LEADING ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

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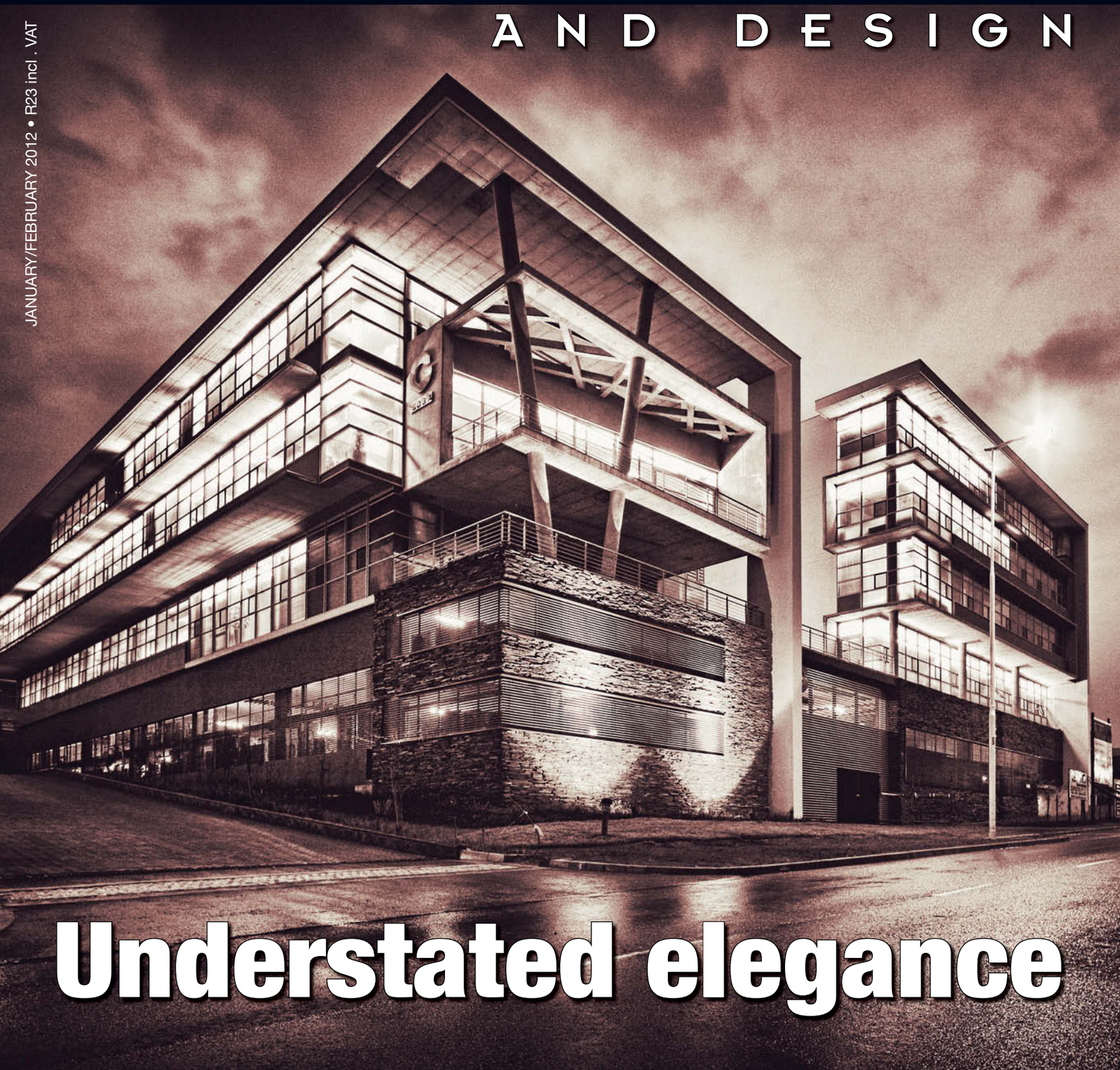

