

## For a home in Trousdale, California, Donaldson + Partners unites a multipanel facade with its interiors and landscape



Can a house help people realize their full potential? A client with a 2-acre clifftop parcel in Trousdale, California, brought the question to [Donaldson + Partners](#). Thus began an exploration between client and architects. The search for an inspired home that inspires people led to a low-slung structure of multifaceted angular panels embedded onto the land.



*Glass-reinforced polymer panels make up the facade (Fernando Guerra)*





*In plan, the home creates a V-shape with a seemingly discrete shape (Fernando Guerra)*

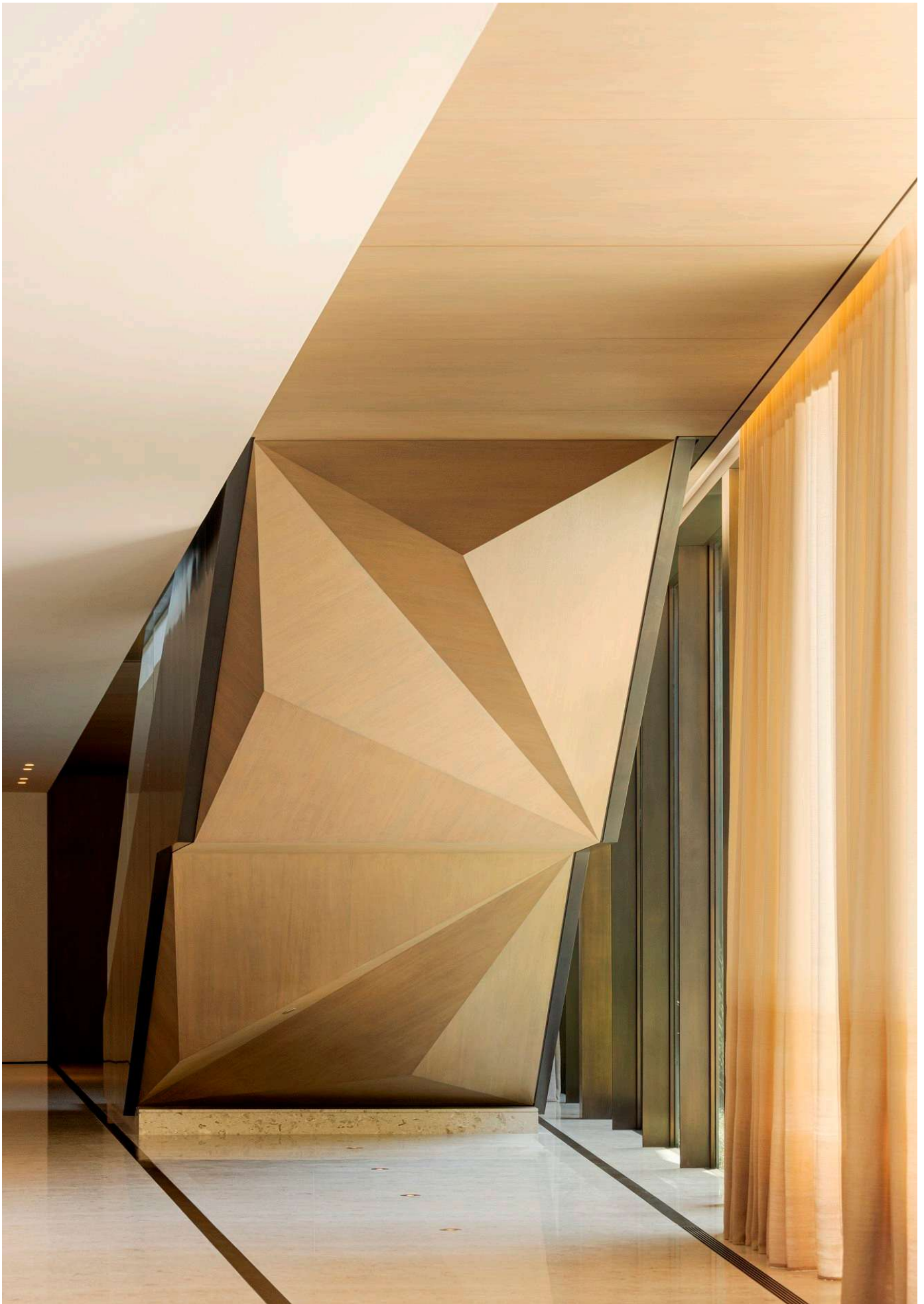
The structure is distinctly not glass panes and sliding doors. “We were really concerned about a building that could transcend the typical neo-modernist homes that are being built in Trousdale,” Robin Donaldson, founder partner and design director of Donaldson + Partners, told *AN Interior*. The client was also opposed to this trend. “So,” said Donaldson, “what’s after neo-modernism?”



