

Shira Shenton

Kerem Maharal, a community on the Carmel about ten kilometers north of Zichron Yaakov, was built on the ruins of the Ijzim Arab village. For some reason, it was named after the 16th century chief rabbi of Prague, Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, although it was established as a cooperative in 1949 by Czech Brigade immigrants. Later, other residents joined and it became a Moshav Ovdim whose residents made a hard living by growing vegetables and dairy.

In 1967, the inhabitants decided to uproot an old olive plantation, sparking widespread public criticism at the center of which was an extreme article by Amos Keinan entitled “Kerem Maharal’s Valley of Death”.

Later on, this picturesque place was discovered by independent professionals (mainly eco-minded) who understood the qualities of the place - an enchanting view hidden on one side from the Tel Aviv-Haifa road, and overlooking the sea on the other. The place became popular and there are currently about 650 residents, some of whom are second or third generation.

Situated on a plot of 800 sqm, on a small hill near natural forests, the design focused on bringing the landscape into the house, while maintaining residents’ privacy.

Inspired by its surroundings, the architect placed rough stones reminiscent of the Arab building, above which rises a white clean modern construction - the two styles complementing each other.

Bearing in mind the privileges of the surroundings and the inhabitants needs for privacy, the house relates to the “sterile” street with an almost mysterious opaqueness, while visually open and hovering above the natural landscape to the rear.

Finishing materials - natural or processed limestone, wood, aluminum, steel, glass and concrete - create a harmonious composition conveying a rustic warmth of belonging in the place, and a visual cleanliness that reflects the modernist architectural concept.

The garden around the house was designed as a Zen garden that expresses an harmonious, calm relationship between the house and its natural environment - incorporating local motifs - Poinciana, Olive trees, and river stones with Japanese motifs such as bamboo, Lychee, and Bonsai trees. An array of interior spaces maintains balanced

proportions and relationships, in accordance with the residents’ calm lifestyle.

Details of the interior and furniture are an integral part of the architectural language - processed teak wood, glass, metal, and latticework made of cement fiber strips.

Serene swimming pool in the backyard.
Architect: Ariel Franco.

All is intended to reflect the purpose of the design – to help residents tell the story of the house, while achieving effective, functional comfort enhanced by the enriched experience of the changing landscape during the day and throughout the year.

בריכת השחייה בחצר האחורית.
אדריכל: אריאל פרנקו.
צילום: עודד סמדר.

