

THREE'S company

Creative triplets with an eye for design share this serene space – and a passion for music, people and mohair.

By Frieda le Roux • Photographs Henrique Wilding • Stylist Marian van Wyk

The original homeowners, Evi and Jochem Elsner, bought the old teak shutters from Onsite Gallery in Cape Town. Not only do they conceal the staircase, but they also add warmth to the otherwise neutral palette.

Who lives here?
Andrea, Marion and
Claudia Wandel
WHERE Somerset West
SIZE ±350m²

Slipcovers on the couches and ottomans make for easy living. The floors are solid pine treated with a white oil from ProNature.

Rectangular cushions from Weylandts

For the German Wandel sisters, life is all about the here and now.

For them, being mindful is the key to happiness and self-expression and the spaces, light and textures in their home in Somerset West serve as a conductor for their creativity – as a collective but also as individuals.

Marion, who lives in South Africa most of the time, discovered “The White House”, as they fondly refer to their tranquil home with its view of the ocean. “We know the former owners; they said they’d never sell the house,” recalls Andrea. “But Marion always knew that one day it would be our home. And she was right!”

The sisters first came to South Africa on a vacation 15 years ago. They liked what they saw and decided to invest in property. Since then, Marion has relocated to South Africa – she only spends about one month a year in Europe – while Andrea currently divides her time between South Africa and Europe. Claudia only visits for about four weeks a year.

All three sisters studied classical music, but Andrea is the pianist. “Whenever she is in South Africa, she composes her own music in the style of the Italian pianist Ludovico Einaudi,” Marion says.

More like a holiday home

The former owners, Evi and Jochem Elsner of Home Concept, designed and built the spacious house with its high ceilings and lived there for six years before relocating to Yzerfontein. They’re friends with the Wandel sisters and have been back to the property several times – an experience Evi describes as “familiar and strange at the same time”.

The design was focused on easy living, Evi explains. That’s probably why people often say that the house feels more like a holiday home. “For us, it was just a very easy-to-live-in home with a relaxed atmosphere where we could accommodate lots of friends – and our pets loved it too! We love that it’s still a cosy, light-filled home with beautiful views.”

The Wandel sisters, who took ownership in 2016, were taken with the big open spaces that somehow never compromise on privacy. “We also fell in love with the wooden front door and the wooden frame around the window in the living room. We love every detail!”

The house is north-facing with mountain views to the north and the sea visible on the horizon. “You can see it from every window,” Andrea says. “In summer, we love to use the terrace as much as possible.”

Another spot you’ll find the sisters in during summer is on the upstairs balcony. “The big couch helps us relax and this is where we spend many lovely evenings with friends.” Thanks to its position, the balcony is protected from the summer wind. >>

The old wood of the dining table really speaks to us. When we fall in love with old furniture, we have to find a place for it! –Marion

The big mirror in the dining area was made by Jochem. Andrea says: “I just love to see the reflections from everywhere and it creates the illusion of even more space. The fabric I’ve put over it is see-through which creates a kind of three-dimensional effect.” The dining table and chairs were also ‘inherited’ from the previous owners.

Extra-long drapes hung from driftwood 'rods' with tie tops enhance the dreamy beach-house look.

A shared space

This is the first time the Wandel sisters have shared a house with an open-plan design. "The space invites you to be more creative," Andrea, a trauma therapist, says. Her sisters are psychotherapists and all three of them studied classical music: Andrea plays the piano, Marion the violin and Claudia the cello.

"We're all very creative on a musical, spiritual, emotional and mental level and all of us have our own way of expressing it."

In winter, the fireplace anchors the open-plan living area and provides warmth for the entire house. Positioned in a corner, it's visible from various different angles. "It really is the centre of our home," says Andrea.

The wood-burning concrete fireplace was designed and cast by Jochem. Thereafter, Stucco Italiano polished the rim.

Making changes

While all three sisters are artistic, Marion is the one who experiments with the décor most. "I love to play around with decoration. Everything has to look good, otherwise I don't feel at home." Andrea agrees: "We love to change things around; after all, Wandel means 'change' in German!"

The house has a neutral palette with light and dark grey as accents. A gorgeous range of mohair blankets produced by Andrea and Marion's local business MareaMarea add warmth, texture and colour. "We employ several people but for us it's a social project rather than a business," says Andrea.

The sisters are committed to their product: "I love the quality of this mohair. It's light and warm; you can wear it as a garment or use it as a blanket or as decoration," Marion explains. Andrea is quick to agree: "It is the best and lightest material you can imagine. You feel protected and safe, and it provides you with warmth in such a tender way."

Just like their lovely home. >>

A latte screen suspended from rope (below) creates some privacy at the front door.



The latte ceiling on the terrace works well with the Nutec cladding on the home's exterior (see left). The cement finish that the sisters love so much is echoed here on the floor and on sections of the wall.

Mohair shawl from MareaMarea; mohair blanket from Adèle's Mohair



Marion's bedroom, the only one on the mezzanine level, is her sanctuary. "My bedroom feels like a big ship. I work with people a lot, so I use the space to take time out and relax." The ceiling is insulated with ISN Board between the exposed rafters. The two skylights let in plenty of light; they have blinds that help keep the room cool in summer.

Mohair blankets by MareaMarea and Adèle's Mohair



STOCKISTS Adèle's Mohair adelesmohair.co.za Home Concept home-concept.co
 MareaMarea mareamarea.com Weylandts 0860 103 400, weylandts.co.za
 Onsite Gallery 021 462 1357, onsitegallery.co.za ProNature 021 556 1238, pronature.co.za Stucco Italiano 021 982 0006, stuccoitaliano.co.za



"The cabinet in the kitchen is filled with wool, buttons, needles, pearls and all kinds of little items you need to knit," Andrea says. The sisters' mother helped them to make the most of the cabinet. "It's filled with history," Andrea adds.

The bathroom on the ground level is situated next to the dressing area. The walls are finished with Stucco Italiano wall plaster.



Marion relaxes in the spacious sitting room. "We love the house because of its calm atmosphere and openness." 🏠

Floor plan

