

# Global fusion

**WONDERFUL FOOD** and **PRIVACY**  
are just two of the drawcards of the  
**VILLA MAISON NOIR**  
in Hout Bay.

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01 Looking down on Maison Noir, it's easy to see the architect's vision of a kraal encircling a village.





erched on a mountain slope in Hout Bay is an Indonesian-inspired villa grounded in African tradition. Architect Paolo Deliperi incorporated elements of traditional Balinese architecture, and linked together nine A-framed "huts" of various sizes in an L-shaped "village" that's partially enclosed by a circular retaining wall in a nod to an African kraal.

Originally commissioned by the previous owners, a family with three teenagers, the house was designed as a resort with privacy in mind, Paolo says. "There is a distinct difference

between the private and public domains, and the privacy of each bedroom is ensured by the staggering of the buildings."

At capacity, Maison Noir accommodates 10 people in 3 integrated bungalows and a master bedroom that is large enough to be a home on its own. With a guest-to-staff ratio of nearly 1:1, the guesthouse can cater for every whim with hands-on service, or the ever-attentive staff can fade into the background if guests so wish.

"We wanted to create a full-blown experience of indulgent service at your own exclusive villa," explains owner Jim Brett, "complete with concierge, chef and a Mercedes Sprinter to ferry you around town."

"Indonesia and South Africa are two of my favourite countries," Jim says. "The Balinese are known for their high service levels and serene settings, whereas South Africa has an incredible fusion of culture – I love the energy and optimism of the people here – and

I wanted Maison Noir to represent all that."

Far from the glitz and glamour of touristic Camps Bay, Brett points out, Hout Bay is a peaceful place to engage in an authentic environment. "You can experience complete privacy here, disappear if you want to, or step out and discover a typical slice of life."

As the president of US-based furniture retailer West Elm, Brett first came to South Africa to source crafts from African artisans, and says he was enthralled by what he discovered. Now, he has turned to those same artists – such as ceramicist Anthony Shapiro – to make one-off pieces for Maison Noir.

Already there are expansion plans for another villa on the site in the form of tree houses integrated into the steep mountainside and to convert an existing house further up the mountain into a spa. Moreover, the adjoining lot has been acquired with plans to turn it into a vegetable and fruit garden – Maison Noir is, after all, highly acclaimed for its food.

"It's all about Charisse," says Jim, referring to resident chef Charisse Nel. "If you read the Airbnb reviews you'll see that although we make bookings for our guests at Cape Town's best restaurants, the best meal of their trip is always Charisse's."

Charisse serves up rustic meals that celebrate flavours derived from unusual pairings and African influences – such as her chicken stuffed with ostrich. "It's all about what happens in your mouth," she says. "I am constantly dreaming about what I am going to prepare for my guests."

Many guests choose to spend time in the kitchen with Charisse, enjoying cooking lessons or at the very least partaking of her renowned crayfish braai.

"Often, we have guests arrive with an itinerary full of ambitious plans," says Charisse, "and they end up abandoning those plans in favour of staying at the villa." ✓

- [maisonnoir.co.za](http://maisonnoir.co.za)
- [pdarchitect.co.za](http://pdarchitect.co.za)
- [westelm.com](http://westelm.com)



If you'd like to go on a tour of Maison Noir with VISI and Saint-Gobain, visit [visi.co.za](http://visi.co.za) for details or e-mail [events@visi.co.za](mailto:events@visi.co.za).



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01 Candle-lit lanterns hang from a thorn tree just outside the kitchen.

02 A semi-circular hallway that connects all the rooms doubles as a casual lounge, featuring Federico Otero-designed Cocoon fireplaces, a couch covered in Ardmore fabric and soft chairs by Ronel Jordaan.

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**01** As with most rooms in the villa, the main lounge features high ceilings and fully retractable pocket doors that lead to the heated lap pool and Jacuzzi. The coffee table was made by the previous owner, who's a carpenter. The sofas were custom-made for Maison Noir by Ascot Upholstery in Cape Town.

**02** A long hallway, in which resident pup Bella lounges, connects the living rooms and kitchen areas with the bedrooms. Masks from the African Market in Johannesburg adorn the wall.

