



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT A mixture of colour and pattern gives the living room a dynamic personality; sliding timber doors open up to join the living room with the creative hub, dining room and kitchen; the walls in the main en suite were hand-painted; textured brass panels by Bronze Age create interest on the covered verandah; a view of the greenbelt

Natural Habitat

SET DEEP IN THE HEART OF THE CONSTANTIA GREENBELT, A SPACIOUS YET COMPACT FAMILY HOME BURSTS WITH LAYERS OF VIBRANT COLOUR AND COOL LOCAL DESIGN

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LIVING WITH DESIGN

'It was of the utmost importance to our clients that we created a highly energy-efficient home,' explains architect Wynand Wilsenach. 'There is a perception that such a home requires reams of unsightly technology, but this is not necessarily the case. Much of a home's energy use can be mitigated through clever design features – such

as overhangs on the exterior to prevent too much sun from entering the interior – which can be designed neatly and elegantly. If the climate at the location is considered in the planning stages of a project, then the design itself can work to maximise temperature and light regulation, minimising bulky and unattractive systems.'



n this Cape Town dwelling – part pastoral homestead, part designer den – a delicate balancing act has been expertly achieved. While interior designer Andrea Graff's lively and spirited eccentric style is undeniably evident, it lives in great harmony with the proportions of architect Wynand Wilsenach's clean and contemporary barn-like design.

With their clients calling for a relaxed and family-friendly approach, Wynand and Andrea worked together to create layered spaces with depth and comfort, drawing inspiration from the home's location. For Wynand, this was expressed in the form of large open spaces, several overhead skylights, stackable doors and the use of natural materials.

'Thanks to the spectacularly wind-still site, which is completely protected from the southeaster, we were able to open up the entire front façade of the house, creating an envelope that could maximise the connection to the mountains and valleys and make the most of the fantastic views,' he says. 'In doing so, we tried to use elements that were as natural as possible, such as stone and timber – they get better with age due to the patina that develops during their life cycle.'

In the same vein, Andrea gave careful consideration to wall treatments, using honest, simple finishes that wouldn't date. The bathrooms are an example of this. One en suite is clad head-to-toe in rich natural timber, which exudes masculine luxury, while the other is hand-painted, suggesting a gentle femininity. 'The chinoiserie-style walls in the main bathroom are hand-

FROM TOP The house uses solar panels on the roof and an eco-friendly pool to increase energy efficiency. The garden was created by landscape designer Francesca Watson; a feature light by Private Collections is a focal point above a Pierre Cronje table in the dining room



With pergolas that filter light and generously proportioned outdoor furniture by Marlantek, this veranda is the ideal spot for summer braais and lazy lounging



Wenge timber cladding adds masculine sophistication to the second en-suite bathroom

‘painted in tones that bring out the magnificent garden that’s so easily accessible from the indoor spaces.’

Another core element influencing the direction of the design was the clients’ desire for an energy-efficient home. To this end, the house features double glazing on doors and windows, extra insulation in cavity walls, solar panels on the roof as well as heat pumps and a ducted air-conditioning system, all selected for their energy efficiency.

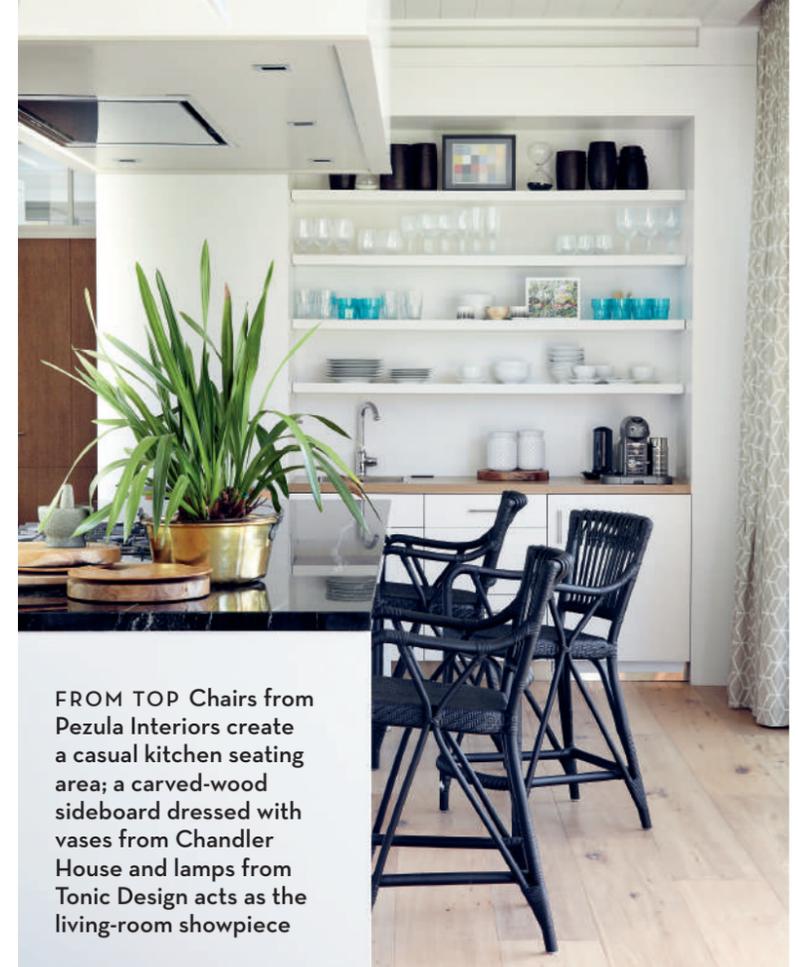
A sun study using software to determine how much sunlight will penetrate the house at different times of the year was used to determine the overhangs and orientations of the home’s openings. ‘We included stacking shutters and pergolas on the exterior to minimise heat gain during summer. We tried to hide all this technology from view as far as possible,’ Wynand explains.

When it came to the interior, Andrea’s discerning style combined with the clients’ love of art, photography and local design led the way. ‘My approach is completely layered – the house is like a treasure trove of finds,’ she says. ‘I was fortunate in that these clients know what they like and don’t like and we had fun choosing one-off pieces and designing custom furniture and handmade local items.’

Andrea’s ‘treasure trove of finds’ includes recognisable prints by local ceramic and fabric house Ardmore, a bronze-clad feature wall in the covered patio and custom-designed cabinetry by Cape Town furniture designer James Mudge in the ‘creative hub’. All of this is interspersed with one-off antiques for an air of transcendent originality.

The layout of the home is designed around the central creative hub – a space for the kids to sit and do homework while the owner cooks in the kitchen. Situated in the middle of the house, so that the family can talk, interact and work together, all other functions are designed to operate around this. ‘The house looks huge from the outside, but it is totally compact and the flow works brilliantly,’ says Andrea. ‘But what really stands out for me is that this house feels like it was built long ago and is simply ageing gracefully.’

■ **Andrea Graff Interior Design**
📍 andregraff.com; Wynand Wilsenach Architects 📍 wz.co.za



FROM TOP Chairs from Pezula Interiors create a casual kitchen seating area; a carved-wood sideboard dressed with vases from Chandler House and lamps from Tonic Design acts as the living-room showpiece

