

ONE AND ONLY



BUILT IN THE *early noughties*, THIS CAPE TOWN HOME *quickly attained iconic status* – AND ITS OWNERS, THE *founders of global furniture brand Linteloo*, STILL LOVE IT JUST AS MUCH *as they did when they first moved in*

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As you make your way from Cape Town's buzzing CBD up into the leafy vales of Higgovale on the slopes of Table Mountain, a forest canopy of trees helps create a magical ambience, where the sound of the city is dimmed. It's this restful otherworldliness, just five minutes from the city centre, that encouraged international furniture superstar Jan te Lintelo and his partner Lars Nikolajsen to buy and build here almost 20 years ago.

The duo were on their second visit to the Mother City, and the city had drawn them in. 'From our first visit, we were in love,' says Lars. 'We were drawn to the food and restaurants, the feeling of optimism, the weather – and we met great people almost immediately, so we came back. Of course, like everyone who falls in love with a place, we started to look at property.'

Try as they might, though, they battled to find something that spoke to them. 'We had seen the work of Anya van der Merwe and Macio Miszewski of Van Der Merwe Miszewski Architects elsewhere in Higgovale, and we really liked their aesthetic, but there was nowhere to build anything. Then an agent took us to see the last plot in Higgovale,' says Lars. 'That nobody wanted to buy,' laughs Jan.

The 'plot' in question was actually three adjacent erven – an overgrown spot with a stream gushing through it in the winter months – and the landscape is effectively a sharp and narrow ravine defined by large boulders and a lush forest of trees. Needless to say, it did not appear to be particularly habitable. 'But we absolutely loved the forest and the site's wildness, and we knew that if anyone could make it work, Van Der Merwe Miszewski could,' says Lars. Serendipitously, Van der Merwe had played in the ravine as a child and after a few months of planning, the studio presented a meticulously made model proposing its masterful solution for the tricky mountainside site.

The aim was to save as many trees and rocks as possible, and to have as little impact on the environment as could be achieved. 'It is such a privilege to be so close to nature, and we really wanted our home to be at one with its surrounds,' says Jan. The result is a gorgeous testament to the skills of the architects and a space that is cradled by nature, providing its globetrotting owners (their other home is in Lugano, Switzerland) with essential respite from their busy schedules. 'We try to get here every few months; it recharges us. We just love it – and we love having people to stay here,' says Lars.

And what's not to love? Wherever you are in this extraordinary three-storey space, it's as if you can reach out and touch the forest outside. >



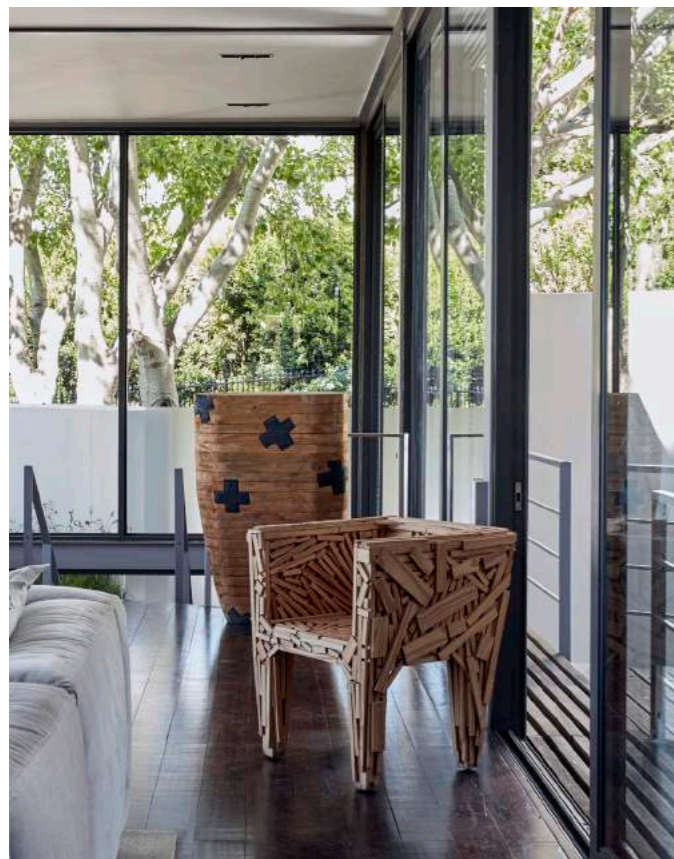
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Connecting the three levels of Jan te Lintelo and Lars Nikolajsen's Higgovale house in Cape Town is a red, black and white collage that South African artist Strijdom van der Merwe created especially for the space; wooden panels in the kitchen echo the surrounding landscape.

