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PHOTOS HENRIQUE WILDING WORDS JULIA FREEMANTLE

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MARINE - MEETS - MODERN  
BEACH  
HOUSE  
ON  
THE  
WEST COAST  
EMBRACES  
OPEN  
SPACES  
AND  
A  
PEACEFUL  
PALETTE  
FOR  
THE  
ULTIMATE  
LOW-KEY  
RETREAT.



**THIS PAGE** This private escape in the coastal haven of Yzerfontein has been cleverly configured to maximise sea and vegetation views, with as many open spaces and unbroken vantage points as possible. **OPPOSITE** The house's spectacular setting comprises the endless fynbos covering the neighbouring reserve, the Atlantic Ocean and Table Mountain in the distance.

**A N  
I N T I M A T E  
U N D E R S T A N D I N G**

**O F** has made Evi Elsner something of an expert when it comes to creating beach homes in this idyllic enclave. Originally from Germany, Evi and her husband Jochem lived in Somerset West for 15 years before relocating to Yzerfontein, where they established themselves as sought-after dream-house developers. Combining architectural, interior design and building skills, the husband-and-wife team found a winning formula: **T H E S M A L L C O A S T A L T O W N O F** Home Concept, their business, starts from the ground up, quite literally. They find a special piece of land, plan and design the structure, furnish the space, and only then find a buyer. The house is handed over complete, down to cutlery in the kitchen drawers and food in the fridge. This unique model allows Evi the freedom to design unencumbered – a strategy that’s proven to be very successful. After their first Yzerfontein house was completed, a waiting list formed for turnkey spaces, signalling a real demand for this kind of service.

**Y Z E R F O N T E I N** For this particular project, a buyer was already in the wings: having narrowly missed out on the first two properties, he committed to buying whatever Evi and Jochem created next. With views of the fynbos-covered neighbouring reserve, the Atlantic Ocean and Table Mountain in the distance, the plot drove the design – private, perfectly positioned, pristine. “It all starts with the property,” says Evi. “Once we find the location, everything else follows.”

Step two is designing the structure to work harmoniously with the plot, with the primary focus on framing the views. But, Evi cautions, you can’t get swept up in the beauty without considering climatic realities. And this is where the pair’s local knowledge of the area is a great asset. “Before I start planning, I get to know the plot – I sit and see the sun, feel the wind,” Evi says.

This piece of land, like many in Yzerfontein, was long and narrow, requiring some creativity. “The design needed to shelter the house from wind, provide privacy and maximise views,” she says. Screed floors were a pragmatic choice; all the rooms are lofty (they never design a space with less than three-metre ceilings); and the layout is open-plan, giving it a generous sense of space. “People from Europe, especially, don’t have a lot of room – it’s the ultimate luxury, so we wanted to emphasise it,” says Evi.

This is accentuated with monochrome architectural detailing and minimal embellishment. Black aluminium doors and a flat roof lend a crisp, clean feel to the structure, allowing the location to remain the focus, and the spaces to flow. The location inspired the final decor layer too, with Evi’s signature neutral toolbox of textures and tones allowing a continuation of the inside-outside flow. But her holistic approach often sees her acquiring pieces before the spaces are even complete. “When I see something interesting, I buy it and keep it in storage,” she says. “We design from the inside out, in a way – the pieces can sometimes shape the house on the outside.”

Regardless of the order of events, Evi always takes the same approach: designing something she’d personally love to live in. “I don’t think a house should be trendy,” she says. A mix of finds crafted by local artisans, one-off antiques and contemporary pieces, with an emphasis on natural textures, give her spaces an organic feel. “Our houses all look different, but they have the same feeling,” she says.

And that feeling is an encompassing sense of peace. As Evi sums it up, “Life is hectic as it is, so people are happy to find themselves somewhere calming.” **home-concept.cc**

“ONCE WE FIND THE LOCATION, EVERYTHING ELSE FOLLOWS.” - DESIGNER EVI ELSNER



**ABOVE, FROM LEFT** Designer Evi Elsner’s monochrome palette was applied to the exterior as well as the decor for a crisp, clean effect; the long, narrow site dictated the layout of the house; inside/outside flow allows for maximum enjoyment of the unparalleled position. **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP** In-depth knowledge of the location allowed Evi to plan for the best possible sun, wind and view orientation; the pared-back vision for the house was, in part, to allow the setting to remain the primary focus.





**THIS PAGE** Always averse to anything “trendy”, Evi’s ethos is timeless, simple design. **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP** Concrete screed floors, neutral tones and sparse furnishings create a breezy, low-maintenance feel throughout the open-plan space; Evi combined an eclectic selection of pieces (ranging from artisanal finds to contemporary accessories), which resulted in a layered and curated - albeit simple - scheme.





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THIS PAGE Earthy textures and artisanal textiles in the bedroom serve to emphasise the link to the natural beauty of the site. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Evi considers a sense of space and immersion in nature to be the ultimate luxuries, and seeks to optimise these qualities in her projects - even the bathroom is generously proportioned, with an outdoor element; Home Concept's primary focus when planning the architecture is to frame the views perfectly.