Understated elegance

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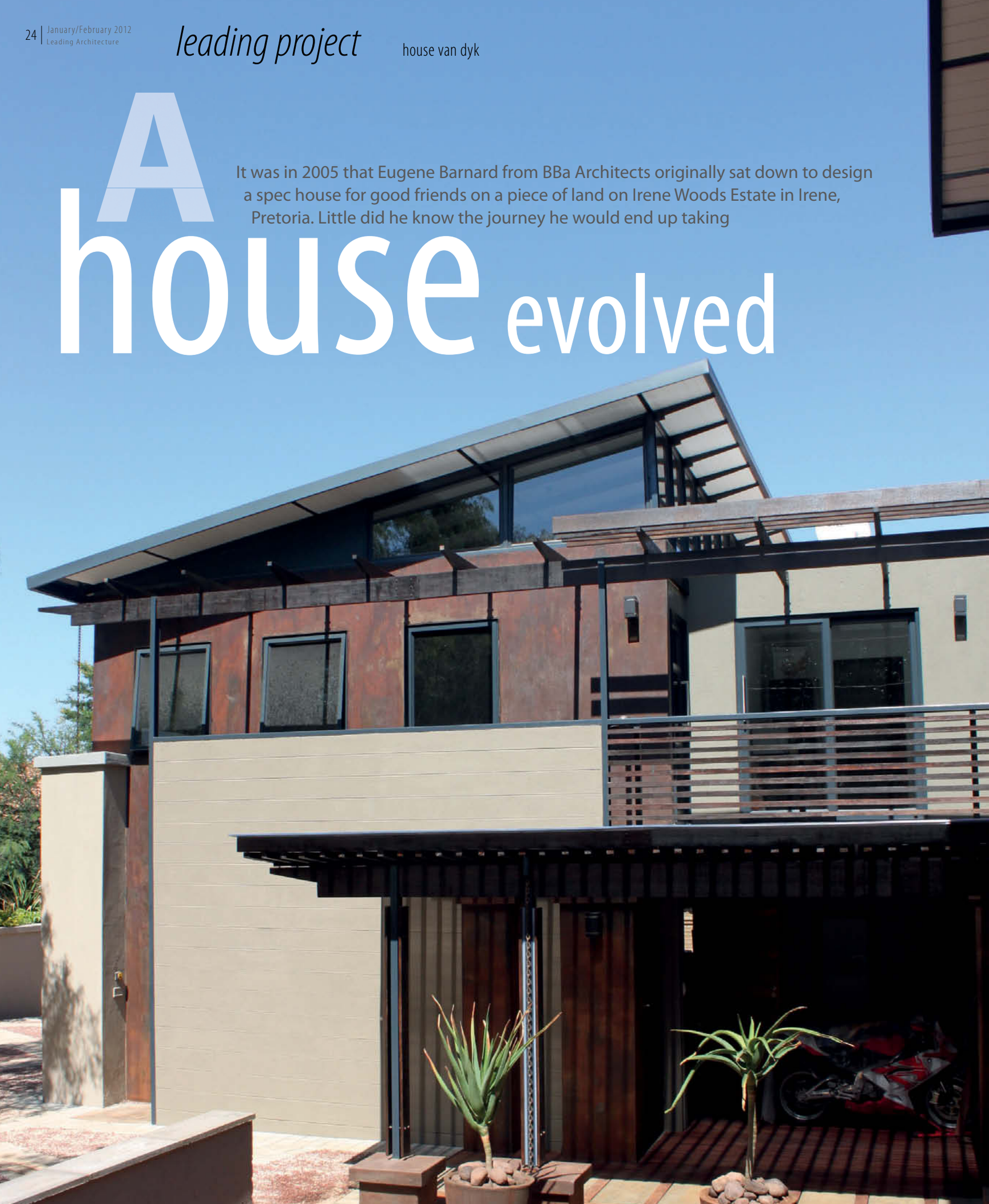
A house evolved

It was in 2005 that Eugene Barnard from BBa Architects originally sat down to design a spec house for good friends on a piece of land on Irene Woods Estate in Irene, Pretoria. Little did he know the journey he would end up taking



As it turns out six years later, Barnard not only redesigned the home, but project-managed the build and became a financial partner as well. He had been close friends with the clients for some time, and when the stand came up for sale in the burgeoning area of Irene, the clients bought the land purely as an investment. Due to financial reasons, Barnard and another friend were later approached to become partners in the property and assist with the repayments.

