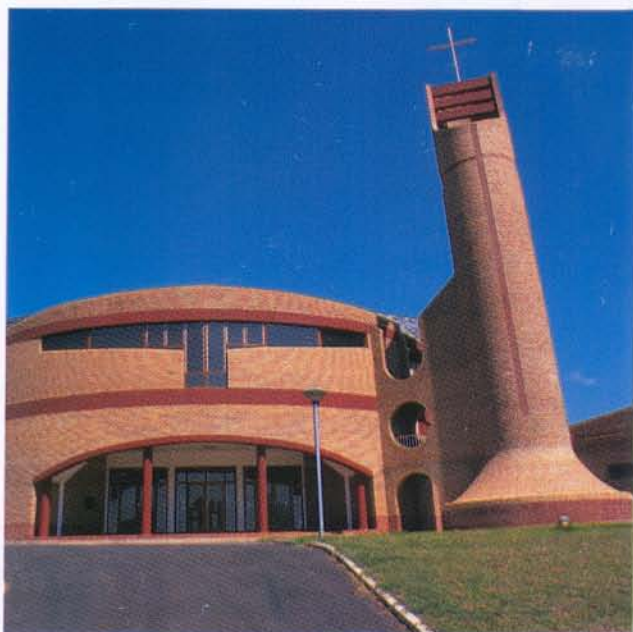


The
DIGEST

of South African Architecture 2000

A review of work completed in 1999



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THREE HOUSES IN RAVINE RD BANTRY BAY

Architects: Jane Visser, Mark Thomas



The Atlantic coast side of the Cape Peninsula seems in many to evoke associations with parts of the Mediterranean coastline. The long dry summers, the steep and rocky coastline and the constant presence of sea and sky all contribute to a kind of architecture that is relaxed, shade-giving and open to the view – which includes, for those who can afford it, the daily spectacle of a glowing sun melting into the sea.

The dominant element impacting on new house designs in this favoured locality is the view. Since the view and the sun on this seaboard are in more or less the same direction and since there are no mosquitoes in this benevolent climate to disturb those dining outdoors, the potential for idyllic outdoor living is offset only by the southeaster and the increasing need for burglar bars.

The house illustrated is one of a group of three which are cut into the steep cliff in a sought-after part of Bantry Bay which is sheltered from the southeaster. They are also sufficiently raised above ground level so as not to require burglar bars. In the absence of these constraints, the deep verandahs which run along the entire north face of the house can be fully used to extend the living spaces. Complete walls slide, or fold, away allowing an uninterrupted flow from indoor living space to outdoor.

Internally, the planning is open with level changes that maximise the views and allow a flow of space. A double-volume space to the living room allows high-level light to stream in above the deeply shading verandah.

The upstairs bedrooms are reached by a walkway that extends into a library/study area. All the bedrooms have verandahs overlooking the sea. Bathrooms are simple, but classic.

The architecture is simple and robust, as are the finishes. The colours are cool with pink beech kitchen tops and hand-painted cupboards in the kitchen. Open shelving, recessed into walls, gives an impression of wall thickness appropriate to the Mediterranean theme. Natural sandstone flooring is used in conjunction with concrete bull-nose step treads. Outside the finish is an earth-tinted cement wash.

A passenger lift connects the house to the garage below.

A raised lawn area with a long thin black pool, creates a foreground to the view. The garden is designed for low maintenance with wild olives, agapanthus and tulbuchia.

The style of the house is relaxed and contemporary. The architects, Jane Visser and Mark Thomas, describe it as the kind of place where you can feel comfortable leaving wet towels and costumes around and where it would be unnecessary to keep your shoes on. 🏠

