

There are many modern villas in Marbella, so it takes something special for one to stand out and catch the eye with its design, interior flow and ambience. For such a property to transcend the passing fancies of fashions and trends, and attain a timeless quality is a further step still, so when you come across a home of this kind you recognise it at once.

This new villa set upon a peaceful, leafy residential street in La Cerquilla immediately creates the sensation of being subtly different. Yes, it is contemporary, using a sleek white-plastered geometry and lots of floor-to-ceiling glass to let in light and views, but something about the distribution of its volumes makes this villa one of a kind.

AN ARCHITECTURAL HOME

Looking around these days, one gets the impression that there is much of a sameness around, with little in the way of personal styling to set homes apart and give them an exclusive character of their own. A true architectural home, however, may be inspired by a particular style but it is defined by the bespoke design solution and creativity that have gone into its making.

Creativity is linked to know-how, both technical and artistic, as well as a sensory understanding and a pleasure in one's work, and this is something shared by Beny Nadel of Xquisit Homes and architect Ismael Mérida, whose collaboration on this project has produced a villa with a style and visual vocabulary that is not only distinct, but will stand the test of time.

Why? It starts with the proportions and distribution, for while we laymen tend to focus on the overall styling and design details, an architect commences the process by thinking about how to proportion the required home and its specifications within the space available, evaluating also the topography, orientation, (sun) light and views.

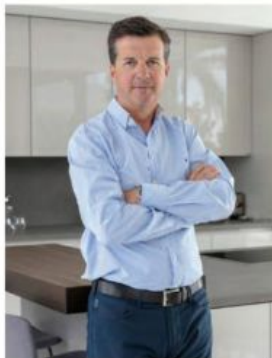
"I was very fortunate to work with an owner who had sufficient confidence in me to give me a relatively free hand," says Ismael of Ismael Mérida Arquitectos. The result was a greater deviation from the mean, for it produced a property of purer architectural design with bespoke made-to-measure spatial, technical, functional and aesthetic qualities.

In other words, a more unique home... and you notice it in the easy aspect of the villa, whose elegance and lack of overbearing volume catch the eye. This is thanks to a clever use and distribution of space, light and materials, which also lead to a very free-flowing, pleasant interior and exterior layout that is both practical and welcoming.

When architect and homeowner understand each other, great things can flow from the collaboration. This beautiful contemporary villa in La Cerquilla, just above Nueva Andalucía's Golf Valley, is a fine example of a property in perfect balance of dimensions, harmony of materials and timeless design.

TIMELESS REFINEMENT FROM LA CERQUILLA 42

BY MICHEL CRUZ PHOTOGRAPHY KEVIN HORN AND LOUISE DE SOLVILLA



Jesus de Francisco – interior designer,
Marbella Décor



Blanca Pera one of the interior designers
responsible for the décor of the villa



Cerquilla 42 reflects the vision of Benny Nadel

"We kept the sleek, white-plastered vernacular," says Ismael, "but added wood, travertine stone and also dark grey-toned aluminium frames for the large, panoramic windows." Opting for top quality frames is one of those details that sets the villa apart, for it allows for a slender, more elegant design that is also functional.

Another distinguishing feature is the apparent lack of columns and walled-in areas. "If a house is to be open-plan there shouldn't be rooms hemmed in by walls or covered terraces where columns interrupt the views." For this reason, the weight is held by the four external walls and a main interior one dressed in travertine stone that is visible both inside

and out. "It is a practical and design solution at the same time, and forms a unifying factor that runs from the lower floor right through to the rooftop terrace."

The architect was discerning in his use of materials and decorative elements, resisting the temptation to elaborate too much and working hard to balance the wood, stone, glass and white surfaces in a harmonious and complementary way. "It is an important process that works hand in hand with the dimensions and distribution to establish a visual balance and harmony." Ismael also thought carefully about rooflines, creating two almost but not entirely symmetrical 'floating'

roofs on the first floor that provide a partially covered section of terrace below.

The rest of the spacious, panoramic terrace has a double-height covering that corresponds with the double-height ceiling of the living room, a feature that makes it a distinct space within the open-plan living, dining and kitchen area. "This design gives the terrace a greater sense of space and views, and brings these into the living room as well, where our decision to place not walls but windows on the north side, allows both more light and amazing vistas of La Concha Mountain to flood into the house." Here, Balinese-inspired water features provide a beautiful night-time element too.

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STYLISH BUT FUNCTIONAL AND HOMELY

The result of the above process of careful attention to detail is a skilful display of visual characteristics within an overall design that blends seamlessly and seems moulded to the beautifully landscaped garden and imposing sea, golf and mountain views. A large lawn flanked by Mediterranean plants, trees and herbs trains the eye along the infinity pool to the Mediterranean Sea directly ahead. Look up and blue Andalusian skies dominate your view; look down and it flows along the fairways and gardens of the Golf Valley to the Marbella shoreline.

A large Balinese lounge bed stands in inviting symmetry to a modern wood-and-plaster poolside bar area designed for relaxing and entertaining. Naturally fully domotic, the villa's state-of-the-art sound system produces excellent acoustics both within the home

and in the garden and terrace, ensuring that this is both a practical, comfortable home and a sexy, stylish villa for entertaining.

The driveway leading to the double carport, forecourt and the gallery-style garage is paved with black-and-white 'pedra calçada' stones that are at once both modern and classical. Other features that impress as you arrive are the Balinese Zen baths and landscaping, as well as a glass-fronted lift that stands alongside the main entrance and connects the villa's four levels.

Of course, you may also want to take the 'floating' wooden stairs that form a refined design feature in their own right, connecting as they do the ground floor, lower level and first floor, from where stairs also lead to the large rooftop terrace – the perfect spot in which to create a panoramic lounging area with bar, dining space with outdoor kitchen and, should you like, a hot tub too.



Other lifestyle areas can be found on the basement floor, where natural light and even sunshine reach the gym and sauna, the beautiful glass wine vitrines and the additional guest bedroom suites. The cinema and games room with top-range equipment by Illusion Custom Home Automation Solutions is naturally kept a little darker, where the three spacious bedroom suites with white-lacquered closets detailed with wood finishing and the master bedroom with open-plan white marble bathroom and large walk-in dressing room bask in natural light and an open panorama of sea views.

The heart of the villa, and any home, is the open-plan lounge, which connects directly with the outdoor lounging area. Flanking it are a dining area and top-spec kitchen on the one side, and a

separate family room on the other. "We purposely positioned the kitchen on the east-side and let it open up to a covered breakfast area, where you start the day," says the owner, Beny Nadel. "The living room and outdoor seating areas on the terrace are in the centre, making the most use of space and views directly to the south, and in the evening you retreat to the family room on the west-side, where you slide open a door to a cosy terrace area with outdoor fireplace."

The villa's stylish but also comfortable and functional décor features elegant contemporary furniture and art by Blanca Pera of Blanca Pera Interior Design Studio and Jesús de Francisco of Marbella Décor.

Aesthetics, functionality and comfort have all been carefully considered in a home that is at

once modern and timeless; spacious and cosy; impressive and welcoming. An easy flow makes it intuitive and homely, while well thought-out architectural design features give this modern villa in La Cerquilla all the credentials of a timeless Marbella classic in the making.

• SOLVILLA

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BY *Andrea Beck*



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