



VELUX®

A HOUSE LIKE NO OTHER

A Villa in the Hills of Jutland



Each project is an opportunity to shape a ‘nest’ where our clients can create memories and experiences. The architecture should reflect a common ground between the environment and the character of the homeowners."

Andrea Louise Brøndsted, NÆST Arkitekter





"Villa Langå features an enclosed facade that provides privacy from the approach road and neighbouring properties. The open facades look out across the landscape. Light and shadow play a pivotal role in the “wow” factor, moving from inward-facing rooms with skylights to expansive, well-lit spaces with panoramic vistas. The skylights bring out the materials and textures, adding depth to the design."

Line Toft Jensen, NAESt Arkitekter

THE NEST ARCHITECTS

Andrea Louise Brøndsted and Line Toft Jensen founded their practice, NAESt Arkitekter, as female professionals interested in human-centred design.

The name of the office translates as ‘nest’: not just a structure, but a home that radiates warmth, safety and belonging. Villa Langå marks the first professional collaboration between Andrea and Line, former student colleagues who are now both young mothers. Their design philosophy reflects the qualities they associate with female energy, such as empathy and modesty. Rather than a cool, clinical approach to the profession, their ideas come from a deep understanding of context and the needs of the people they design for.

Andrea discovered the importance of ‘nesting’ when she moved with her young family from Copenhagen to Jutland during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her interest in working with people to achieve their dream homes had become stronger and, as Line shared her interests, they decided to work together.

Around the same time, Jette and Jan bought a piece of land in Langå, a small town with around 3000 inhabitants in the hills of Jutland. They had self-designed some of their previous homes so understood the process and their own priorities. Although Jan sketched some suggestions himself, the couple were keen to tap into fresh ideas and, via an internet ad, met Andrea and Line. The couple chose them from the many who responded because of an instant connection and a preference for working with a young local practice with original ideas – people without “30 years of thinking habits”, as Jan puts it.



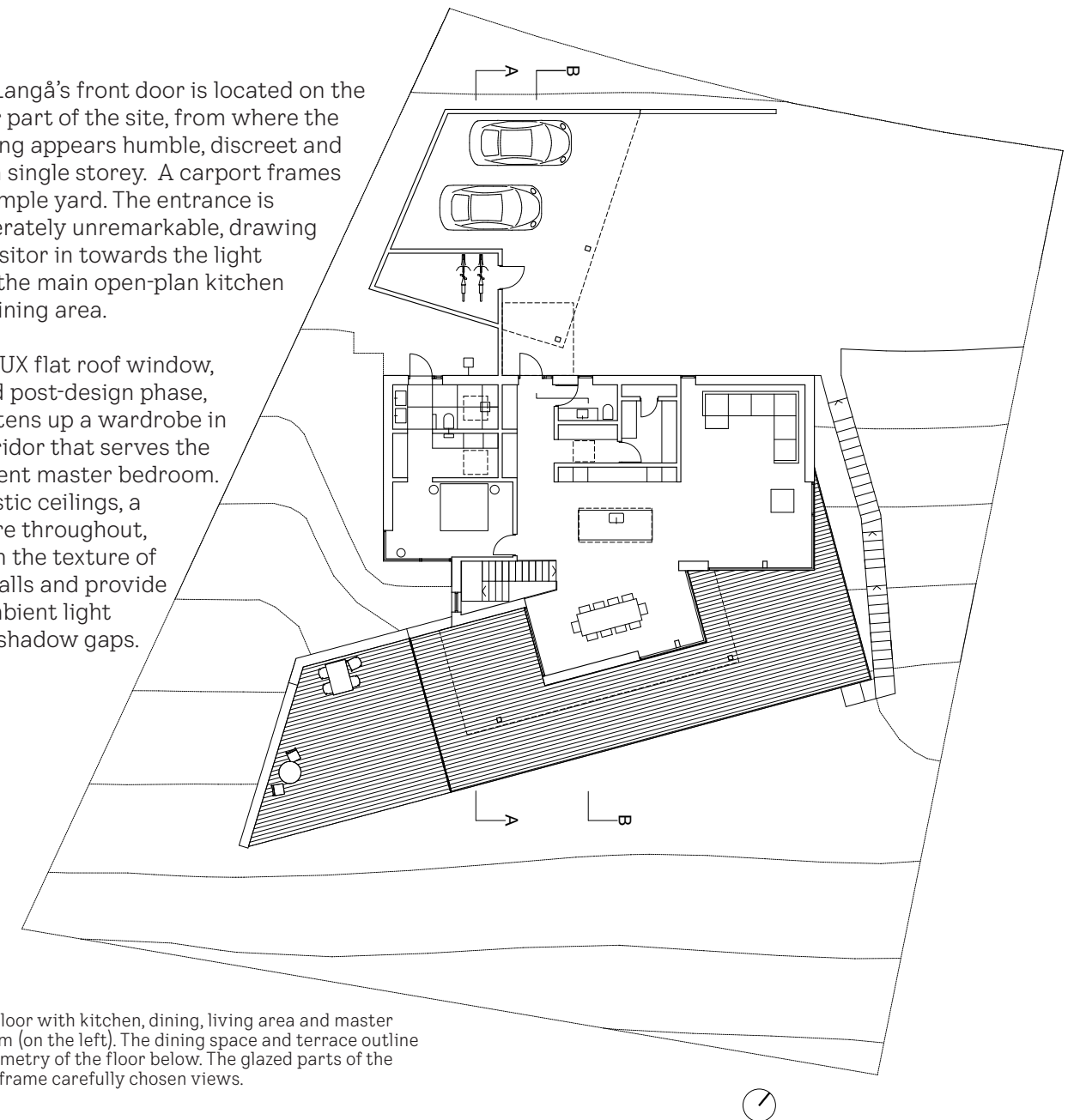
Andrea's interest in a people-first approach to architecture began during her studies; in her master's thesis she considered the impact of daylight, acoustics and nature on human health and wellbeing. She was fascinated by the way patients recover faster in sun-lit hospitals and people thrive in well-ventilated houses with good daylight and a connection to nature.

