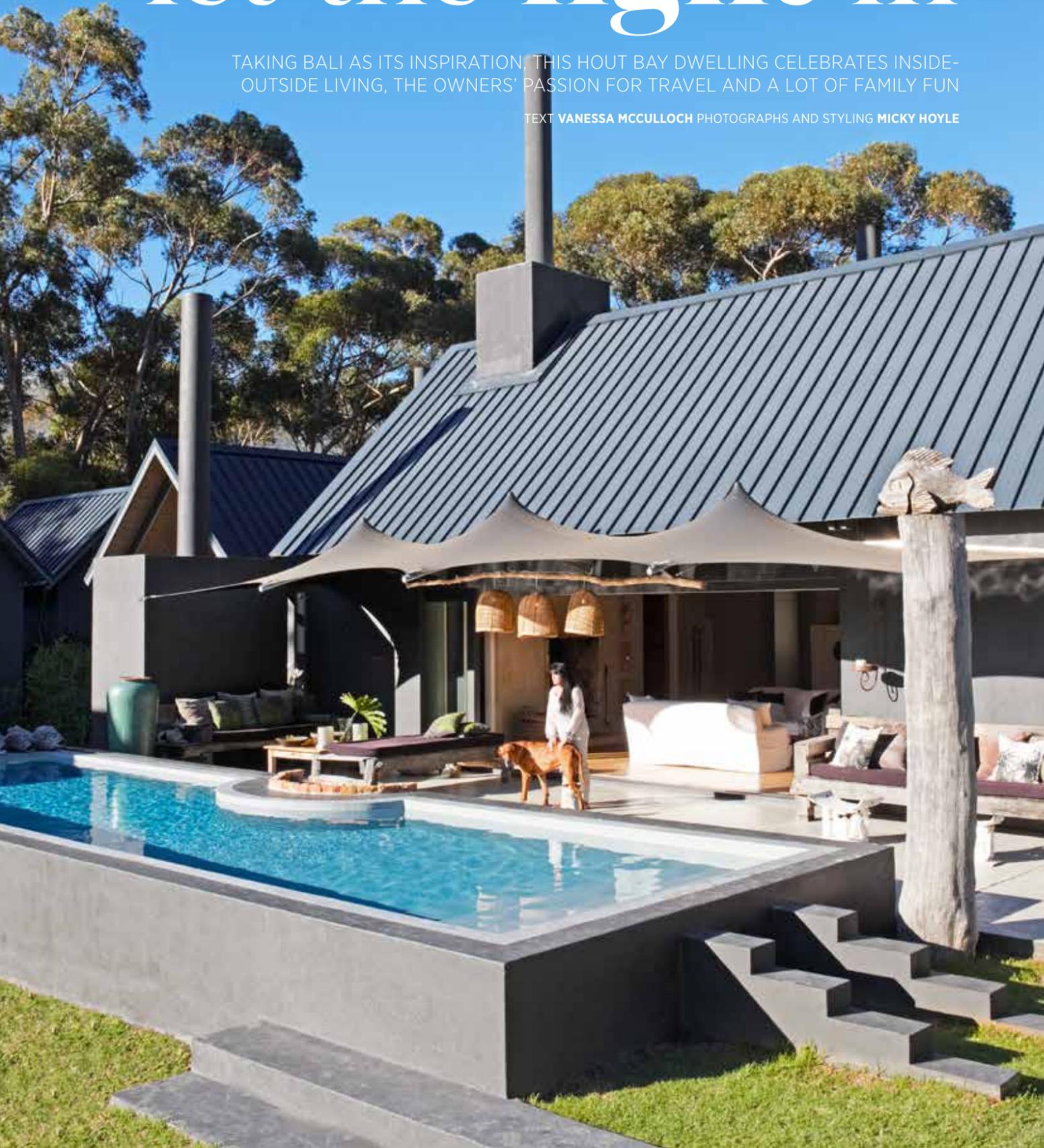


# let the light in

TAKING BALI AS ITS INSPIRATION, THIS HOUT BAY DWELLING CELEBRATES INSIDE-OUTSIDE LIVING, THE OWNERS' PASSION FOR TRAVEL AND A LOT OF FAMILY FUN

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OPPOSITE Nicole Brunda-Cloete with Tommy on the expansive balcony of the Hout Bay home she shares with her husband Herman and their kids John-Paul, Jamaica and Angeliq. THIS PAGE The main bathroom opens right up to the leafy surrounds.

The view of the house as you descend the driveway. Rather than building up, the house is spread out over the plot. OPPOSITE The view from the TV room across the moat into the dining room. A lot of the decor items were sourced on Nicole and Herman's travels.



