

Brutalist architectural elements are in full play, as seen in the home's façade

An Industrial Revolution

This unique home unifies the raw nature of brutalist architecture with the luxury of large open spaces, writes MJ Jose

Photography **WIG TYSMANS**
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GREY AREA
 (Clockwise) Clean lines and large open spaces suit the owner's minimalist tastes; The specially designed mailbox; This unique shelving unit takes centre stage on the third floor landing

THE FAMILY THAT resides here has been living in this idyllic Makati village for quite some time now, but their architectural masterpiece of a home continues to command attention from passers-by. While researching for pegs that would help him come up with a look for his home, the owner stumbled upon the concept of brutalist architecture, which suited his design preferences perfectly. “This was a very personal project,” he says. “I wanted to create something that would be the sum total of which architectural and design elements I like best.”

Brutalist architecture was highly prominent from the 1950s to the mid-1970s. The style is characterised by ruggedness and rawness, and combines detailed and exposed brick and concrete work. Back in the day, it was favoured by architects for university buildings, high-rise housing, and shopping centres. To help in the creation of his dream house, the homeowner approached architect, interior designer, and visual artist Carlo Calma. “What I like about Carlo is that he takes into consideration both his clients’ preferences and his own expertise when he designs,” he adds. “He’s very artistic and edgy; he likes adding a lot of details to his work.”

When he began work on the house, Calma set out to explore different ways of working with its key materials—concrete and steel. “The homeowners were very clear with how they wanted their house to look,” he says. “Their initial ideas allowed me to envision the structure as that of a skeleton; the concrete represents the bones, and the peeling effect on the ceilings is the paper-thin skin—think of it as a way of revealing what’s inside.” The homeowner found the idea very much to his liking, and Calma managed to integrate this effect into different areas of the home. The detailing on the front door is one of the most prominent; the



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peeling effect is present, and the so-called flaps part to reveal artistically rendered vein-like elements. “I’m glad I went along with the idea,” says the owner. “It adds an interesting touch to what could have been too spartan.”

STARK, SPARK
 (From top)
 The second floor landing has glass doors that open up to the balcony; The powder room on the first floor; (opposite) The staircase was designed to trick the viewer’s eyes

There is plenty of play on the façade. Aside from the front door, one’s eyes would also be drawn to the cantilever bar, which works as a fountain. Another point of interest is the makeshift tree on top of the garage. “Initially, I wanted to put a real tree there,” says the owner. “Carlo had a better idea—he constructed something more industrial. And because I like bicycles, you can see that the ‘plant’ sort of resembles one.”

The home opens up to a large area, where the living room integrates seamlessly with the kitchen and the outdoor pool. “It





was very important to me that the areas accessible to the public are larger than the bedrooms," says the owner. "These large open areas make the house look bigger, giving everyone plenty of space to roam free." For a family that loves to entertain, that's only logical. On days when they hold social gatherings, they open up the glass doors that lead to the pool area, allowing guests to trickle in and out as they please.

The kitchen is also a special place for the family. The lady of the house is a skilled cook, and this is where she prepares and serves her sumptuous spreads. They also have their meals here; the cosy space gives the family a feeling of intimacy. One of the most noticeable elements of the kitchen is the laser-edged panelling that separates it from the living room. "I spent a lot of time looking for doors, and the options that were readily available in the market weren't really jiving with what I had in mind," says the owner. "Carlo suggested movable panels. These—as well as the panels for the downstairs powder room and upstairs bedrooms—were laser-

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edged with negative reliefs of rock texture, which conform to the brutalist nature of the house." Just outside the kitchen is a concrete and brass bar inspired by the one owned by Tony Stark in *The Avengers*. Mixing drinks is one of the homeowner's many hobbies; having a cool-looking, fully-stocked bar was a big priority for him.

The staircase is an art piece on its own. Calma merged layering techniques with optical illusions to create a dynamic structure that tricks the eye. "It looks different from every angle, and even serves all sorts of purposes," adds the homeowner. The upstairs landing is yet another large space, with glass doors that open up to a large balcony overlooking the pool. The owner likes to keep it free of clutter; he



IN THE DETAILS

(From top) The master bedroom; The man of the house is a skilled musician; (opposite from top) The staircase landing looks out into the living room; The kitchen is the lady of the house's favourite room



BY NIGHTFALL

Carlo Calma's custom chairs can be found in the outdoor areas of the home; (opposite) The pool area is where the family bonds on weekends

sees the landing as a space he can easily convert and transform. "I think of it as a work in progress," he says. "I can really let my creativity out because there is so much space to play around with."

The third floor houses the bedrooms and the multimedia room, where the family gathers to watch movies. "There are no televisions in the bedrooms," says the owner. "Most of our bonding sessions are spent either here in the multimedia room, the kitchen, or the pool. All this adds to the non-compartmentalised feel that I was going for." His family enjoys the openness as much as he does. They used to live in a townhouse, where the spaces were quite small.

Most of the furnishings in the home are custom-built, but Calma also acquired pieces from some of the best furniture brands to complete the look of the home. "Each house [I design] is unique," he says. "It is a marriage of the clients' needs and my personal touch. As the architect, it is my responsibility that all elements blend together seamlessly." The homeowner is more than happy with the results of the collaborations. "Carlo always comes up with a variety of interesting solutions and proposals. When I see something that needs to be addressed or updated, I just go back to him. The end result is a modern structure with plenty of artistic elements." ❶