

OUTSIDE IN

MEXICO CITY, ME

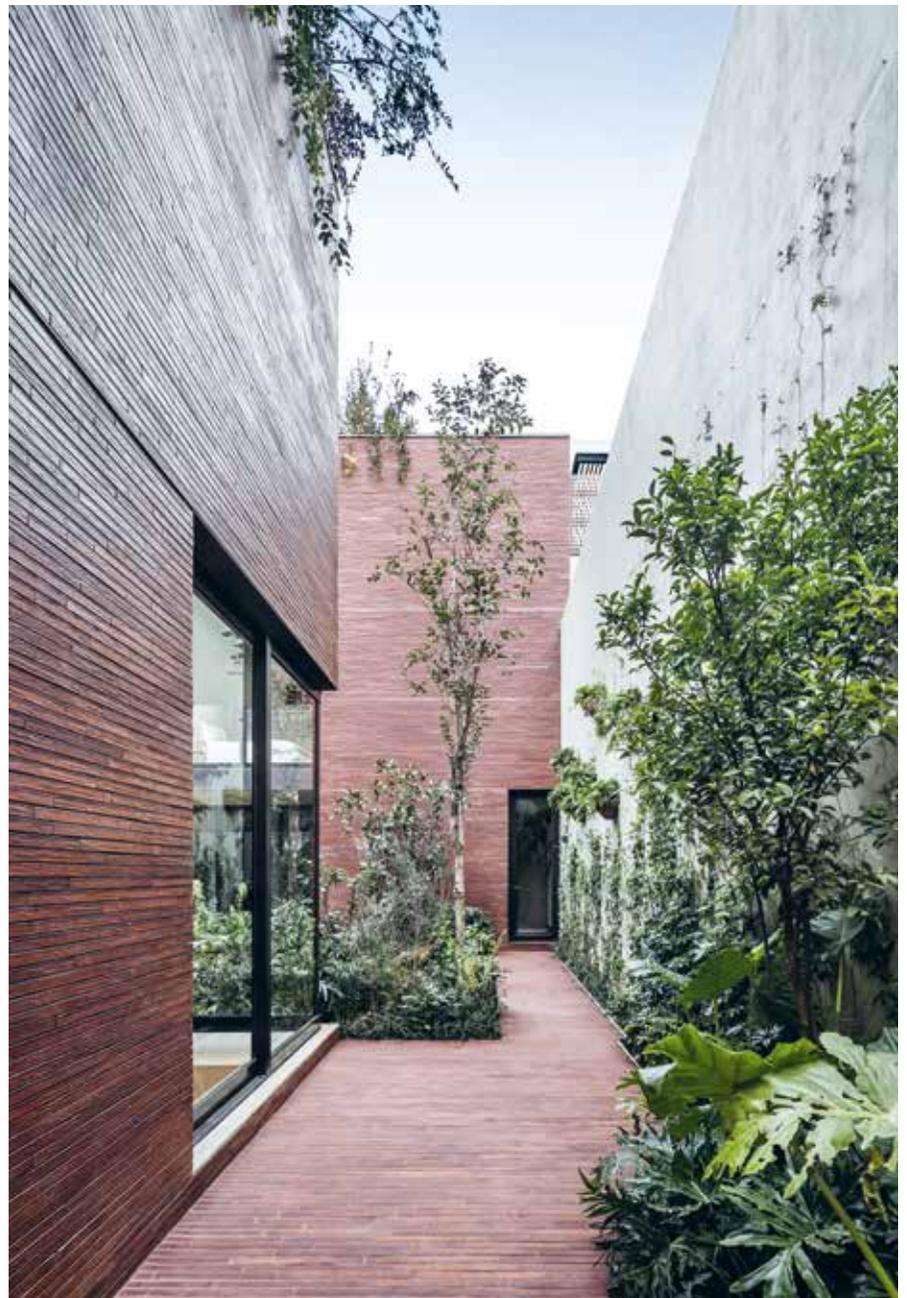
-
- + shaded
 - + air-purifying
 - + decorative
 - + restful
 - + cooling

Nothing about the outside of this windowless red-brick cube suggests that, on the inside, a family house has been built round a green heart.



The house is located in Lomas de Chapultepec, a district of Mexico City close to a number of natural parks, the largest of which is the 650-hectare Bosque de Chapultepec. This project might be on a much smaller scale, but the connection with nature that you feel here is undeniable, the various open-plan spaces flowing naturally round a large courtyard garden set at the heart of the house. This is the way they have been building houses in the area for decades: in nature and around nature, but with a modern twist.

Built for an entrepreneur in the hospitality industry and her three daughters, the U-shaped building is designed, as are many homes in Mexico, round a patio area that keeps the heat out, safeguards privacy and connects all rooms and common areas. At the entrance, a rectangular water feature on one side and a large plant container on the other already give a taste of what is to be found inside. Once past the doorway, you experience the power of the vegetation intensely as the impact of the greenery and the natural light become clear: everything in this house feels warm and safe. When the plans were initially presented to the client, she was a little afraid that the building would be very large and cold in proportion, but during the building process she became happier and happier with the design.



The safe and warm feeling is mainly due to the fact that the areas, connected by the inner garden and a floating wooden staircase, flow into each other in a natural way. Every part of the house is designed to help the interaction between the residents and nature. On the ground floor, you walk from the living room and kitchen through the garden, with lush planting on all sides. All lines of vision here include some form of vegetation, just as in the rooms on the first floor. From the courtyard with its natural stone path and the borders flanking it, to the large bathroom with a green patio and the roof garden, the house radiates an intimate ambiance with lots of privacy. The living room has an especially beautiful view of the plants, which are precisely at eye level, because the living room was built slightly lower than street level. This allows you to admire even more closely the various textures and colours of the plants, which include *Alocasia macrorrhiza*, (elephant ear), *Philodendron selloum*, *Schefflera arboricola*, (dwarf umbrella tree), *Schefflera amate*, *Monstera deliciosa* (Swiss cheese plant) and several ferns, all loosely arranged next to each other here in a perfect humid climate and protected from the bright sunlight. In addition, they filter the sunlight, creating a pleasant temperature in the house. On the patio also grow trees that take the greenery all the way up to the top, linking the storeys. In the bathroom next to the main bedroom, where there is no view of the courtyard, a small patio with a stylish container garden and large skylight offers another green corner. And if you want complete privacy, there is no better place than the roof garden. In fact, the house offers a suitable spot for everyone at every moment of the day.









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PARADISE DREAMS

AMSTERDAM, NL

A sub-tropical indoor garden sits at the heart of this eco-friendly hotel located on Amsterdam's Java Island. Travellers and people from the neighbourhood may alight here daily between the metres-high palm trees and plants, inspired by south-east Asian, and in particular Javanese, vegetation. They may even walk through and above the jungle by way of a number of wooden and glass bridges that connect the hotel's light-filled spaces.

+ air-purifying
+ CO₂-processing
+ climate-controlling,
humidity-increasing,
cooling, heating
+ restful
+ noise-reducing
+ decorative



