

OUR FIRST GROUP OF
TALENTED ARCHITECTS
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THE DESIGN MUSEUM
HOLON FEATURING
BENCHES MADE FROM
CAESARSTONE'S
'MOTIVO CROCODILE'

BENCH MARK

The ambitious architects setting the visionary standards for a new Israel

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAN LEHNER WRITER: SIMON MILLS



Tel Aviv's White City, with its 4,000-odd buildings built in the International Style, is something of an architecture groupie's Disneyland. In 2003, it was awarded Unesco World Cultural Heritage status for its 'unique adaptation of modern international architectural trends to the cultural, climatic and local traditions of the city' and it still thrives as a hotbed for architectural talent.

The current crop of gifted architects, interior designers and developers shaping Tel Aviv's new skyline – Pitsou Kedem, Ilan Pivko, Moshe Tzur and Orly Shrem

among them – choose to live and work in the small state of Israel (just 8.1m people) despite a persistently challenging socio-political climate, but buoyed by a defiant increase in business creation and capital investment and an unemployment rate that's at an all-time low. Add to this a brave, bold vision and a distinct lack of sentimentalism, which has helped the city develop a fearless aesthetic dialogue.

'The big advantage is that, as we are a small and developing country, there is no well-defined historic, cultural language,' says Kedem. 'This allows for

great flexibility in design, and inspires freshness and innovation in design.'

'It is our basic contention that Israel continues to pioneer a situated modernism,' says Tzur. 'From the Technion campus in Haifa to Tel Aviv's modernist housing clusters in response to Patrick Geddes' 1925 street plan for Tel Aviv, change has always been innovative. In the great flowering of architecture since the foundation of the state in 1948, that commitment to the constant recreation of modernism has proved to be a worthy objective for a young nation.'



01 Daniela Plesner

A partner at Plesner Architects and a graduate of Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy. Key projects include the Walworth Barbour American International School at Even Yehuda, completed in 2007.

02 Hanan Peri and Shalom Davidovich

Partners at Peri Davidovich Architects and specialists in grand-scale luxury. Key projects include a 12,000 sq m palazzo in the Nigerian savannah, the largest private home ever designed by Israelis, and the Ferrari Maserati showroom in Tel Aviv.

03 Ilan Pivko

One of Israel's most influential architects. Key projects include Tel Aviv's Vox nightclub, 4 Florentine complex, and the Jaffa Sea Shell residential complex, where he also keeps a home.

04 Alon Baranowitz and Irene Kronenberg

Founders of the Tel Aviv-based BKARCH Studio. Boutique hotels are a speciality, and key projects include the Mendel Street Hotel in Tel Aviv, the Wyndham Grand in Frankfurt, the Sir Albert Hotel in Amsterdam, and the Cardiff Park Plaza.

05 Shemtov Tzrouya

A partner at MYS Architects. Contributions include the design of a wheelchair-friendly, multi-accessible arts centre for Tel Aviv University and the Lagoon, an ambitious mixed-use development perched on the cliffs of Netanya, Israel.

06 Yonatan Monjack

Established in 1989 by Yonatan Monjack and his wife, Irit Monjack, both graduates of Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy. The firm specialises in private houses, luxury apartments and boutique hotels, such as the Artchuk guest suites in Kfar Vradim.

07 Orly Shrem

A graduate of the Architectural Association in London and one of Israel's most prolific and respected architects. Practice established in 1985, and key projects include the interior design of the Rothschild residential tower in downtown Tel Aviv.

08 Alex Meitlis

A graduate of Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy and a former employee of Richard Rogers and Ron Arad in London. Projects include hotels, private homes and retail spaces, and Meitlis is also the design director for the Ottolenghi restaurant empire.

09 Pitsou Kedem

A graduate of London's Architectural Association, Kedem founded his firm in 2002 and now employs eight architects. Key projects include Tel Aviv's Taizu and Bindella restaurants and the city's B&B Italia flagship.