PREVIOUS SPREAD
Conceptualised by Van Der Merwe Miszewski Architects, the forested home was designed to have as little impact on the environment as possible.

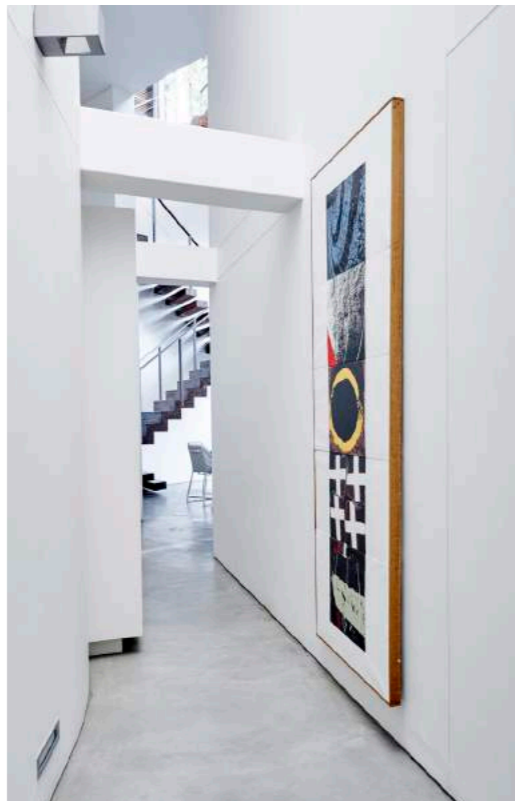


HOUSE higgovale

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In the right-hand corner of the dining area stands a Van der Merwe work, the first bought by the couple. The sculpture on the round table is by local artist Francois van Reenen and is entitled 'Big Blue Dog'. Inspired by the classic Chanel handbag, the Quilted Kekke chairs are by Piet Boon (pietboon.com), a Dutch design company known for its subtle Italian stitching.



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Backing the glass door of the living area is a wooden sculpture, also by Van der Merwe, whose natural texture is reflected in a Favela chair by Brazilian designers the Campana Brothers for Edra (edra.com); the Southampton modular sofa by Linteloo will be available soon from Weylandts (weylandts.co.za). Continuing the wooden theme is a Manhattan coffee table by Roderick Vos for Linteloo, while the white ceramic sidetables were found at Art in the Forest (artintheforest.com). The small Belle Fauteuil chair at the front right is by Piet Boon; an Indy easy chair by Vos for Linteloo is the ideal spot from which to admire the greenery outside.



Oversized panes of glass let in the green, while sliding wooden screens provide privacy and protection from the sun. There are plenty of pockets for admiring the environment, whether these are on the sun-splashed terrace, in the upstairs living room or from one of the three bedroom suites. All the interior fittings were custom-designed to suit the space, and thanks to the combination of clean lines, timber trims and charcoal steel beams used in its construction, this home – locally known as ‘Bridge House’ – looks set to remain a timeless and iconic piece of South African design.

The abode also plays host to a significant collection of local contemporary art. Jan and Lars have an expert eye for engaging pieces, which they have been acquiring since they decided to put down roots in South Africa. Many of the artworks in the house are early pieces by artists who are now highly regarded, and are testament to the couple's ability to spot talent at first glance. ‘We’ve worked closely with a few contemporary gallerists in the Cape, and over time, we’ve also commissioned a few pieces,’ says Lars. ‘Our biggest driving factor is that we like artworks with a strong story behind them. We never buy for status – it’s always been for the interesting narratives, people and circumstances behind the pieces.’

The collection is, to say the least, extensive and ranges from a magnificent Lionel Smit oil painting that dominates the stairwell to an oversized hare by acclaimed sculptor Guy du Toit. And it’s evident that the couple gleans much joy from sharing their many tales of discovery. ‘Many of the artists have ended up being our friends too,’ says Jan.

While Bridge House is a remarkable piece of architecture, it’s also a home in which its owners joyfully celebrate the fact that they are friends of the arts – and that the people who create the arts are friends of theirs. linteloo.com; vdmma.com



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Lars and Jan are friends of the arts, ‘and many of the artists have ended up being our friends, too,’ says Jan; another collage by Van der Merwe hangs in the passageway; the sculpture in the garden is ‘Grounded’ by Angus Taylor, and was built on on site using mud, moss, steel and stone; in the bedroom, two small artworks by Shany van den Berg are exhibited on a shelf above the bed, and the wall beyond is adorned with a painting of a bull by Gregory Kerr.

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To the left of the bed sits a Minne chair by Piet Boon as well as a Delft Blue No. 02 lidded vase by Marcel Wanders for Moooi (moooi.com). All vases in Wanders’ Delft collection are produced and decorated at Royal Delft, the Dutch company behind the original Delft Blue ceramics.