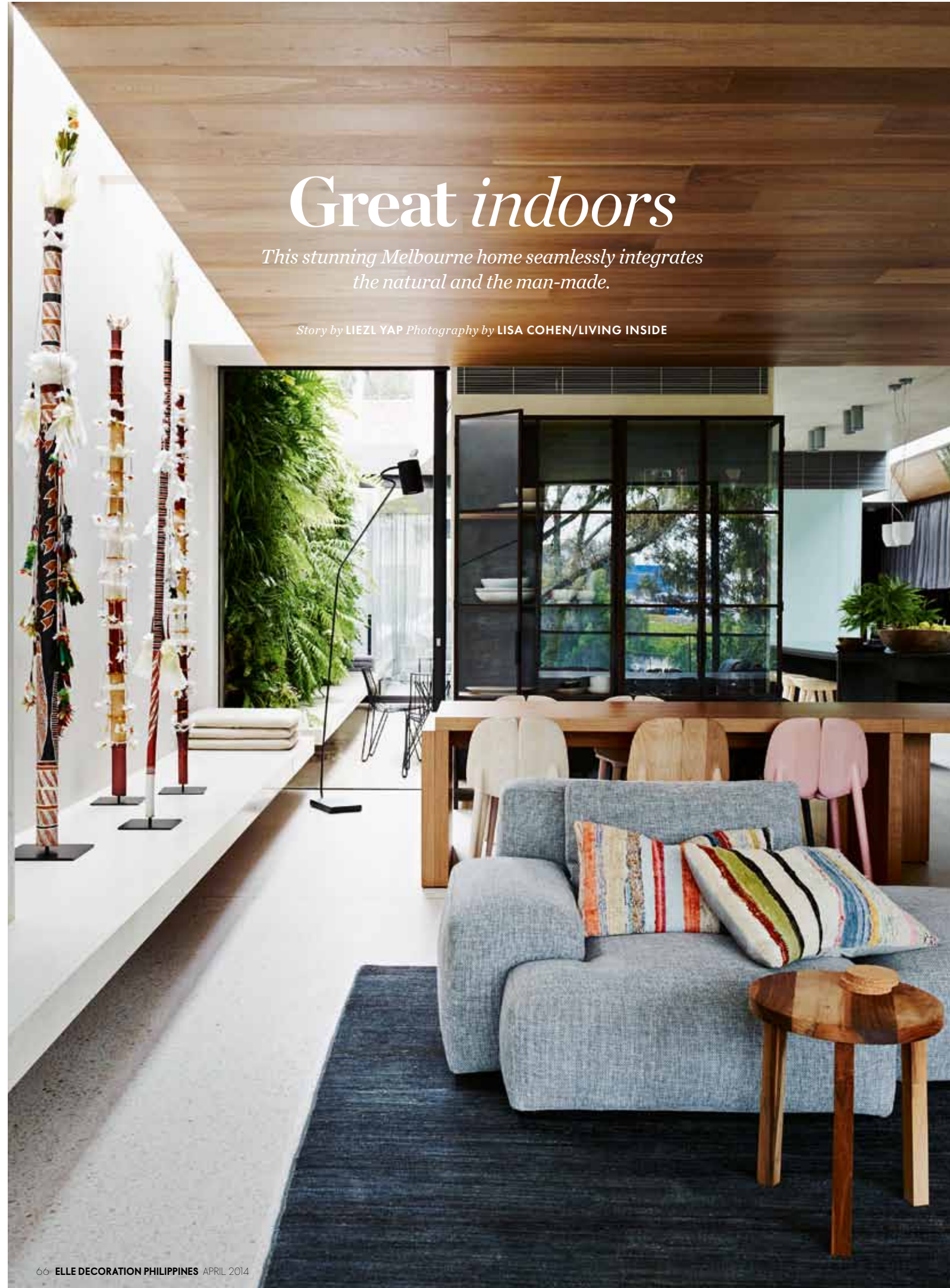


Great indoors

This stunning Melbourne home seamlessly integrates the natural and the man-made.