"We found a place we wanted to live, that was surrounded by nature and with vast big views. Then we started thinking about the house."

Jette and Jan, homeowners

Villa Langå's front door is located on the upper part of the site, from where the building appears humble, discreet and only a single storey. A carport frames the simple yard. The entrance is deliberately unremarkable, drawing the visitor in towards the light from the main open-plan kitchen and dining area.

A VELUX flat roof window, added post-design phase, brightens up a wardrobe in a corridor that serves the adjacent master bedroom. Acoustic ceilings, a feature throughout, match the texture of the walls and provide an ambient light from shadow gaps.



Upper floor with kitchen, dining, living area and master bedroom (on the left). The dining space and terrace outline the geometry of the floor below. The glazed parts of the facade frame carefully chosen views.

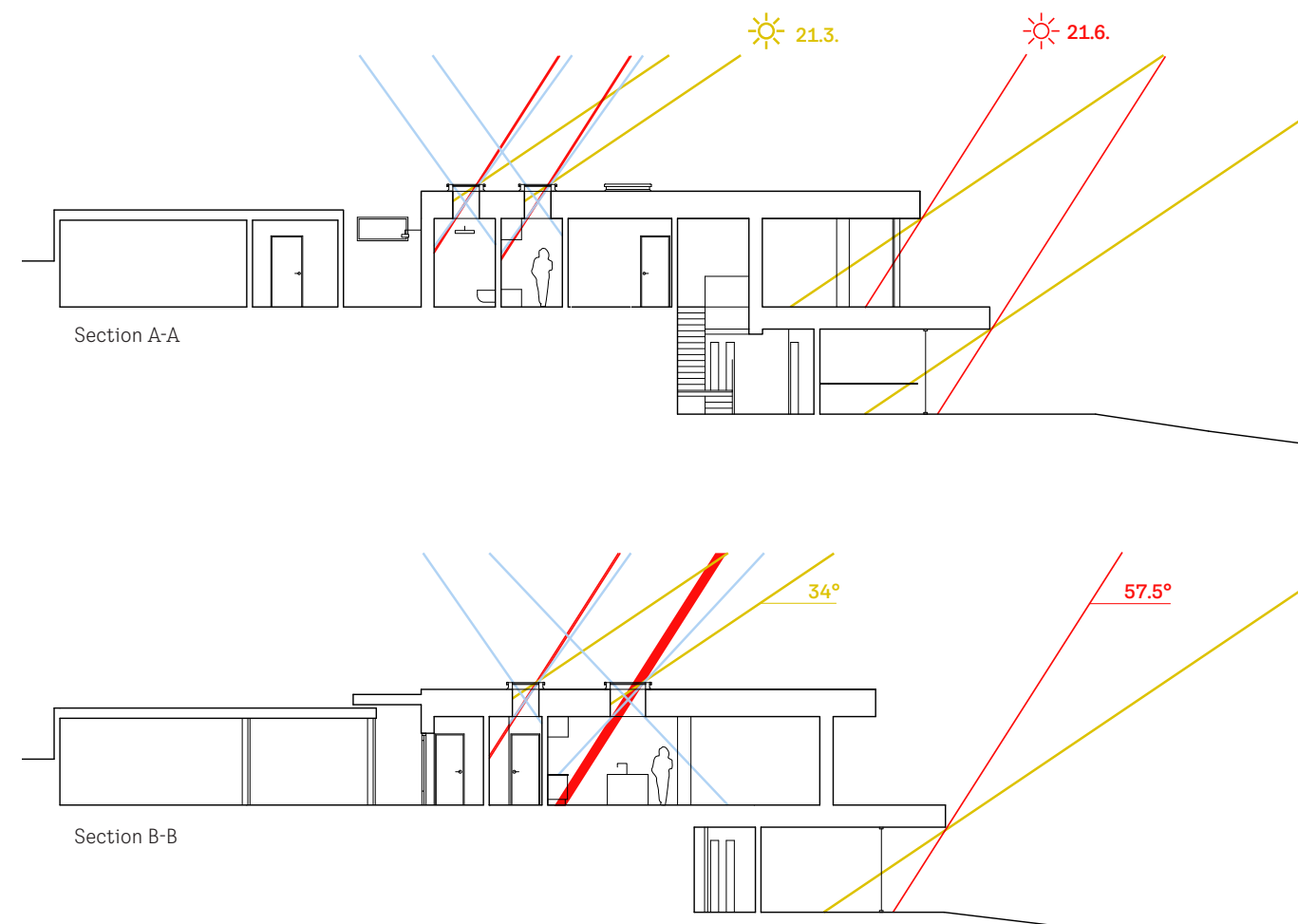
A DEMANDING TOPOGRAPHY

The architects' analysis of the site led them to an unusual solution: to design an almost invisible house that would follow the topography of the hill. However, rather than having an underground feeling, the building would open out across the landscape and be full of daylight. The views and wind direction led Andrea and Line to conclude that the top floor needed to rotate 15 degrees in relation to the lower one – a simple, radical move that makes the building special.

Andrea describes Jan and Jette as warm and welcoming with strong artistic sensibilities. Jan devotes his spare time to painting, while Jette has a background in glassmaking. Both understand the tactile qualities of materials and were comfortable taking on the co-designing of the interiors.


Buildings built into a slope will always have one problematic side in terms of designing in daylight and ventilation. But, at Villa Langå, VELUX flat roof windows allowed the architects to achieve complex interior spaces that didn't compromise on light levels or lose the feeling of being tucked into a hill.

The 15-degree rotation of the top floor dining space in line with the floor below adds complexity and different views of the landscape. The sofa area is tucked behind a cube that hides the kitchen utility space. A light, open-tread staircase leads to the lower floor.



