



## VOËLKLIP, HERMANUS

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The brief called for a beach house suitable for a family of four, on a vacant site in Voëlklip, Hermanus.

The site is a long, thin, rectangular subdivision stretching between two streets, and looking out over the undulating tree-tops of milkwoods and fynbos along the coast on the one side, and up to the Overstrand Mountains on the other.

The gently sloping site presented the opportunity for a split-level living space allowing lounge, dining room and all bedrooms to have sea views. Restrictive title-deed and planning conditions determined the nature of the building. The form of the house and the detailing are purely functional. The long linear nature of the site resulted in a covered walkway from the entrance portico all the way to the south sea-garden entrance and access to the paths and beaches. It also allows the horizon to be visible below the first-floor slab from the beginning of the entrance walkway. The flat cantilever slab roofs allow the first- and ground-floor levels to be raised to the maximum permissible height. This maximises the 180° panoramic views of the beaches and rocks from the living areas.

The splitlevel open-plan living area extends from the one-and-a-half volume living room and kitchen up into the dining room and lounge and out towards the pool area and courtyard on the north side. The main garden courtyard functions as a large outdoor entertainment room. The line of newly planted trees will form a screen enclosing this space.

The lower ground floor accommodates three bedrooms behind the fully glazed sea-facing façade which is fitted with timber sliding shutters for privacy and security. All these bedrooms open

onto a timber deck which steps down into the seaside, pebbled garden. As the views are of paramount importance, the first-floor lounge and dining room also have large full-width glazed sliders opening onto a sea-facing balcony. Balau timber sliding shutters provide security, privacy and protection to the terrace. The lounge, dining areas and terrace also have views back through the house, over the living room, towards the pool and courtyard and up to the mountain, through clerestory windows.

Materials were selected to enhance the beach-house character of the building while at the same time adding touches of sophisticated detail: white cement screed floors to the public circulation areas; lime-washed oak floors to the lounge, dining area and lower-ground floor bedrooms; off-shutter concrete ceilings; and external decks, shutters, cladding, screens and pergolas of Balau timber that will weather to a silver-grey patina. Frameless glass balustrades and delicate brushed stainless steel handrails add a slick contrast to the cement, concrete and timber.

Walls are plastered and painted the same colour internally and externally for continuity of planes. White sandstone dry-pack cladding is used on the sea-side boundary wall and steps, forming a plinth to the building and again to the base of the street boundary wall and steps.

The Balau timber pergolas, screens, timber shutters and cladding add detail to the stripped linear masonry and concrete structure. Feature horizontal and vertical slot windows, clerestory lights and skylights puncture the walls, floors and roof, permitting light and framing views. ■