Some of our friends thought we were mad when we told them our plans for the house,' says Nicole Brunda-Cloete of the Hout Bay, Cape Town, home she shares with her husband Herman and their three children – John-Paul (19), Jamaica (17) and Angelique (11) – three dogs and three cats. Rather than a single homestead, it is spread out almost like a village or an African kraal, interspersed with intimate courtyards and koi-filled ponds. There's even a mini beach, with palm tree, deck chairs and Balinese umbrellas. As film-makers for National Geographic, Nicole and Herman's office is wherever the job takes them. They viewed the Hout Bay plot during a brief stay in Cape Town while they were based in India filming the dolphins in the River Ganges. Although it was set up against the northern slopes of Table Mountain, the light and views were blotted out by sky-

high blue gums. Undeterred, they bought it that very afternoon. The couple had a shared vision. Out of all the many countries that have inspired them, it was Bali that they wanted to come home to. 'We were sitting in a restaurant with a bottle of wine and we started drawing a plan,' says Herman. They still have the serviette that they sketched on. 'We knew the feel that we wanted, but we didn't know how to put it together.' That's where architect Paolo Deliperi stepped in, and the 'kraal' concept was born. 'It's like lots of small buildings that are all interconnected,' he explains. Public and private areas are roughly divided with all four bedrooms (there's a downstairs 'cottage' too) on one side of the property and living areas on the other. The children's bedrooms are like mini Balinese villas, each decorated in its own style, with indoor and outdoor showers. Climb up a ladder and you're in a loft-style living area

with doors that lead onto a communal roof garden. The main bedroom, Nicole's 'oasis' complete with its own living area, is right at the end of the house. All the glass doors (some an enormous three-metres high) slide back into the walls, so that in summer the house opens up. 'The courtyards are treated like rooms left open to the sky,' explains Paolo. Nicole compares it to being in 'an amphitheatre, with the view pouring into every room'. The design involves a complex interplay of the four elements. 'You've got water and five fireplaces,' says Paolo. 'The courtyards are related to the open air, and then the earth is how the house is grounded on the land.' There's also a fire pit that extends out into the pool, so fire and water can exist side by side. Nicole describes how they light it in the evening, have a last dip in the pool and then lie around the fire. The earth element also comes through in the use of stone and wood in the design.▷





CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE Architect Paolo Deliperi, accompanied by Skuzi the Jack Russell, walks along the decking from the front door. Behind is the TV room, which is the mirror image of the dining area. The glass doors are three-metres high; Nicole in the outside dining area with Tommy. Herman made much of the furniture, including this tabletop, from the original blue gums on the property. 'I've realised that I can't show him a picture of a piece of furniture,' says Nicole, 'because he won't let you buy it. He'll go off and make it!'; the beach area has loungers, Balinese umbrellas and a Jacuzzi. 'It's like this little piece of paradise,' says Nicole; in a shaded poolside spot, Malawian fishing baskets are repurposed as lights. The turquoise urn is from Weylandts (weylandts.co.za).



The stonemason sourced the rock for the fireplaces and exterior from around the property, and Herman, a cameraman by trade, made the floorboards himself from the mountainous piles of felled blue gums. Nicole thought he was joking when he suggested it. He then moved on to furniture: among other pieces he crafted the imposing outside table from the trunk of the largest tree that once stood in the middle of the property.

The house is always full, says Nicole cheerfully, showing the walk-in fridge that is filled on a Friday and empty by Sunday. Unsurprisingly, the home is a magnet for their children's friends. Not that you'd notice. 'I thought that they had left home but they're still here,' Herman jokes. 'Every two weeks you bump into one!'

But that's testimony to the way that the house accommodates a tumble of barking dogs, and an ebb and flow of teenagers, while maintaining privacy for all and its Zen quality both inside and out. 'People didn't think it was possible to achieve what we have with this house,' says Herman. 'But we did it.' **Paolo Deliperi, pdarchitect.co.za**



LEFT The main bedroom is Nicole's 'oasis' complete with its own living room. Behind the bed is a central fireplace and in front of the bed doors open out onto the 'beach' area. Half of the wood from the largest gum tree on the property was used for the flooring. RIGHT One particularly dreamy space is Nicole's bathroom where she can fold the windows back, lie in the bath and watch the moonrise over the mountains. BELOW The koi swimming among their larger carved cousins at the front of the house. The water connects all the way around the one side of the house. Nicole has divided the ponds into age groups: 'That's nursery, that one's primary school and this is high school.'



**NICOLE & HERMAN'S HOME TRUTHS**  
**In warmer weather** it's like the inside and the outside are one. With all the doors open, the mountains and the moon seem to creep in (Nicole); the doors are open and the kids are everywhere. They love swimming with the koi because they'll follow you in the water and you can touch them (Herman). **My favourite space in the house is** our bedroom - where I can close the door and be peaceful. My bathroom and dressing room are also pretty spectacular! (Nicole); the kitchen area. I love cooking and baking, and sitting by the fire. This is the place where everyone comes together (Herman). **My best travel destination?** Bali and Africa. Both have an amazing energy. Bali for the people, the craftsmanship and the architecture. Africa for the bush, the wide, open spaces and wildlife (Nicole and Herman). **A home must be** a refuge, a place where you feel that nothing can touch you, where you can just enjoy being with family and friends (Nicole). **I love** the roof garden. It has jaw-dropping views over Constantia Nek. Herman was very clever using the space (Nicole); that Nicole painted the house black. She had them paint about 20 different samples and each time it got darker and darker, it worried me that the house would look depressing. In the end we went with New York (the darkest black) and I could not imagine the house any other colour. It's incredible against the green forest (Herman). **I'm excited for summer because** we started planting fruit trees when we first cleared the land. We are anticipating a bumper crop. Strawberries, blueberries and figs; there's nothing better than picking fresh lettuce and tomatoes (Nicole).