*The home features a basement level and a partially sunken courtyard (Fernando Guerra)*

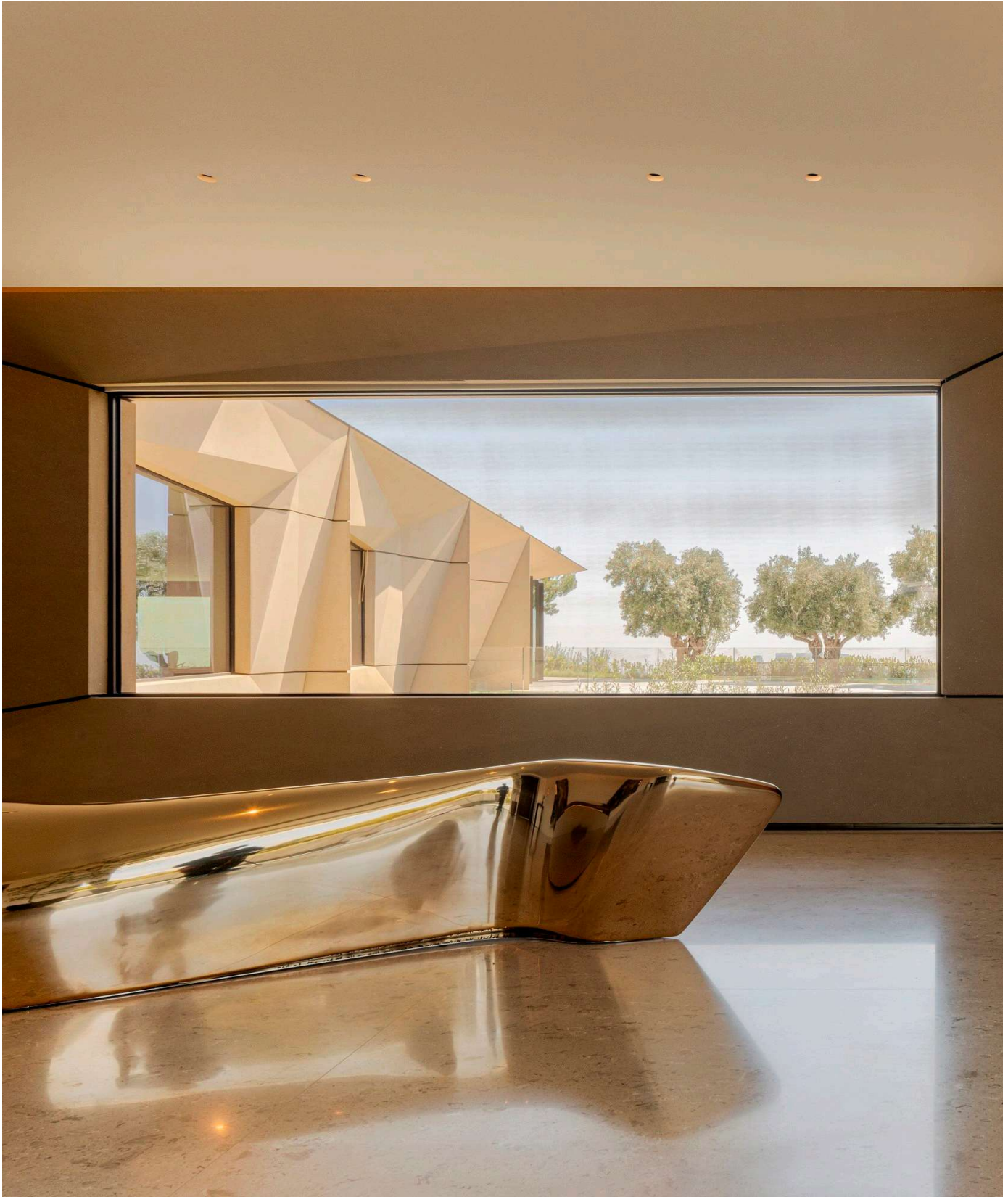
A fractal-like facade and intimacy with topography became both answers and solutions. They also stemmed from the client's own interest in gemstones and Parisian stone. Instead of shipping stone from France to California, which was too heavy and complicated for the site, the architects went for glass-reinforced polymer (GFRP) panels, made in San Francisco. Embedded with little shells, the facade panels take on a stone-like quality while remaining light, practical, and timeless so that the home feels of the future, a fitting quality for a building meant to uplift its inhabitants.







