

hinge

ARCHITECTURE
INTERIOR DESIGN

Panama Playful
Gehry Goes South

Royalty Abroad
Aga Khan in Toronto

Under the Bridge
SILT in Brisbane

HOMeward BOUND

A Year of New Houses



www.hinge.hk



ISSN 1561-781-5
9 771561 781004

HK\$80
RMB80
US\$11



Amchit Residence, in "Hinge" (Hong Kong)
February 2015, n. 231, pp. 34-37

[cover story]

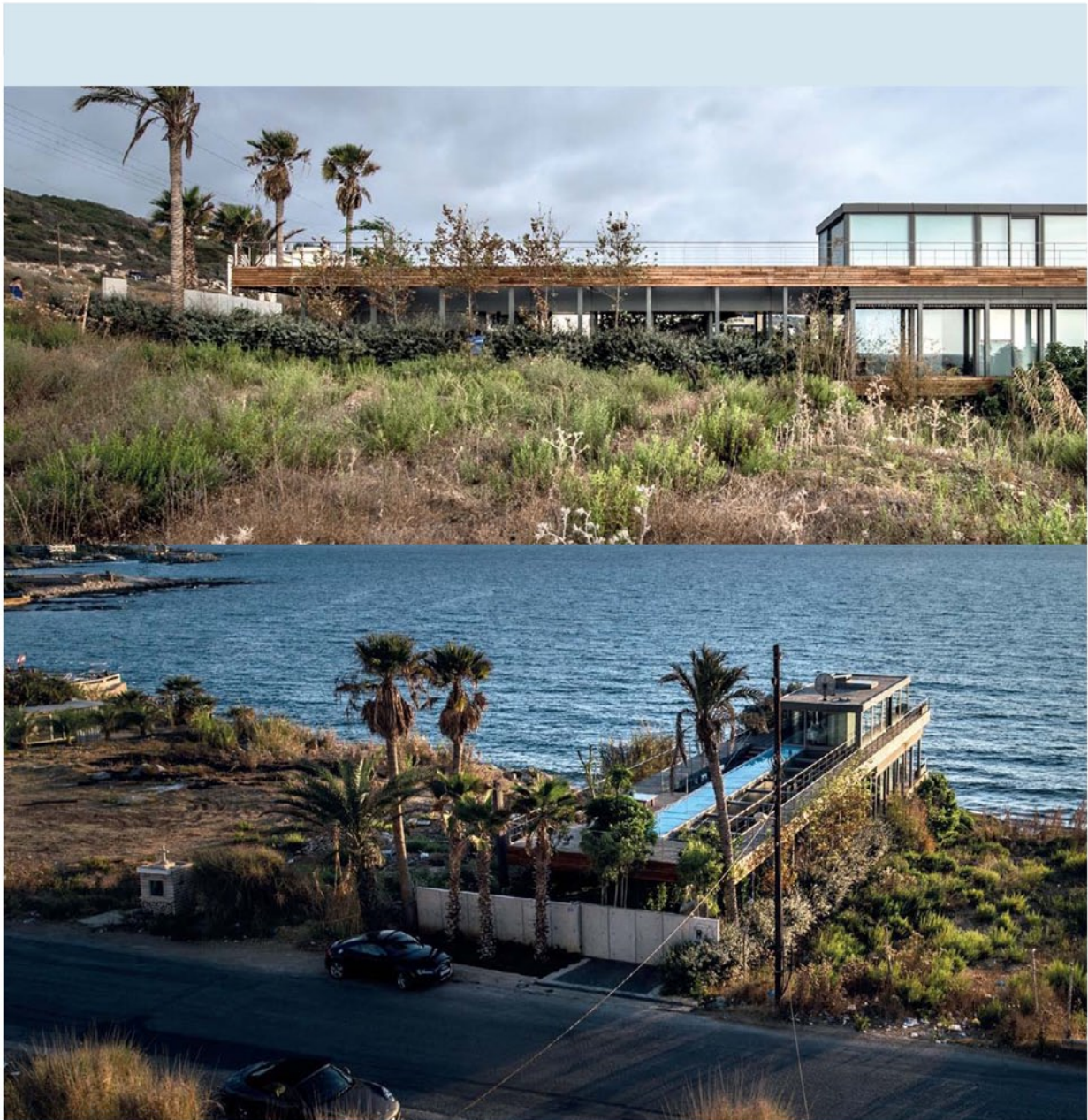
House Artists...

