STUDENT HOUSING

A new global asset class
Spanish/Kuwaiti-based practice AGi Architects have designed a unique intertwined family chalet which offers its residents the benefits of pleasant outdoor areas and superb sea views while maintaining complete privacy. The S Cube Chalet consists of 3 semi-detached beach houses, each with their own outdoor space.

S pain and Kuwait-based practice AGi Architects have delivered a unique project to Kuwait’s residential market, the so-called S Cube Chalet. Having won the Middle East Architect Awards 2012 as Residential Project of the Year, the project demonstrates an innovative approach to providing connected spaces whilst maintaining the privacy of its residents at the same time.

S Cube Chalet consists of 3 semi-detached beach houses. Two of the houses are located on the ground floor level and are mirror images of each other, separated by a staircase that leads to the third house. The third house is positioned on a higher level and across from the two residences, enjoying a large roof terrace with direct views towards the sea. Each of the three houses enjoys an individual outdoor area that is open to the sky, offers privacy from its neighbor as well as extended sea views.

DESIGN
The owners of S Cube Chalet – two brothers and their sister each with their own families – wanted to continue enjoying the same exceptional environment in which they grew up, but with complete independency and privacy from each other. Hence, “the design of these three small houses called for a duplicated program, which maintains privacy while benefiting from outdoor areas and sea views through the use of several terraces.”

BEACHSIDE LIVING IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN

Images: S Cube Chalet, Kuwait, AGi Architects
The team behind the design of the family chalet consists of Joaquín Pérez-Goicoechea and Nasser Abulhasan, Co-founders and Partners at AGi Architects, as well as Salvador Cejudo, Design Partner at AGi architects.

“The [chalet’s] design objectives were very clear: to be able to create three separate dwellings that enjoy the most of the outdoor areas and sea views, without sacrificing the privacy of each one. To do this we had to be as fair as possible, designing very neutral spaces but at the same time not identical houses, while meeting the particular needs of each family, relatively distinct from each other,” the team commented.

“The design is very simple and practical, with a compact base that houses three concentrated parts. Spaces are rectangular and contain the essentials, [designed] unpretentiously. The aesthetic of the chalet has been strongly influenced by the available budget,” the AGi team said.

OUTDOOR SPACE
The outdoor spaces on the ground floor and on the roof terrace of the third house on the upper level are the main distinguishing elements and spaces of this project, AGi say. All three houses are organised around those spaces and are designed to optimise and enhance the residents’ outdoor experience.

In order to guarantee a comfortable climate in the houses’ outdoor spaces, the latter are designed to harvest the prevailing winds and enhance their circulation within the courtyards.

“The outdoor spaces are designed to allow the circulation of wind flows – both sea and desert breezes – and together with the existing shading spaces allow for comfortable outdoor being, which is essential in an arid climate. We minimised the planted areas facing the desert, using only local plants, while on the sea shore, grass and local plants are combined to create a geometric landscape,” the AGi design team said.

INTERIOR
With regards to the chalets’ interior design, the team has placed high emphasis on functionality.

“Functionality is [paramount] in the S Cube Chalet. We proposed very compact elements, rare in this society, but necessary for functional issues, responding to the clients’ needs,” the team said.

“The furniture is also very functional, mainly from Spanish brands based on high quality and competitive price. The three houses [only] contain the essentials because as beach houses, they are designed to optimise and enhance the outdoor experience.”

All materials used in the S Cube project are locally manufactured. Flooring, stairs and dividing walls are all cladded using Indian sandstone. Interior walls and ceilings are finished using plaster and paint, whilst handrails are cladded with wood.