*The stairs continues the language of the facade (Fernando Guerra)*



*The panels choreograph views from the windows (Fernando Guerra)*

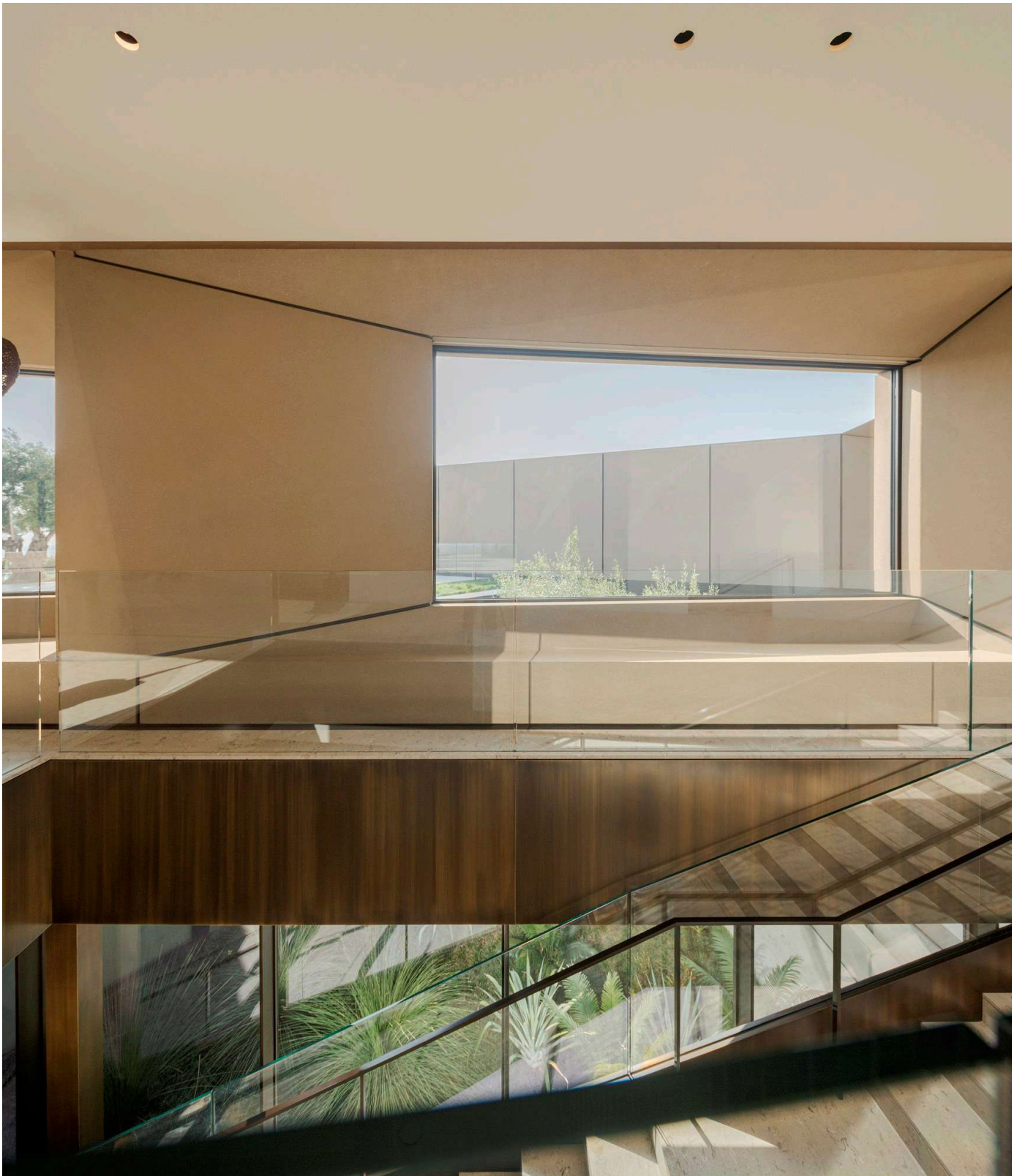
The panels surround the home in varying angular planes. In plan, the home is V-shaped that digs down into the ground, consisting of a main inflection point that branches off into two wings. It stretches 21,000 square feet in total. The project is not unlike Donaldson + Partner's [Hill House](#). "I see them as being part of the same conversation, just different site, different manifestations of those ideas in different contexts," said Donaldson. Both are embedded into the ground but



Trousdale's regulations that structures can't exceed 14 feet in height (to preserve views of the hills) required this project to be planted differently with a basement-level that integrates a cinema room, spa, gym, and partially sunken courtyard.



