

**An Eames-inspired
home in Belgium**

By Frances Ambler

Photography Stan Koolen

Concrete dreams



Most people come back from their travels with a few souvenirs. Jeroen Lathouwers, owner of the graphic design studio Atelier Graphique Turtle returned with a desire to build his own home (along with something of an Eames obsession, but more on that later). Inspired by the concrete structures he'd seen in Japan and the United States, Jeroen wanted to create one for himself and his family in his home country of Belgium.

Completed in 2013, this dream home took two years to complete but Jeroen's dedication and determination have undoubtedly paid off. He has created a home that addresses all of his needs – a warm and inviting family space, a practical but inspiring studio, and a stunning backdrop for his museum quality collection of mid-century pieces.

The layout gives an indication of how each of these concerns was taken into account when designing the house. Jeroen's studio, for example, is reached directly from the entrance hallway, via a flight of floating concrete stairs. Clients can come and go, without ever encroaching on the family space.

The remainder of the downstairs space is devoted to the open plan living, dining and kitchen area, bathed with light thanks to the full-length windows overlooking the garden, and the skylights – Jeroen describes how raindrops sound "magical" on the roof. A second

'This house is my bubble. I am living in my own world'

staircase leads up to the master bedroom, his son's bedroom, a bathroom and a TV room. And, for any one who thinks open plan living is not for them, take note of Jeroen's secret – a tucked away, second kitchen, "for the dirty things".

The project was blessed with an architect – Jan Cloetens of Arcero Architects – who, literally, went the extra mile to ensure its success. He took an unconventional approach to address the problem of finding affordable workmen with the skills to construct an ambitious concrete structure in a country more used to bricks and mortar: each time he spotted a concrete building, he would knock on the door to find out who had built it!

You can see why this was so important by looking at the house. The only pre-fabricated elements of the structure were those containing the glass window panels on the front and side; everything else was constructed on site. Concrete is also

Previous: external view of the house, with a 1971 Porsche 911.

Right: floating stairs lead to Jeroen's studio.

