



# SOUTH YARRA HOUSE



# PANDOLFINI ARCHITECTS

Words by Brett Winchester • Photography by Rory Gardiner • Architecture by Pandolfini Architects  
Interior Design by Pandolfini Architects and Simone Haag • Build by Dome • Furniture, Objects, Artwork and Styling by Simone Haag  
Landscape by Myles Baldwin • Engineering by SDA Structures





At first glance, South Yarra House by Pandolfini Architects gives little away. But once inside, detailed sculptural forms and finely curated material elements make spectacular statements.

Positioned between two apartment blocks in Melbourne's South Yarra is an unassuming family home that gives nothing away from the busy street. "This [approach] appealed to us as in a lot of our work, we try and create quite abstract facades where you don't know what you are entering into," says Dominic Pandolfini, founder and director of Pandolfini Architects. "With South Yarra House, we have a great concrete wall with no apparent openings that gives very little away, but once you enter the home, it opens up to sculptural elements that are not typically seen within a house." Once past the minimalist concrete facade, these meticulous forms and delicate connections to the surrounding environment begin to reveal themselves in vivid detail.

Aside from the client's desire for privacy and tranquillity, Pandolfini Architects was given near complete freedom to design the home, which features unique interior elements and links indoors with out. Distinctive design elements such as concrete used in the voids,

black-framed patterned glass and the home's ability to link spaces while still retaining a sense of intimacy are among the more invaluable architectural statements.

Moving from the front yard into the double-height foyer, the transition from outside to inside is manipulated with a metaphorical extension of the front garden via a polished spotted concrete floor. However, it is the idea of compression and expansion that "accentuates the journey of the home," says Dominic. Pandolfini Architects has emphasised the idea of expansion through South Yarra House's height and architectural gestures. A cantilevered curved staircase is one such feature, its sinuous volume contrasting with a natural zinc-cladded wall beneath that hides corridors, embracing the notion of compression. These ideas are expressed further in a hidden corridor that is lined with timber battens, taking the owner on a journey through the spaces before ending at a garden outlook.





With the bedrooms and amenities on the ground level, the team positioned the living space on the first floor and enhanced the area with a seamless indoor-outdoor link. The striking staircase leads to the open-plan living, dining and kitchen area, which holds some surprises. The cantilevered form, adjacent to the staircase, contains a bar and is intricately detailed with stone battens, timber and aged brass elements. Additionally, in the heart of the kitchen, a monolithic stone island with a zigzag feature is complemented by more zinc cladding that conceals appliances and amenities. The team worked with designer Simone Haag to select furniture pieces for the space. “This collaboration was crucial,” says Dominic. “Simone’s layering of materiality and furniture helped to soften the more masculine architectural elements of the home.”

Leading out from the main living space is a large terrace and swimming pool, which extends out over the garden below. A louvred roof system over the terrace protects the exterior living areas and pool from the western sun while also adding another measure of privacy. For the

gardens, Dominic explains that, due to the size of the house, “there wasn’t a huge amount of garden area, so we worked with Myles Baldwin early on in the design process to make sure that we could create these outlooks and lush gardens.” As such, considered garden arrangements were installed to soften the scale and materiality of the dwelling, while integrated planter boxes and stone walls shield the internal spaces from neighbours. For the main bedroom, a private garden terrace gives striking views out to the treetops. On the ground level, underneath the pool, a more secluded garden with a contrasting variety of plants and trees was added to complement the home’s bold architectural features.

Condensed in its footprint, South Yarra House is a careful curation of concrete, glass, natural zinc cladding and stone, all of which have been chosen for their longevity and easy maintenance. Spread out over four levels, with generous space for indoor and outdoor connections and activities, the seemingly simplistic concrete home proves that one should never rely on first impressions.



Grounded by a woven tapestry of materials, the open-plan living space is divided into zones by striking furniture choices and plush rugs.