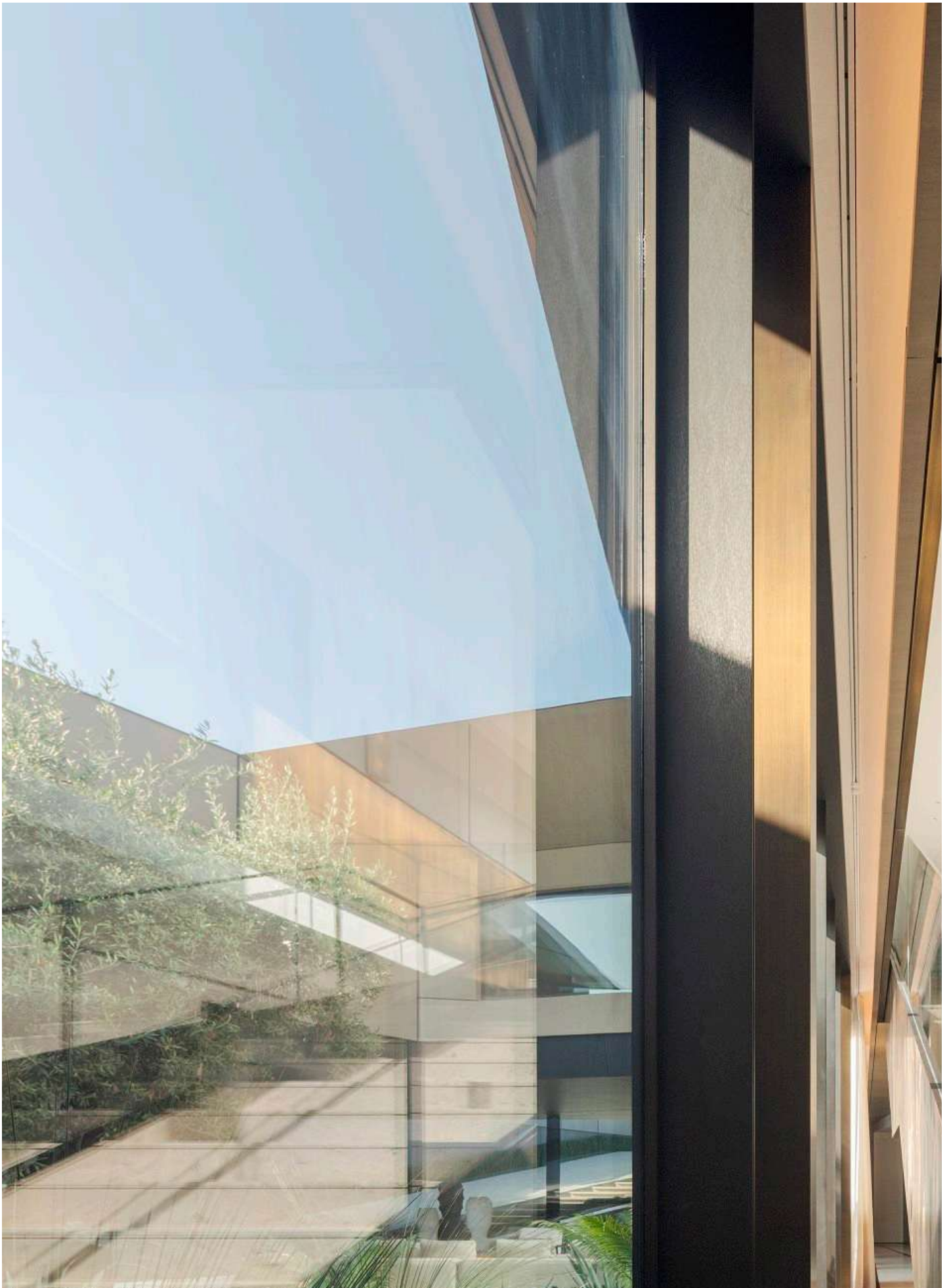
*The panels continue forming frames inside, creating nooks along windows (Fernando Guerra)*