New House Architecture

hinge 231_28



Amchit Residence, in "Hinge" (Hong Kong)
February 2015, n. 231, pp. 34-37

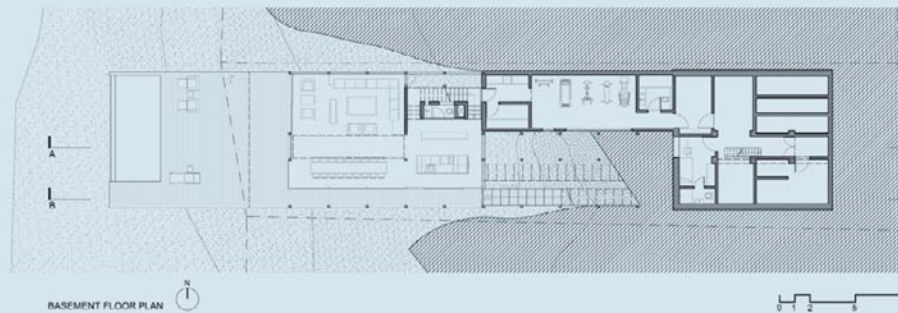


AMCHIT RESIDENCE Amchit, Lebanon
Blankpage Architects

Photography by Ieva Saudargaitė

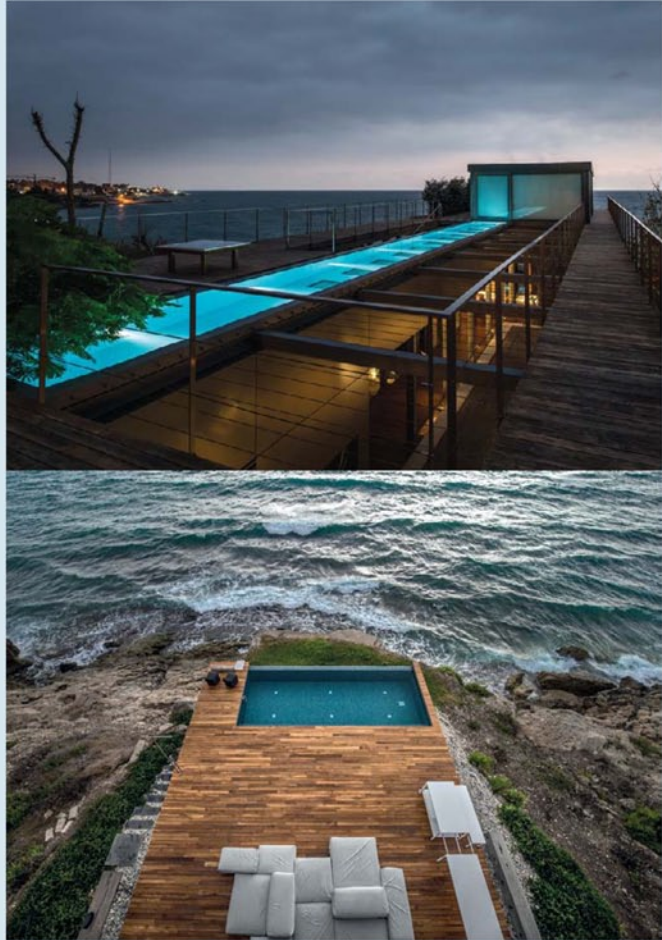
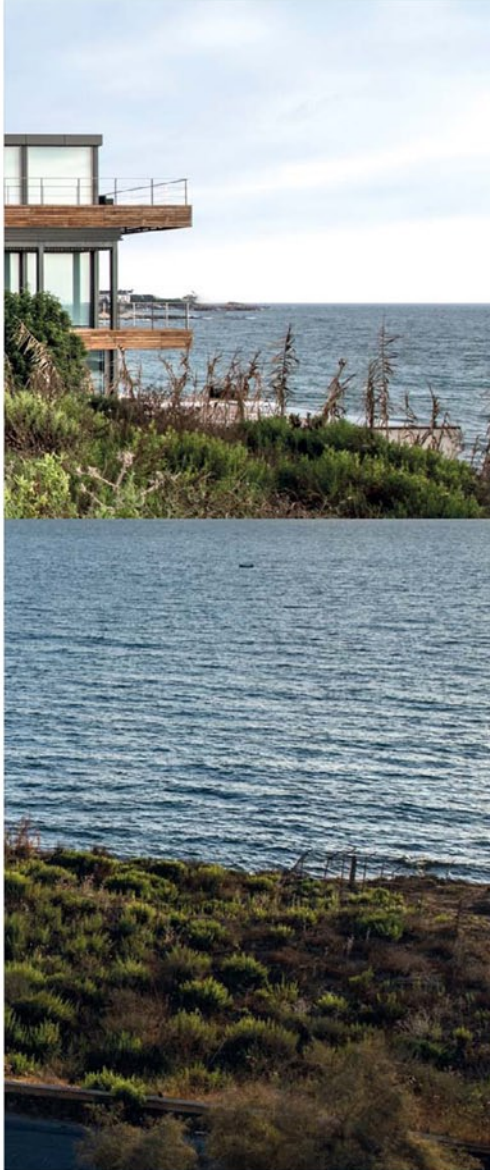


