



## SOURCE OF VISTAS

location: Pezula Private Estate, Knysna  
architects: Archi-Studio Architects, JHB  
project architect: Demo Salerno  
interior: George E. De Haast & Owner  
photography: Ian Flemming

LOCATED ON PEZULA PRIVATE ESTATE, ON KNYSNA'S EASTERN HEAD, THE SITE IS A 5 500M<sup>2</sup> ERF SET ADJACENT TO A LARGE GREEN BELT. IT OFFERS VIEWS OF THE DRAMATIC ROCK FORMATIONS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE SOUTH EAST AND SOUTH WEST AND DISTANT VIEWS OF THE OUTENIQUA MOUNTAINS TO THE NORTH.







Says project architect Demo Salerno: 'The partially fan-shaped site, originally a dense pine forest, has a wide sea frontage set at varying angles thus allowing the buildings to spread out and enjoy the different sea views on offer.'

'Conceived as a residence for all-year-round vacations, our brief was to create an elegant, yet relaxed and rustic home with generous, uncluttered spaces all to face the varying sea views. The owner's insistence was to create a simple, light and airy home with a unique identity.'

While designed within the Pezula Estate architectural guidelines, the house comprises a series of pavilions conceived along the principles of 'Village Architecture' and is 626m<sup>2</sup> in size with over 120m<sup>2</sup> of double volumed spaces and 200m<sup>2</sup> of timber decks and balconies. Set on the flattest and lowest point of the site, the five pavilions are built onto a large platform elevating each space above the fynbos so as to maximise the views while allowing the natural environment to envelop the built form, giving the illusion that the house grows out of the site.



Seen approximately 10 metres above the entrance platform, the first impression of the house is that of a series of monolithic envelopes and 'scattered rock-clad ruins' set symmetrically along a strongly defined central axis. The dark blue barrel-vaulted roofs, with large overhangs, are clearly defined geometrical forms that not only cap the individual pavilions but also visually merge to mimic the undulating swells of the ocean below to create an interesting dialect between the man-made and natural environments.

*previous pages & these pages: Despite the various challenges, such as limited permissible building forms, material choices and external finishes, the beauty of the site and its surrounds inspired the owners, architect and interior designer to continuously challenge themselves to create a unique and environmentally friendly home.*

*below: Courtyards form retreat spaces with clear reference to the Zen theme. The use of clean geometric lines and specially placed objects give one a sense of understated elegance. The large 'sun' built out of varying coloured sandstone tiles sits centrally on the garage / pool wall making it the focal point of the outdoor room.*

*right: Simplicity is key via well-matched materials that combine to create a magical environment. Views to the ocean are spectacular, even from the kitchen.*



These strategically placed pavilions clearly outline the plan of the house. The two outer buildings, furthest from the public zone, contain the bedroom wings with the eastern wing reserved for the children's apartments and the western wing for the parents. The centrally located living pavilion – housing the entrance hall, living, dining and recreation room above – is open-plan with all spaces connecting seamlessly.

Adjacent to the central unit and defined by the negatively formed spaces of the three main areas, is the kitchen and entertainment court to the west and the family room and external lounge to the east, all with sea views.

So as not to interrupt the fluidity of the walkway and to create a continuous flow, a clear



glass entrance door was used to separate the interior from the exterior surrounding. Once through the entrance hall, one immediately appreciates the layout of the house. The plan is formal, symmetrical and linear with a clear acknowledgement to simple architecture detailing, free from obvious and overused architectural styles and references.

The design synergy between architect and interior designer is clear. The use of natural finishes: stone, timber and earth-toned textures are identified throughout. Like the architecture,

George de Haast's interiors are modern, yet timeless.

Seen as a gallery and display area by both designers, the winding circulation spine has been treated as a secondary raised platform, which connects the various rooms and courts along an ever-changing light-filled scenic route. The passage, which is incorporated as part of each room, contains a series of artworks, which can be appreciated throughout the house.

In contrast to the restricted circulation route, the main living area is an over-scaled, double-volume space capped ▷



*this page:* The master bedroom has been designed using the same principles as the living room and the en suite bathroom as a series of individual yet flowing spaces, with each function clearly defined by its own materials, ceilings and mood.

by a seemingly floating barrel ceiling. Within the large space, the various functions are identified into three clearly defined areas, each with its own identity yet held together by the use of flowing material. The floor floats past the large glass panes and becomes a series of cantilevered balconies over the fynbos.

To further emphasise the feeling of living in a large gazebo, designer De Haast placed a daybed within the rock clad gazebo, along the central access of the lounge. This is complemented by a pair of oversized Burmese pots, which become focal points from both inside and outside the house.

On either side of the main space, both kitchen and family room form part of the area created between the main pavilions. As they are elevated to the same level as the entrance hall, both have vistas past the entertainment decks to the ocean. When fully opened up, via folding sliding doors, both spaces become an extension of the patio areas, thus further creating the feeling of living outdoors. Timber pergolas spanning the entire deck create a sense of enclosure while filtering the harsh western sunlight. □