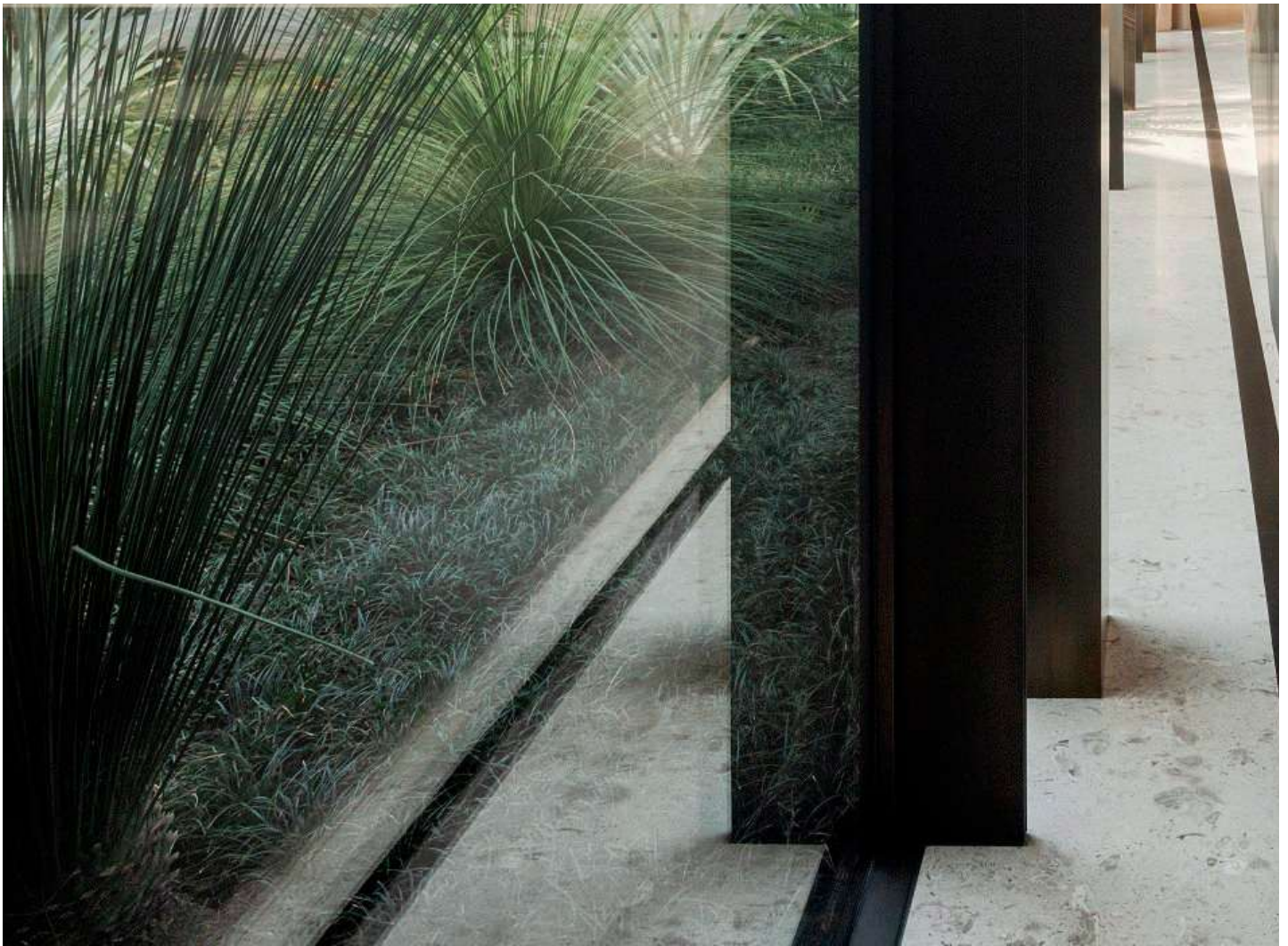


*Each panel in the home is custom designed based on its location (Fernando Guerra)*

The exterior informs the interior. Just as panels frame the facade, they also frame rooms and views within. Donaldson explained, “The house has about 90 of these GFRP panels. Each is custom designed based on where it is on the house. Instead of making windows just from these two parallel planes, we started to think about windows as an object. So the GFRP panels fold and create windows. On the interior, that folding continues and creates little places to sit.”