Story by LIEZL YAP Photography by LISA COHEN/LIVING INSIDE



Living area (facing page) The vertical garden was designed to be visible from both the kitchen and the living room. The steel china cabinet was custom-designed by Leeton Pointon, architect Michael Leeton's firm. To furnish the space, Leeton collaborated with interior designer Allison Pye.

Kitchen The curved wall was painstakingly covered in hand-painted Spanish tiles in a mossy shade of green. Ceiling lights from Produzione Privata and Artemide ceiling illuminate the space. The burnished steel rangehood matches the jet-black Lacanche oven and cabinetry. ▶



How were you able to achieve your goal of bringing the outdoors in?

Large windows framing views of the surrounding landscape provide a wonderful connection to the outside. The natural materials used inside the house also provide a connection to the garden. Each level has its own landscape element. On the lower level is a Woollemi pine gorge. The central living level has a vertical garden that creates the focus for the living spaces. The top level, where the homeowners' bedroom is located, has its own roof garden with a pond and a view of the eucalyptus tree canopy and the park in the horizon. The boundaries between inside and outside are blurred to create a feeling of living amongst the treetops.

How was the house built to weather the elements?

The large north- and west-facing skylights and the windows have concealed and automated external blinds to protect them from the harsh Australian sun in summer. The windows are double-glazed to retain heat during the cooler winter months.

The house contains a number of surprising details, like the curved walls and the carved handrail on the staircase. Can you tell us more about these design elements?

We wanted to create a very organic, fluid building, both internally and externally—a home that feels like it can change with the ebb and flow of family life. The curved waxed walls and spiral staircases create a natural flow between levels. The skylights above sculpt the spaces in a dramatic way. Soft linen curtains temper the harsh Australian light and create a contemplative feeling within the house. The approach was to seamlessly integrate all elements of interiors, architecture, furnishings, decoration, and landscape into Park House. It was the inherent undertaking of each element to complement the other—no individual component vying to overshadow another.

Located in suburban Melbourne, architect Michael Leeton's Park House project took top honors at the Australian Interior Design Awards last year. Built for a couple with a particular interest in horticulture, the house was designed with the objective of creating a place of calm where the homeowners could be surrounded by nature. The finishes and materials used were carefully chosen to reinforce this connection to the natural elements. A restrained color palette, as well as a combination of wood, concrete, and black steel, helps create a peaceful abode that brings the outdoors in and lets nature take center stage. Here, Michael Leeton talks to us about the project.

What inspired the design of the house?

