adjacent garage”, Zhang adds. The lowered ceiling of the white vestibule space creates a strong sense of intimacy and feeling present which is – with few steps – completely contrasted by the expansive, double-height, open-plan living space. It is a reference to the new kind of flowing space introduced by Mies van der Rohe where restraint, rationality, and order was enforced. “When this Western architectural concept of classic modernism meets with the Eastern garden’s precept that ‘the imagination and the real combine to create new scenery with each step’, it is notable that they each interpret the concept of ‘flow’ in their own way”, Zhang explains and concludes: “[We] employed a minimalist architectural aesthetic, while introducing changes in the opening and closing of the different spaces. By carefully modulating their degrees of transparency, each space is individually defined, while also interconnected to and flowing into the others.”

Architecture by **Z+H Interior Design**

Photography by **Cai Yunpu**







SERENA HOUSE

Recife, Brazil

The concept of ‘less is more’ has rarely been more telling than in relation to the Serena House. Despite its compact footprint of 50 m² in the iconic Chanteclair building in downtown Recife, the Brazilian firm Módulo 4 Arquitetura has managed to create a studio loft of absolute serenity.

“The Serena House is an invitation to contact with the inner world, to well-being and tranquility. It is an environment that takes on a pulsating and welcoming visual poetic, radiating serenity”, architect Jose Alexandre Cavalcanti says. Valuing neutral tones to inspire a dose of calm and relaxation, the loft studio features a special aesthetic combining the elegant with the contextual history of the Chanteclair building. “Part of the original structure of the century-old building was preserved, and the project develops from it, embracing and especially valuing the robust pillars. The side table that combines the pantry, home office and washbasin is related to the futon bed and was custom designed, connecting with the surrounding imagination and affect”, Jose explains. The connection between the design elements ensure a conceptual strictness where forms in furniture and architecture elevate the experience of the space. “The organic shapes and the use of natural materials make our eyes dance, following the sinuosity of the sculptural elements that animate themselves and take on multiple functions along the route, where the integration of spaces speaks for itself”, Jose notes.

Serena House is thus a place embodying past, present and future. “It is made with objects that rescue time and reinforce a sentimental legacy left in each family item in a delicate way”, Jose ends.

Architecture by **Módulo 4 Arquitetura**

Photography by **Walter Dias**



HILLSBOROUGH HOUSE

Hillsborough, California, United States

Inspired by the neighboring classical Carolands Chateau – a 4,278 m² mansion of 98 rooms built in 1914, the Hillsborough House is based on a masonry plinth with quiet spaces floating above spaces of activity. As a home for a family of six, the residence maximizes functionality while exhibiting tasteful minimalism with a nod to local history.

In a tribute to Carolands Chateau, the Hillsborough House is composed with a similar approach to organization and rusticated base. “The language of the wood cladding serves as a canopy to the activity and provides warmth to offset the masonry. The screening modulates around the structure to strategically control views, sunlight, and privacy”, architect Jason Ro says. Although the Hillsborough House introduces a hint of solid mass at first, the presence of void space is immediately experienced once entering the place, relating directly to the green exterior. “In true California fashion, capitalizing on its temperate climate, the home is fit for indoor/outdoor living and entertainment.





Wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling retractable doors unify the double high core of the residence to the exterior programs such as its outdoor kitchen, garden, pool, and sport court”, architect Zac Rockett says. The masonry accentuates the interior spaces with muted nuances of grey, allowing Hillsborough House to become a beacon of contemporary living. Strategic openings combined with a structured organization enable a theatrical play of light and shadow throughout the day, reinforcing the experience of both texture and form. Simultaneously, the openness gives room for the central design features to play a protagonist role in the composition; exemplified by the monolithic fireplace structure which solidifies the architectural expression. Wooden furniture and finishing contribute with warmth and enhance the dialogue between the design and the natural setting; reinforcing their co-existence and establish a modern, Californian sanctuary.

By balancing the classical elegance of Carolands Chateau and the refined minimalism of the 21st century, Hillsborough House not only preserves the traditional roots and the greatness of the past but dares to bring the understanding of beauty from yesterday into the context of today.

Architecture by **RO | ROCKETT DESIGN**

Photography by **Adam Rouse**



16



17





HOUSE OF GRID

Trnava, Slovakia

In a brand-new residential neighborhood on the outskirts of the Slovak city Trnava, a 296 m² home of fibre cement has been designed with the structural precision of chessboards. Conceived as a House of Grid, the single-family residence vows to a squared layout with monolithic load-bearing walls and steel columns to define spaces and maintain the relationship to the garden.

“We found ample space to nurture a concept of a ground-level house seamlessly connected to its garden”, architect Rado Buzinkay says. “Veiled beneath the facade’s surface, which defines the house’s square footprint, hides an intricate internal structure.” Designed as an open residential landscape with buffer zones and an organic extension towards the garden, House of Grid attempts to break away from the conventional footprint of a compact house with a terrace. “The foundation of mutually shifted monolithic walls and glass forms a composition that either opens up or closes in response to the orientation towards cardinal directions, the need for privacy, and connection with the exterior. Extended exterior structures surpass the perimeter by a range of two to five meters, filling the conceptual square floor space and expanding the house’s living area into outdoor rooms”, Rado explains. An additional feature is the screen blind shading which can close the gap between the columns and provide shelter during the hot summer months.

With extensive wall surfaces and floors, the spatial qualities of the house is highlighted by the interior design’s ‘gallery principle’. “The open space is complemented by a few standalone furniture pieces - such as the kitchen island with a wine cellar. Doors and storage spaces are seamlessly integrated into the built-in furniture. Our priority, as in our previous projects, remains the use of materials in their natural form”, Rado concludes.

Architecture by **Beef Architekti**

Photography by **Matej Hakár**

Words of the Week



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Restless Living is back on the road!

Last week, our small team was finally on a new trip to film four projects in Portugal. The trip has been long underway and has required lots of patience. Nonetheless, it went great and I am looking so much forward to see the final result of four new episodes.

Our trip to Portugal is no one-off. I have already started planning the next trips and we are working towards being able to publish a bi-weekly house tour on YouTube with supporting content on Instagram and TikTok. I am incredibly excited about this new journey, where I have been accompanied by new partners – two immensely talented video professionals. During our first trips, we will focus on increasing the quality of the episodes; both in terms of videography and the storytelling. It will not be perfect from the beginning, but we will work relentlessly to improve from episode to episode.

For now, the episodes will need to be edited with brand new graphics and animations. Hereafter, we will plan the relaunch of our YouTube channel once we conclude our next trip within the next couple of months. I hope you are as intrigued as I am and want to follow along on our journey to produce better architectural content.

CHRISTIAN TRAMPEDACH
FOUNDER, RESTLESS