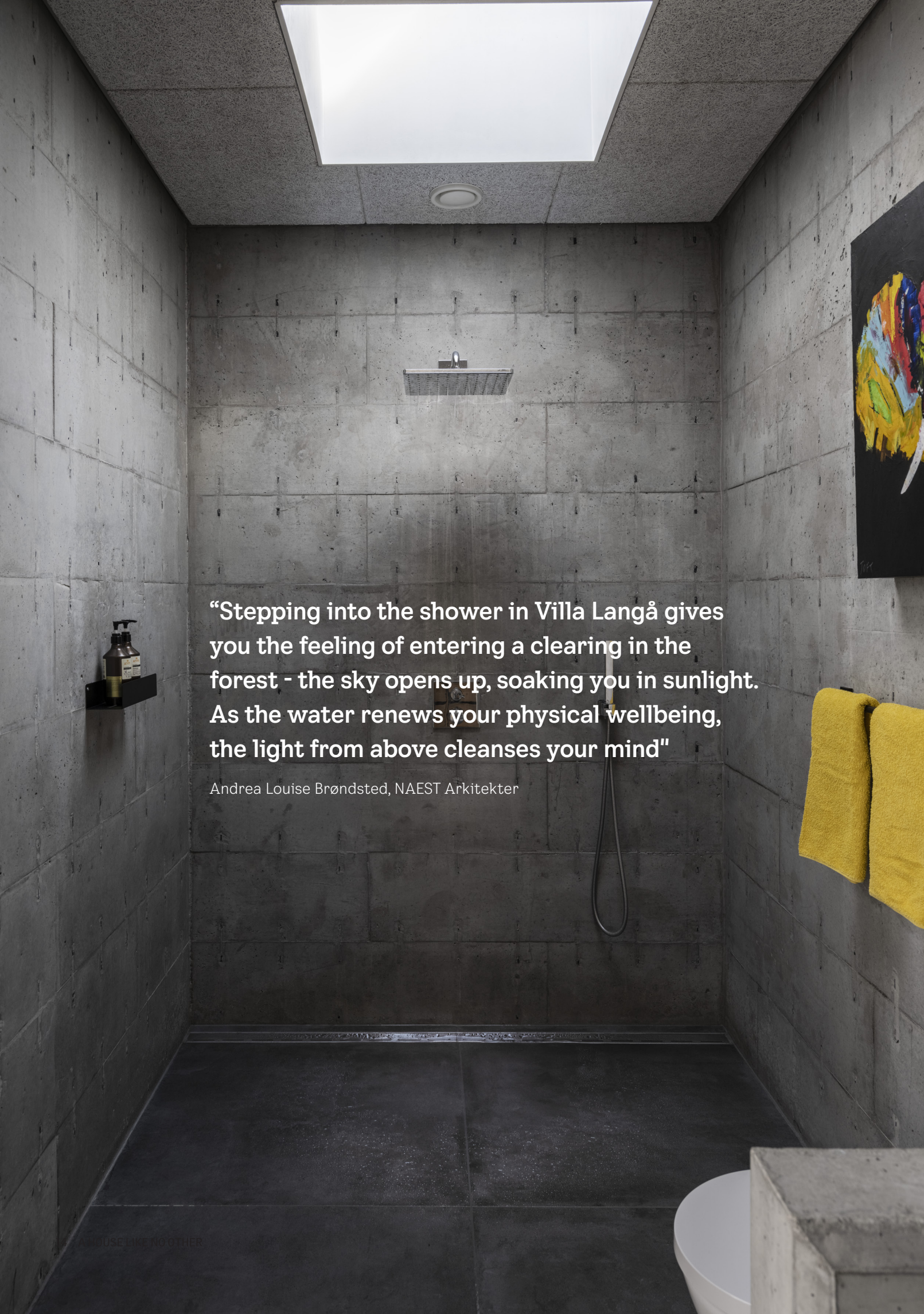
The sections show the transition between the more closed north-west rooms, the open, south-facing kitchen dining area and the abundance of daylight in the entire volume. The protruding roofs protect the glazed front from overheating in summer, while allowing the winter sun to penetrate the interiors.

The character of daylight coming in through the roof changes depending on the position of the sun. In summer, its rays move through the interior, marking the passing hours; in winter, flat sun rays are reflected by the white window frames, illuminating the rooms with softer, indirect light. In the drawing, the red lines show the sun's position during the summer solstice; yellow lines its position during the equinox; and blue lines show no-sky lines.

A modern kitchen and dining area with a large skylight and floor-to-ceiling windows. The kitchen island has a dark countertop and a sink. The dining table is made of wood and has black chairs. The room has a concrete ceiling and walls. The view outside the windows shows a green landscape with hills and a small town.

"My favourite room is the kitchen – in fact the entire top floor. You have a nine-mile-wide unobstructed view from the kitchen island, which stands in the light of the roof window above. It's the best spot in the house!"

Jette, homeowner

A minimalist shower room with walls and ceiling made of large, light-colored concrete panels. A large, rectangular skylight is set into the ceiling, providing natural light. A square showerhead is mounted on the back wall. To the left, a small black shelf holds two bottles of soap. To the right, two bright yellow towels are hanging on a rack. The floor is made of dark, large tiles. A white toilet is partially visible in the bottom right corner.

“Stepping into the shower in Villa Langå gives you the feeling of entering a clearing in the forest - the sky opens up, soaking you in sunlight. As the water renews your physical wellbeing, the light from above cleanses your mind”

Andrea Louise Brøndsted, NAEØT Arkitekter





"The first thing Andrea and Line did was go to the site - it was just a big field - and photograph how the sun moved across it and the best views. It was difficult to imagine what the house should look like or how it would connect to its surroundings."