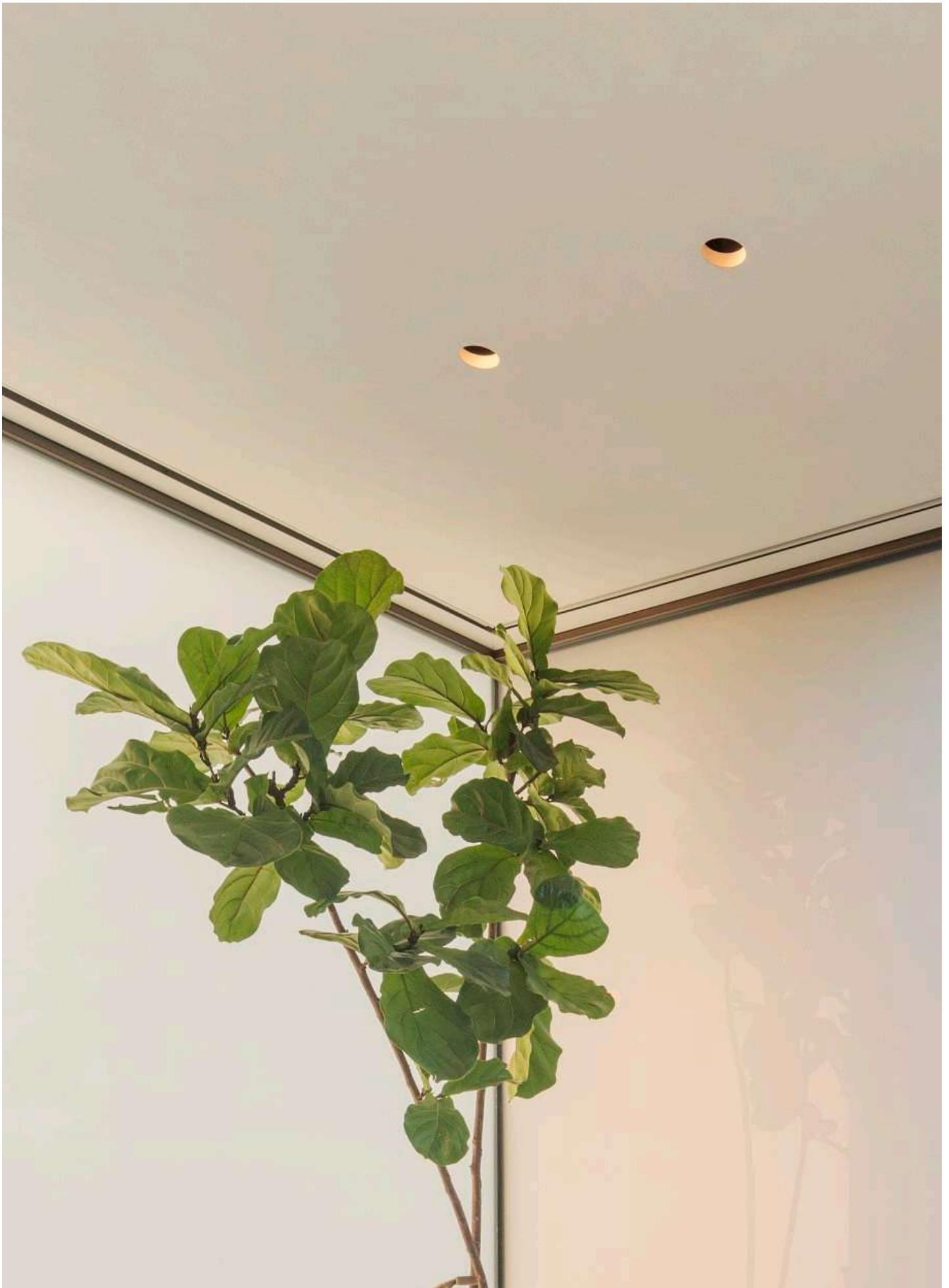






*The depth and angularity of the facade can be felt within the home (Fernando Guerra)*



