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A MODERN BEACH HOUSE IN A PRIME SPOT IN YZERFONTEIN IS THE PICTURE OF COMFORT AND EASY LIVING.

HEAR

& NOW

PHOTOS
HENRIQUE WILDING
WORDS
AMELIA BROWN

“WE HEAR NOTHING BUT THE WAVES CRASHING AND THE SOUND OF BIRDS.”

That’s all you really want in a beach house. (But uninterrupted sea views, a designer kitchen and smart, wind-conscious layout are nice, too.) It is the connection to the environment that attracted Evi and Jochem Elsner to Yzerfontein. “We always wanted to live close to the sea and be surrounded by nature,” says Evi. “After looking up and down the coast, we found Yzerfontein. We’ve got free-roaming ostriches, tortoises, bokkies and dassies, and Cape Town is only 80 km away.”

Yzerfontein is a gem on the West Coast: a charming fishing village with a long white beach from where you can spot whales and dolphins, and abundant wildflowers in spring.

After working in Somerset West for 15 years, the property developer and interior designer duo relocated their home and business headquarters to this seaside village. They turned their attention to building homes that they would want to live in, homes that consider light and lifestyle, wind shelter and entertaining, starting with the property next door.

With a green belt front and back, the new house has guaranteed views, plus the unique curve of the coastline offers a panoramic seascape. Here, the Elsners built a barefoot beach house with three en-suite bedrooms and two large decks, one facing the sea, the other into the fynbos. It’s been cleverly orientated to beat the prevailing wind – there’s a reason Yzerfontein is so popular with kite surfers, after all.

“The challenge of being newcomers to Yzerfontein was finding suppliers and subcontractors, but I am happy to say we found everything we needed,” says Evi. “We’re very proud of creating a space where you can interact with one another or be by yourself.”

Evi describes the kitchen as the heart and the link. Flanked by frameless glass doors, the space flows seamlessly to the deck, entertainment

area and pool. Standing here and looking through the opposite doors to the fynbos beyond, it’s clear to see the structure’s interconnectedness with the landscape.

Natural materials were used in a palette of deep greys and crisp white. Whereas the rest of the house features traditional white A-frame ceilings with exposed rafters, which give the space a calming beach house atmosphere, the kitchen has a concrete bulkhead that suits its clean, modern lines.

The exterior has the satisfying simplicity and linear angles of a Monopoly house. Sharp-edged A-frame wings shelter the entertainment areas, and it’s painted in the same modern two-tone palette as the interior.

The new owners, who are from Austria, saw pictures of the house and fell for it. They love the idea of being able to just move in and feel at home. This effortless livability is a result of both the layout and Evi’s interiors. “We wanted to create a space that’s easy

to live in and maintain, while feeling relaxed and cosy.”

Perhaps the best place to listen to the house’s signature soundtrack of waves and birds is from the bath in front of doors adorned in white curtains that open directly onto the fynbos. **V**

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PREVIOUS SPREAD

01–Shelley, busy laying the places for lunch on an Oregon pine table that she lacquered in glossy black. A mix-and-match assortment of seating includes two original Panton S-shaped chairs. The cupboard is an antique South African Railways locker made of Oregon pine.