Jan, homeowner



FLEXIBLE SPACES

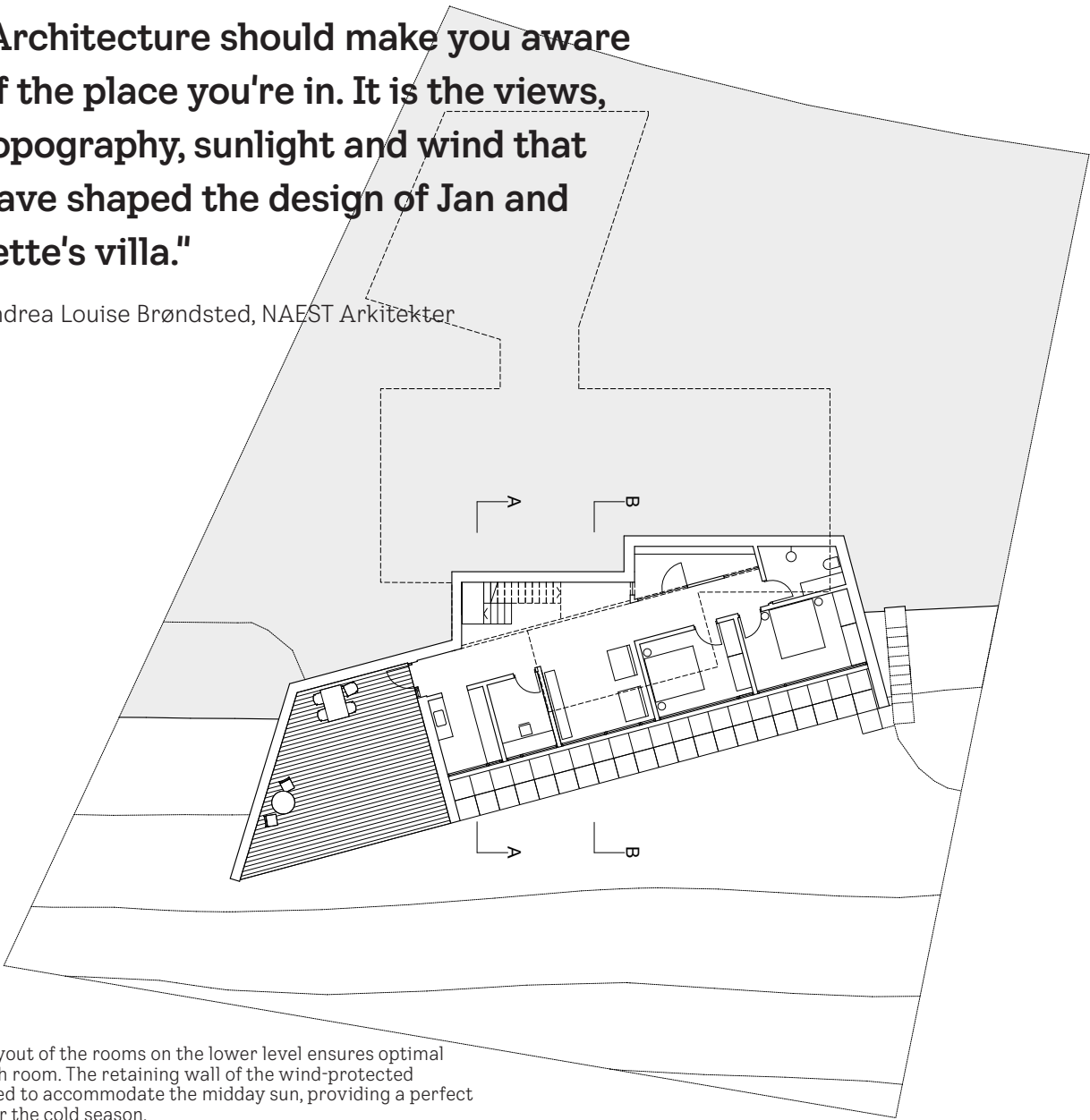
The lower floor currently houses the homeowners' art studios, a TV room and a wine cellar. Jan and Jette were aware that they would not live in the house forever, so designed it to meet the needs of an average family - the drawings show a row of children's bedrooms. As on the main floor above, there is a generous terrace with various seating areas positioned to accommodate the changing conditions of time and season.

In Villa Langå, every space is shaped with the best experience, comfort and happiness of the inhabitants in mind. All rooms are tailored to the clients' wishes, but their quality is also more broadly appealing because the house follows universal rules of user-friendly design.

