



Studio di Architettura Leonardo – Genny Augusti

Private Villa
Amid Land and Lagoons
 Albarella Island, Rovigo, Italy

The Studio di Architettura Leonardo practice was given a brief to design a villa that offered a sense of protection but also, at the same time, a feeling of connection to the surrounding nature. Its answer was this private villa on the small island of Albarella, a place that was nominated for Unesco World Heritage Status in 2015 as it retains traces of the pristine nature of the Po Delta, with its distinctive lagoons, stretches of water and flatlands. Dense vegetation, filled with larch and pines trees, is common in these parts and found along the access road, almost an invitation to understand the philosophy underlying its construction: at times the building is quite bold and dominant, such as the monumental front door, but this is never at the expense of interacting with the local landscape. The complex itself might spread across various separate blocks, but the architectural lines remain simple across the design, providing an essential shape centered on an east-west axis. An entrance marks each

end of this axis, with these actually exalting the other shapes that characterize the villa. A similar minimalist approach is found in the choice of textures, with the range being wood, concrete, porcelain stoneware and glass. The house has a large garden, with a swimming pool, that helps feed into the sense of being immersed in the surrounding nature. This feeling is then enhanced by the villa being split into three volumes, each across two levels and with direct access to the garden. One of the two outdoor sections – the one used for the living area and the main bedroom – has a furnished terrace on the upper floor with an extensive panoramic view. The slightly unusual structural approach is actually a solution to specific functional requirements and a desire to minimize the environmental impact, making as much use as possible of natural ventilation and so increasing overall energy efficiency. The central volume is the heart of the villa, characterized by windows that create visual connections between the inside and outside

and that allow in plenty of natural light. Another defining feature of this structure is the large, pivoting Synua front door by Oikos. Rising more than five meters, this security door has a vertical pivot system and lies flush with the wall. The outside is clad in oxide black Laminam in segments, while ash grey oak is used for the inside. One's eye is drawn to the imposing nature of this door, which makes it both an integral part of the villa's contemporary personality and adds to the idea of circularity between the worlds inside and outside the house. This impressive door is but one of the numerous refined details in this design, such as the careful choice of claddings and floorings. The same is also true of the design and maintenance of the garden, which follows the slight slopes of the land and is almost entirely surrounded by a Leylandii hedge. This is another detail that is key to contextualizing this villa on the island, helping to mitigate the view of the surrounding constructions and roofs.



Photography courtesy of Oikos



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