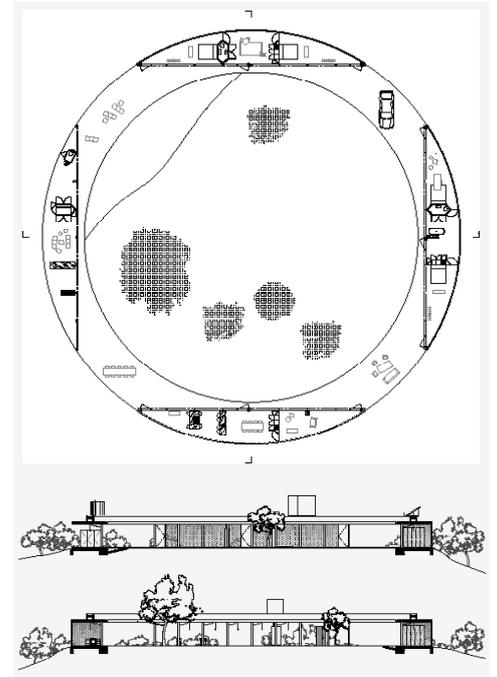
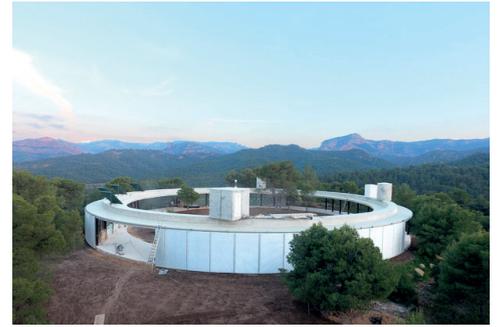


Solo

Office KGDVS

Christian Bourdais' "Solo Houses" venture becomes most evident by making the journey to Cretas, an untouched forest area in the mountainous region of Matarraña just north-east of the natural park Els Ports, located in the centre of the triangle Barcelona–Valencia–Saragossa. Here, in the midst of a one hundred hectare plot of pure nature, one feels itself all of a sudden truly "solo"–alone though and magically isolated and disconnected from every day turbulences. The "Solo Houses", on-going project of contemporary small resort-prototypes conceived by a New Garde of international young architects, offers a distinct experience and looks to spend leisure time.

The Belgium architects Office Kersten Geers David Van Severen realized right after the Chileans Mauricio Pezo and Sofia Von Ellrichshausen the second "second home". Approaching their nearly completed house that's built on a natural plateau to provide for its future owner a breath-taking 360° panorama on the wilderness, the immediate question arises whether this is a house at all. Although the Office project provides all basic structural elements –as a concrete foundation–(but in the shape of a circular "catwalk"), a façade corresponding with the three inhabited segments (... but perforated and with the feature to be shifted around the circumference if needed), a simple flat roof that is supported by four straight rows of eight columns which cut chords from the circular base (... but exposes purposely all technical infrastructure for photovoltaic panels, water tanks and generators as sculptural objects) and a set of furniture (... but all directly connected in some way to the supporting columns)–, it is one of a kind that questions traditional conventions. The overall 1.600 m² surface that includes a 1050 m² patio garden with a natural carved pool and three segments–living room, master bed room and guest room, each of them 60m²–is both at the time: discrete and imposing, ceremonial and sparse, wide-open and introvert, transparent and opaque, luxurious and austere. As the architects once explained, the Solo House II is an exercise in making architecture out of only devices. Some of those are specially conceived by others: as the textures for the roof objects of painter Pieter Vermeersch, the mobile stool-lamp hybrids of artists Richard Venlet or the iconic "WireS#" mesh Chaise Longue of designers Muller Van Severen, all inspired by the curvatures of the house. Undoubtedly, hedonists will admire this project, but only those who can identify themselves with the motto "low resolution at its best" that's probably the most adequate characterisation of this unique and outstanding construction. (Moritz Küng)



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