In 2005 Barnard designed a spec house for the stand. A raft foundation was cast in 2009 and in July last year, due to estate pressure, the build got under way at a fairly slow pace, as the clients were building out of their own pockets from the start. As their financial situation improved, they decided to live in the home themselves. "I looked at the house that I had originally designed in 2005 and thought that I could improve upon it and modernise the design," says Barnard, adding, "As

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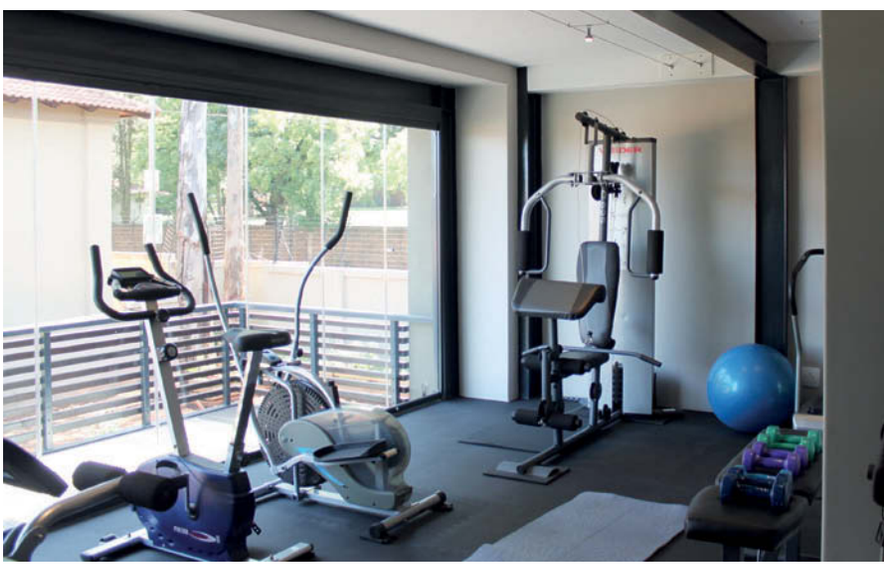
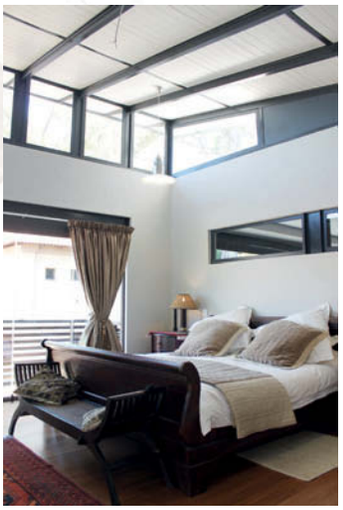
a sign of the times, the original design was almost Polynesian in origin, but I have grown as an architect since then and am trying to get clients to take more of a risk these days - not just to go with the flow."

When it was decided that the Spaceframe building method would be used, the clients' bank, FNB, refused the bond on the basis that they believed, Spaceframe building system to be only for 'low-cost housing'. Unperturbed, the clients eventually received finance from ABSA, enabling them to finish the house. "Spaceframe is ultimately quicker to install (11m^2 can be constructed in an hour, while the brick equivalent





would take eight hours), and reduces the cost of labour by 20%," says Barnard.

As the site is in a dolomitic area, it needed to be subjected to geographical reports and it was decided that a raft foundation should be placed. "In my opinion this was the better option and one which the structure will benefit from," says Barnard. Other than that, the build was relatively smooth sailing – even approval from council was quick.

When originally designed, the 352m^2 house had three bedrooms, one en suite, and an additional two bathrooms, with an open patio and open balcony. As the design of the house evolved, the decision was made to enclose the patio, creating a family room and the original dining room became a study. On the upstairs, which houses all the bedrooms, the