Amchit Residence, in "Hinge" (Hong Kong)
February 2015, n. 231, pp. 34-37





Amchit Residence, in "Hinge" (Hong Kong)
February 2015, n. 231, pp. 34-37



Situated near the coastal town of Amchit, about 40km north of Beirut, this serene seaside dwelling offers a respite overlooking the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. It is a weekend and holiday house, and feels decidedly different – open, inviting – from the defensive posture sometimes required in Beirut, where political turbulence frequently troubles a beautiful city. The largely glazed building is an elongated rectangle placed lightly on the site, perpendicular to the coast edge. This affords sweeping views up and down the shore, and sets up a hierarchy culminating in the forward-most space perched above the water. It also logically navigates the slope of the rough terrain.

The house is 450sq m placed over three levels. The master suite is located at the top level, to exploit the views. A long lap pool is also at this level. A promenade leads to and through the building, setting up constantly changing views of the ocean. Because transparency is the catchword



Amchit Residence, in "Hinge" (Hong Kong)
February 2015, n. 231, pp. 34-37



here, the evolving coastal light also affects the tones of the different spaces during the day. At the centre of the plan, the architects carved a vertical void through the house, to reconnect it with the sky. Although not strictly needed for daylight, it is a knowing nod to the primacy of the horizontal land-to-sea axis; it reminds occupants that the sky, too, plays its role.

The building is constructed of concrete, steel and wood, and its lightness on its site, the sense of almost landing there complete, as if on legs, is intentional. The middle floor is bedrooms and family room, while the principal common living space is at the lowest level, where another pool is located, along with access to the beach. The levels are connected via external ramps and staircases, as well as an internal circulation core.

Amchit Residence looks not unlike numerous nautical objects; it appears to 'dock' to the slope and float above the lower site area, and there are moments, such as where it overlooks the lower deck and pool, set against the seawater, that remind of the decks of cruise ships. The rigid straightness of the building's edges – admittedly suggested by the narrow site – further this very manmade, engineered aesthetic. But then the materials, particularly the important use of timber, helps to humanise it all. Where the building is most minimal it is most adventurous, and feels quite like something temporarily tethered to the earth. The very long rooftop lap pool must offer an ethereal experience to its swimmers, especially near dusk. Part of the visual punch of the building is provided by the rusticity of its site, where few trees or gentle gardens are anywhere in evidence. Though hardly uninhabited, the landscape here is as rough as the ocean at times, which helps make this construction seem delicate and almost brave. It is a statement on the land, daring the sea.