Jette and Jan share Andrea's appreciation of nature. They have planted 300 pines – dwarf pines where the views are – across the sloped grounds. Over the coming years it will grow into a lush, wild garden, establishing a connection to nature not only for the enjoyment of the current owners, but also for all the house's future inhabitants.

"Architecture should make you aware of the place you're in. It is the views, topography, sunlight and wind that have shaped the design of Jan and Jette's villa."

Andrea Louise Brøndsted, NÆST Arkitekter



The rational layout of the rooms on the lower level ensures optimal daylight in each room. The retaining wall of the wind-protected terrace is angled to accommodate the midday sun, providing a perfect outside spot for the cold season.





**"We had lovely, productive meetings –
we called them team meetings because
we had a lot of ideas ourselves!"**

Jette, homeowner





"The design phase was a process of collaboration between architect and client. Jan and Jette needed help pinning down a vision of their ideal home so we could capture it in a cohesive design."

Andrea Louise Brøndsted, NAEST Arkitekter



LANDSCAPES AND PAINTINGS

Villa Langå is the result of a dialogue: NAEST laid a clear framework for the design and helped their clients through the decision-making process. A strong concept can be realised in myriad ways without losing clarity and Jan and Jette's active contributions have enhanced the house in the process.

To convey the complex geometry of the building to their clients and demonstrate optimal daylight, Andrea and Line used 3D visualisations from the very beginning of the design process. Renders were used not only to depict solutions, but also as a design tool: they helped Jan and Jette decide on their preferred room height, the division of the façades and views from inside the house.

Other decisions were taken directly on-site, including adding the skylight in a wardrobe and – more radically – leaving internal walls without the usual finishes. The house is constructed using ISOBYG, a Danish system of prefabricated concrete blocks that creates energy-efficient walls. Like Lego bricks, the elements are stacked one on top of the other and then filled with concrete. When Jan and Jette saw the rough walls on a visit to the construction site, they fell in love with the texture.

"We decided to leave the internal walls in rough concrete with visible traces of the formwork panels. The walls felt smooth and tactile and radiated a warmth impossible to achieve with standard plasterboard. Sometimes we find new shapes and stories hidden in the walls. In daylight the material comes to life, like a painting."

Jette, homeowner

The darker interior shades of the house shift attention to the daylight, with the textured walls strengthening the effect. Although concrete may seem a cold choice, these walls are tactile and warm, each joint a reminder of the human work behind them.

The daylight coming into the house from above makes for almost painterly views, unspoilt by the glare of direct sun. Jan and Jette insisted on a fully glazed, almost invisible front façade without any unnecessary mullions. In a standard white cube interior the light would have been blinding, but here the combination of VELUX roof windows and unfinished concrete evens out the brightness.

Jan uses one of the bedrooms on the lower floor as his studio and test-hangs his paintings all around the house. These balanced light levels are crucial for painting. Even next to large runs of glazing the conditions are perfect for displaying art – and the works shine against the walls.





FULL OF LIGHT

Villa Langå is NAESt's first project so also their first specifying VELUX windows. The rooms in the house are far from ordinary and VELUX advanced visualising tools helped ensure the design met the requirements of optimal daylight and fresh air.

The architects also received expert support when preparing their technical documentation and are looking forward to working with the VELUX team again on future commissions.

"Both of us knew and used the VELUX Daylight Visualizer on all kinds of projects during our studies. It's a great tool for illustrating the quality of daylight in spaces and provides architects with detailed technical reports, allowing them to not only control indoor environments, but also to check that a building conforms to all daylight norms."

Andrea Louise Brøndsted and Line Toft Jensen, NAESt Arkitekter

To achieve the ultimate simplicity in the main shower room, Jan installed the toilet tank on the other side of the wall, hidden in the walk-in closet. The washbasins are in a niche in a corridor that leads to a hidden patio with an outdoor shower.

The polished steel surface of the kitchen island reflects the sun's rays, brightening up the space and evoking the sculptures of geometric abstract art.

The main bedroom was sited on the top floor to facilitate easy movement between the main rooms of the house. Entry is from along the main façade, walking from the dining space towards a glazed corner. Positioning the room on this side of the building allows the bed and the bathroom to be hidden from the view of neighbouring properties. The glazed corner adds lightness to the volume, reducing the barrier between inside and out.

The sun's rays penetrate the building all day, each hour from a different position, strengthening the awareness of living in the moment – and being in a beautiful place.

PROJECT DATA

Client:

Location:

Architecture:

Year:

Photography:

Private

Langå, Denmark

NAEST Arkitekter

2023

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