

Green at Heart



A down-to-earth approach makes this simple but striking Vietnamese townhouse perfect for those with a taste for cultivation.



Project: House in Go Vap
Location: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Architects: MM++ architects /
 MIMYA .co
mmarchitects.net

This family home was a dream project for MM++ architects, a young Saigon-based firm co-founded by French architect Michael Charruault. The owners handed over total control, while throwing down a challenging gauntlet – to take the standard city box-house plot (just 8x22m) and elevate it in terms of design and finish, on the slimmest of budgets. MM++ employed simple build materials (concrete, brickwork and ceramics) and looked to traditional Vietnamese design for inspiration. In the past,

Vietnam's homes incorporated open, central courtyards to provide light and ventilation. Drawing on this principle, the house has been turned inside out, with the garden brought indoors. In the centre of the home, a large open roof allows indirect sunlight to illuminate the space – a key consideration given the absence of any windows on the side walls, another common feature of the densely built up city's hemmed-in houses. To create the high-end finish, all the furniture and equipment from the kitchen to the coffee table was bespoke designed. "The most remarkable thing about it is to see how much people enjoy this back-to-basics approach," says Charruault, a strong proponent of traditional design, which he believes provides a toolbox for cost-effective, livable, climate-adapted homes. —David Lloyd Buglar