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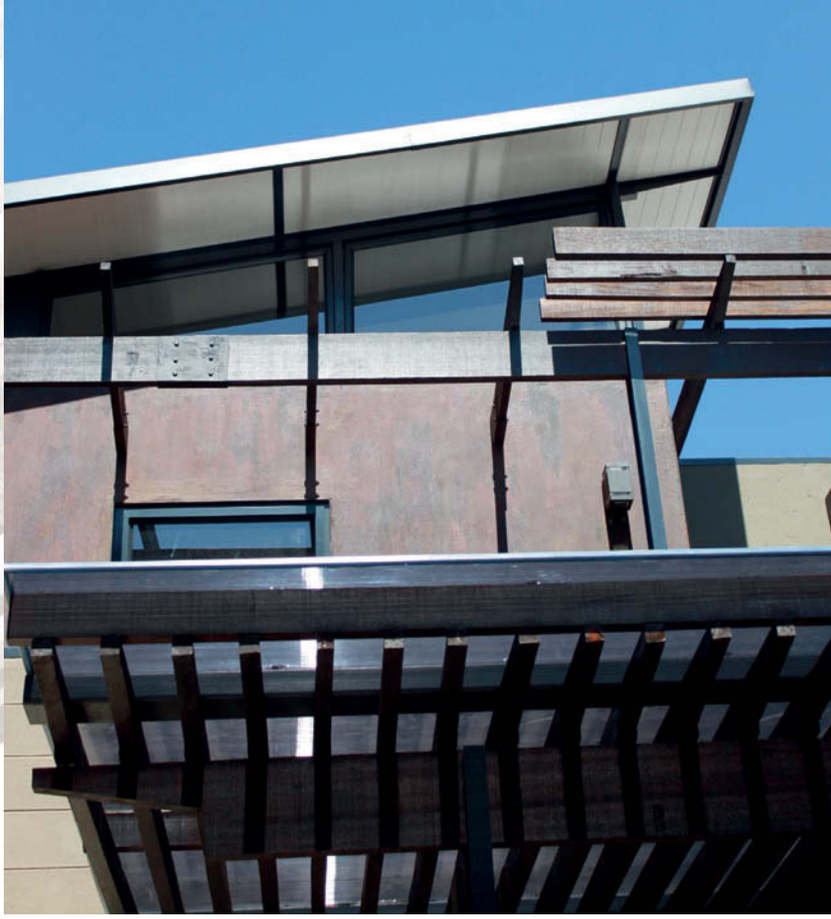
balcony was closed in to become a gym. The garage had initially been designed as a single storey with a garage, but progressed to include a studio on the first floor above the garage. This separate apartment with a kitchen only came on board halfway through the build, meaning that the final square meterage of the home ended up at 462m^2. Johan Trollip from Style Project Management was appointed from August onwards to help complete the project; occupation was mid-September.

"I would describe the style as contemporary industrial architecture," says Barnard, taking into account the amount of steelwork employed as well as the rust paint applied to focal areas of the exterior. "Many green methods and materials were used in the design. We investigated double glazing for the windows, but in the end Clearvue from Smartglass was used as it exhibits the same properties as double glazing from a heating and cooling perspective." Although facing almost due north, Barnard ended up with a house with great climate control through the use of Spaceframe, Clearvue glass, acoustic wool in the ceiling and the fact that the roof has substantial overhangs to reduce the penetration of the sun's rays.

Windows and the addition of natural light are important elements of the structure. Foldaway and stackable frameless glass windows stretch across the length of the house, which opens up onto the front garden. "My favourite part of the house is the entrance," says Barnard. "We selected glass for the front doors so that one is never visually separated from the inside or the outside. The lounge and dining room look out onto the garden, where a two-metre-wide swimming pool, stretching 18m along the sliding glass doors, is due to be installed. Three moveable steel bridges that can be used as a deck or as three separated bridges will then allow access to the garden," he says. The garden itself will be landscaped in terraces – while working around the existing trees on the site, Barnard created different levels and separate 'boxes' to add interest to the garden. Plants by Lots of Pots in Lynnwood currently add some colour to the garden prior to its completion.

Overlooking this garden are cantilevered balconies off the main bedroom, gym and spare bedroom. Steel 'I beams' were used and fixed to the underside of the concrete slab which cantilevers in front of the gym creating this balcony. Mentis Grating, although typically designed for industrial walkways, worked very well in the context of the house for the gates, balconies and overhangs.

Further features of the house include a state-of-the-art kitchen, a steam room to complement the fully kitted-out gym, a double garage and maid's quarters with an en-suite bathroom and a natural stone/cement mixture for the paving.



Solar water heating and heat pumps have been considered and allowed for as a future installation if needed. However, gas was the preferred option for water heaters, fireplaces and the braai.

"By-laws are forcing us to have a good look at what we are leaving behind and to do it in a more considerate way. The building methods employed made it more cost- and energy-efficient," Barnard says. In the end he had almost entirely free rein with his design, and he believes that when such freedom is afforded, conversations with clients become even more productive, more of a 'chat'. "When the client gives you space, you can do some very nice things with it," he concludes.