

OPEN SEASON

Combining natural materials with contemporary design, this home near Brussels radiates comfort and warmth

Words
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Photography
JAN VERLINDE/LIVING INSIDE



A WEEPING WILLOW CASTS

shade on the lawn and, at the fence, chestnut-coloured horses gather in a cluster. Inside the low, brick-clad house, glass doors open to the breezes and beams of sunlight crisscross the wooden walls and concrete floors.

Designed by Lien Pierard and her architecture practice Styfhals, this 320-square-metre home on the outskirts of the village of Steenhuffel, a 20-minute drive north of Brussels, is home to Lien, her husband Cédric and their children, Loui, seven, and Léon, five. Completed in 2017, the property is calm and restful by design.

'This is our everyday family home, but I wanted to create something that had the feel of a holiday retreat – a place where we can relax away from the pressures of work,' explains Lien. 'Our previous house had high ceilings and lots of white, and was a little bit cold. This time, I really wanted to design something that felt warm.'

To give that feeling of warmth, Lien used natural materials, including tactile wood, marble and soft leather. The open-plan living, dining and kitchen area is where the family spend most of their time. Glazed from floor to ceiling on two sides, it maximises the long views out to the surrounding fields. 'Each morning I see the willow tree and the colours of the sunrise,' says Lien. 'I love to begin the day like this, to see nature and the changing of the seasons.'

When it comes to furniture, Lien mixes vintage, bespoke and designer items. The living room is home to a vintage armchair and sideboard, as well as a classic 'Togo' sofa designed by Michel Ducaroy for Ligne Roset. Recycled cardboard 'Scraplights' by Graypants hang above the bespoke dining table, which is Lien's favourite piece. 'My grandparents had something similar when I was growing up and I always wanted to replicate it,' she says. The vintage dining chairs, a wedding gift to her parents, are inherited.

Completing the house was a challenging three-year process, but today the family is enjoying the fruits of that hard work. 'Our lives are hectic. We both work full time, our children are still young and there's a lot of running around during the week, so on weekends we love to just stay home,' says Lien. 'Sometimes we invite friends to visit, but really we don't plan too much. We just want to enjoy being here.' styfhals.be















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