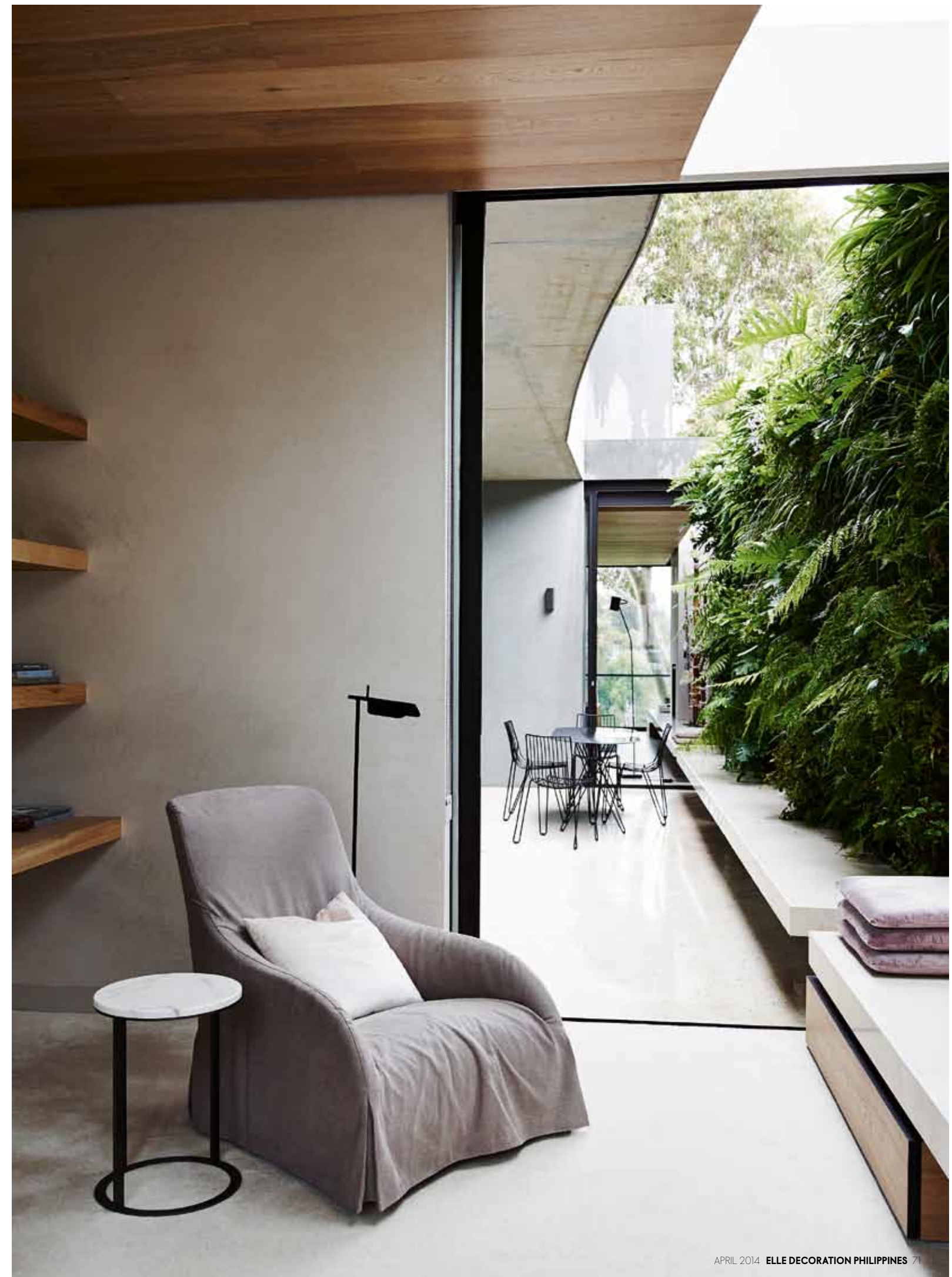
We wanted to create a place of calm where our clients could connect with the landscape and be surrounded by the natural environment. The homeowners are keen horticulturalists and they fell in love with the site due to its proximity to the adjacent park filled with eucalyptus trees and a river beyond. We wanted to give them a framed view over the beautiful park while creating new opportunities for their own landscaping within the site.

Courtyard The lush vertical garden in the courtyard, executed beautifully by Fytowall Australia, has the added benefit of making the space several degrees cooler. The built-in bench that spans one wall in the living area was made with Modica limestone slabs. ▶

Kitchen Floor-to-ceiling glass windows offer a view of the surrounding trees as well as the vertical garden located a few steps away from the kitchen. The flooring is polished exposed aggregate concrete and the kitchen island is made of honed black pepper granite.
Sitting area A side table and armchair from Australian brand Space Furniture create a cozy corner for quiet contemplation. ▶



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Hallway (facing page) Touches of wood bring warmth to the space. The front door is made of solid oak and was also custom-designed by Leeton Pointon.
Staircase The curved staircase was designed to bring fluidity and movement to the home, its scalloped shape adding a touch of softness to the interiors. ▶



Master suite The master bedroom is located on the highest level of the home. Two layers of linen curtains filter out the harsh Australian sun, softening the light that fills the space. (Facing page) A floor lamp designed by Arne Jacobsen for Louis Poulsen and an Eero Saarinen side table provide a delicate contrast to the room's angular forms. ▶



SOFT LINEN CURTAINS
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THE TOP LEVEL HAS ITS OWN ROOF GARDEN WITH A POND AND A VIEW OF THE EUCALYPTUS TREE CANOPY AND THE PARK IN THE HORIZON.



Bathroom (facing page) The master suite and adjacent bathroom has its own roof garden with a pond and daybeds for enjoying the view. The angular Roger Sella bathtub references the black steel lines that frame the floor-to-ceiling windows. A Moroso armchair in a faded shade of blue is a wonderful complement to the Danskina floor rug.

Sitting area In winter, the curved sofa in front of the fireplace is the perfect spot to curl up and enjoy a cup of tea. ■