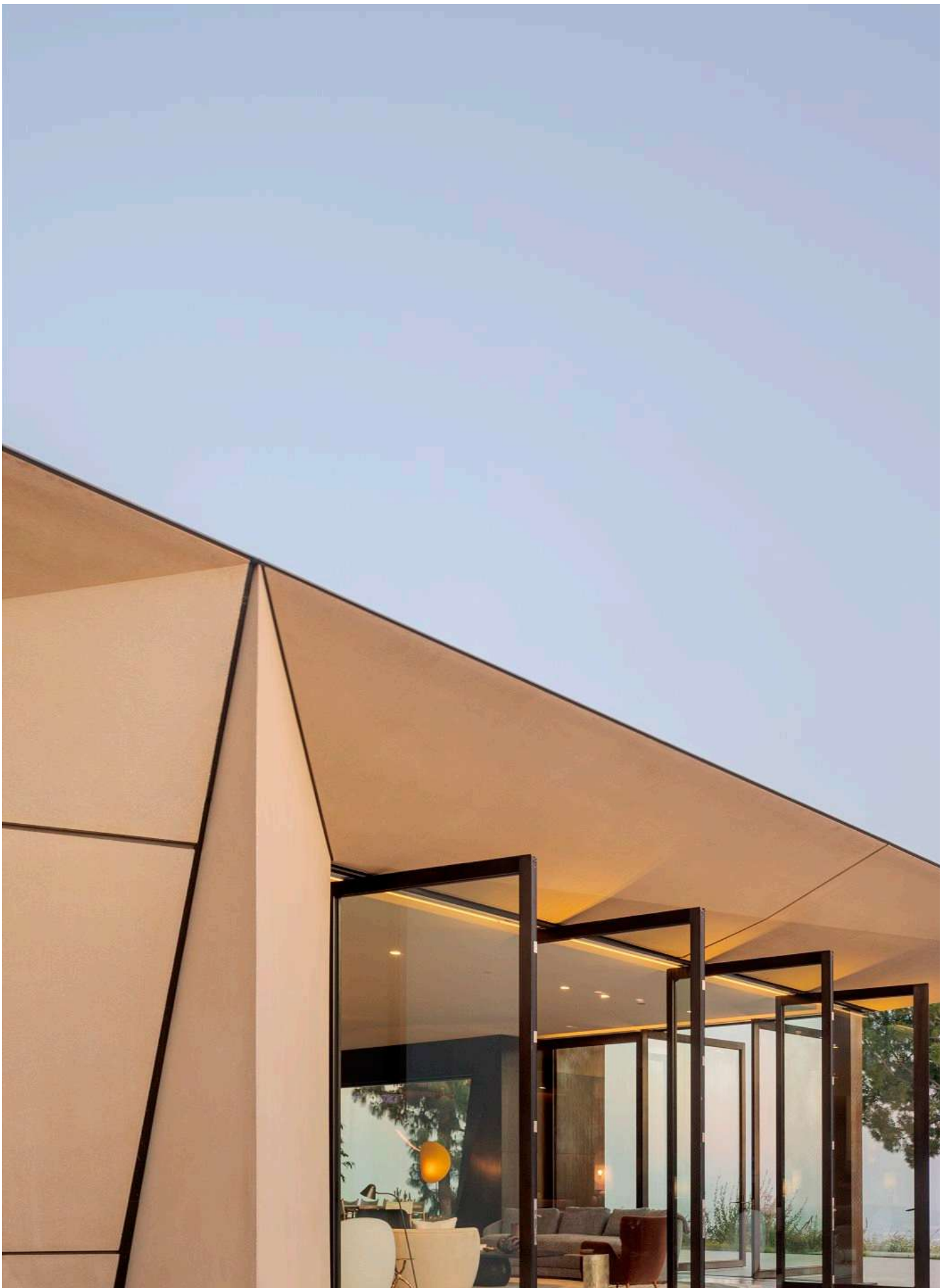




*The angular planes of the home set up strategic views (Fernando Guerra)*

This informs the rest of the space as panels fold or unfold to frame different rooms and the views within them. Even the windows that aren't occupiable continue staging sightlines and frames. The window right off the entrance, for instance, is scaled to the aspect ratio of a full cinematic movie, apt for a residence in movie capital Los Angeles. The angles and windows of the interior are all calibrated for different views, balancing the relationship to the site with the structure of the home.

