

VILLA BORÉALE

The *Villa Boréale* is a charming contemporary residence located in Charlevoix, an eastern region of the Quebec Province well known for its wooded valleys, skiable mountains and breathtaking points of view. At the heart of the boreal forest, the Villa is set on a sloped and private site, matching up nicely with the ubiquitous vegetation of the surroundings.

The clients, a dynamic young couple in their early thirties, approached the CARGO Architecture team in order to find an architect who could assist them throughout the construction process. The collaboration then begun by finding the ideal site within the *Municipality of Petite-Rivière-St-François* and near the ski center *Le Massif*. Being involved as early in the process, the architect was able to adequately inform his clients about the different aspects to be considered and future impacts of the site choice in the development of the project. The team chose to work on a wooded area at mounting foot, well oriented, with a great potential for intimacy.

The project's design comes from a global vision: A Scandinavian inspiration, a cottage with clean lines, a modern barn. The materials in their raw appearance influenced the general concept, as well as pale tones and natural textures such as wood, concrete and the white color. The black metal cladding also creates an impressive contrast that highlights the smooth matte finish of the steel and the natural grain of the Eastern white cedar. Moreover, as the entrance to the site is significantly higher than the house floor level, the choice of installing the same black metal cladding on the roof became clear, in order to provide a neat signage at first glance.

Throughout the design, the site was quickly revealed as a powerful element of the project. By choosing carefully the location and size of each window, external views were highlighted, and the atmosphere created by natural light is pleasant throughout the whole day. As for the position of the large sliding door, it was "pushed" toward the main interior open space with the intention of subtly separating the internal functions while creating a outside protected space. All these intentions ultimately aim to capture the essence of this project: the surrounding nature and wildlife.

Regarding the program, the objective to offer a total of 14 sleeping places and three bathrooms was respected, despite the constraints of floor area, thus requiring an intelligent and vigilant drafting work. The interior spaces have been designed to simplify circulation while providing a sense of *grandeur*. The mezzanine also offers a lot of flexibility in terms of functions: it is a master bedroom, a playroom for kids, a reading corner, a quiet place to nurse a young baby, etc. A fourth bathroom could even be integrated, in a later phase. The *Villa Boréale* really is a touristic housing project that can adapt over time, if the clients' needs were to change. That wise approach of flexibility represents a cornerstone of the practice of CARGO Architecture. The Architect also designed the project keeping in mind the business aspect of the operation, since the clients were looking to maximise the return on their investment via renting (Airbnb, villaboreale.com and other websites).

Finally, the house can be described as a home in harmony with the natural context of the boreal forest, and a clear symbol of a contemporary vision of the Quebec cottage: light, nature, purity and simplicity.