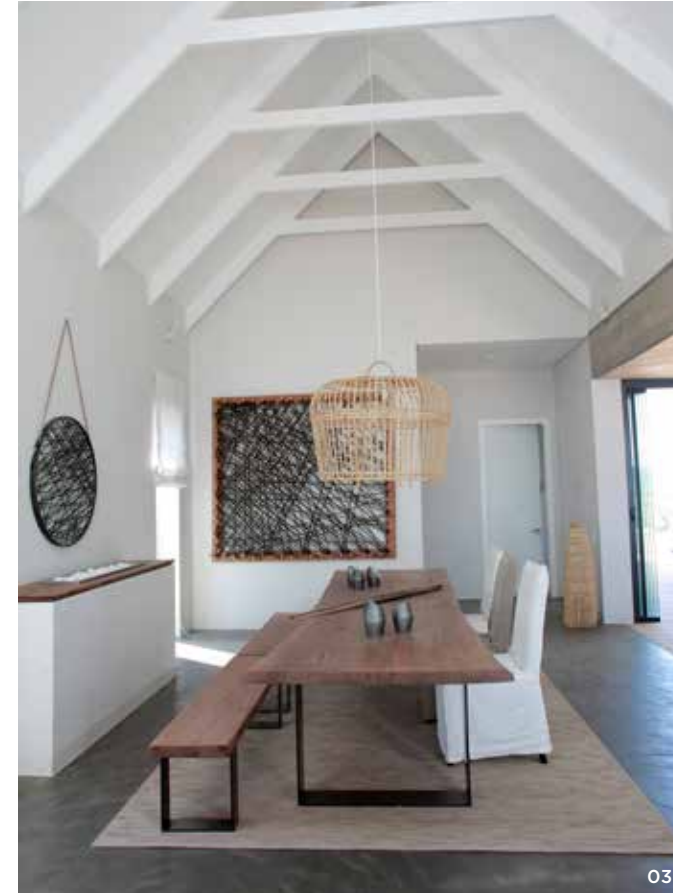
THIS SPREAD

01–A herd of wire-sculpted beaded zebra from Africa Nova.

02–Shelly made the wreath hanging from a sash window using fynbos, bits of wood, wine corks and pine cones. She spray-painted it matte black and added hand-carved wooden birds to give it a whimsical character. Other Christmas-inspired objects with a local visual identity are a laser-cut paper nativity scene by Cape Town paper artist Pauline Irvine of Artymiss, a laser-cut metal Christmas tree by Tin Town, graphic vases and a festive black-and-white bauble featuring a gecko, all from Africa Nova.



- 01- Contrasting textures and patterns: rock salt in a tapas bowl and bone salad servers on a beaded place mat and woven fabric runner, all from Africa Nova.
- 02- The open-plan kitchen is the scene of many collaborative efforts by Shelley and her daughter Phoebe. Floating shelves host everyday objects and collectibles. The palette is largely white with wood. The hanging lights are original '50s pendants. The hand-carved African chair is a favourite of Shelley's.
- 03- Shelley preserves lemons with salt a few weeks before Christmas Day to serve with fish and chicken. The fabric lid covers on the jars are shweshwe and African wax cloth cut into rounds and tied with hemp string.
- 04- In Shelley's workspace in the open-plan living area, floating shelves provide a surface for a display that incorporates black-and-white photographs, etchings that have yellowed with time, fine art illustrations and collections of found natural objects such as shells, skulls, antlers, nests, seed pods and coral.
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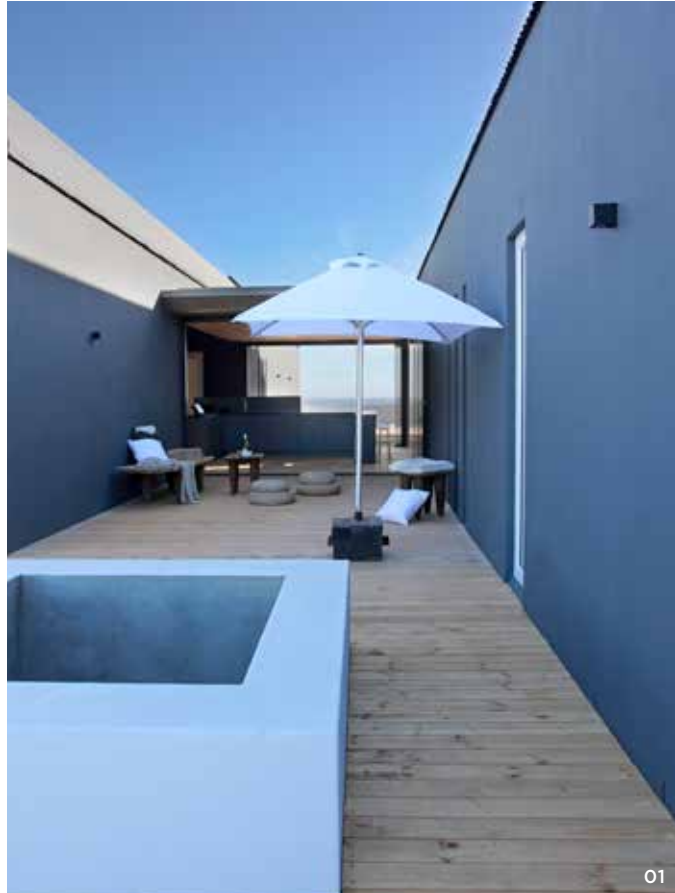


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