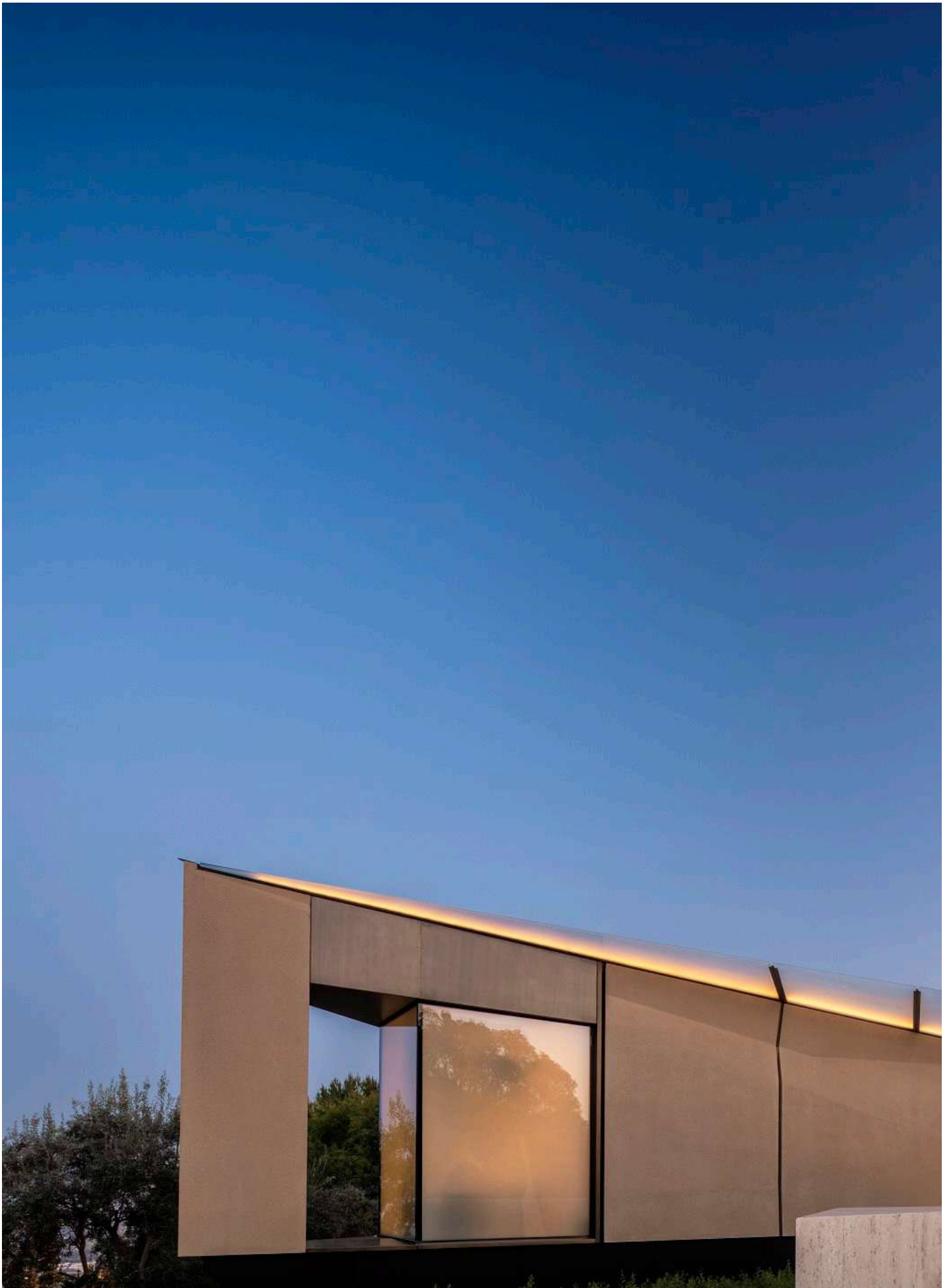






*Pivot doors create an indoor/outdoor experience (Fernando Guerra)*







*Per building regulations, the house maintains the maximum height of 14 feet (Fernando Guerra)*

Details continue the motif of the facade down to the doorknobs. “This house gave me an opportunity to really look at the notion of the *gesamtkunstwerk*, the complete work,” said Donaldson. The architects designed the doorknobs to take after the multifaceted language of the exterior. It falls alongside frames of the client’s own gemstone collection, art, fractal-inspired sculptures by London studio Based Upon, and furnishings led by interior designers Nicole Hollis and Joan Behnke. All are carefully orchestrated to inspire.