**03** The art of eating is taken seriously at the villa, and dinners are sumptuous affairs – for the palette as well as the eye. The crockery, which features a golden koi, was specially designed by Mervyn Gers. For every plate, bowl and cup there's a more demure ironstone twin for mixing and matching.

**04** In winter, the smaller lounge is a good place to curl up by the fire with a good book, and in summer the doors can be flung open to invite the outside in.



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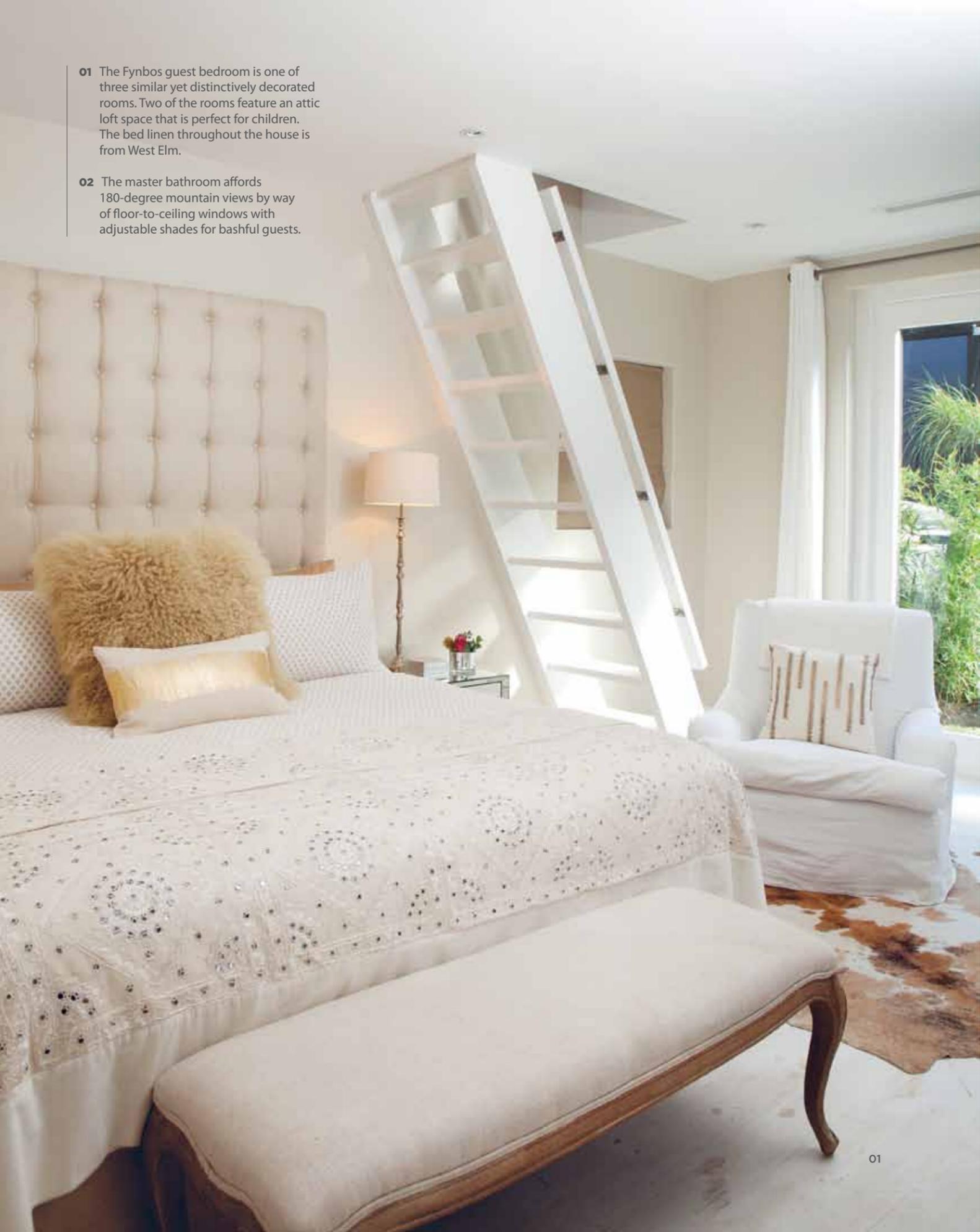
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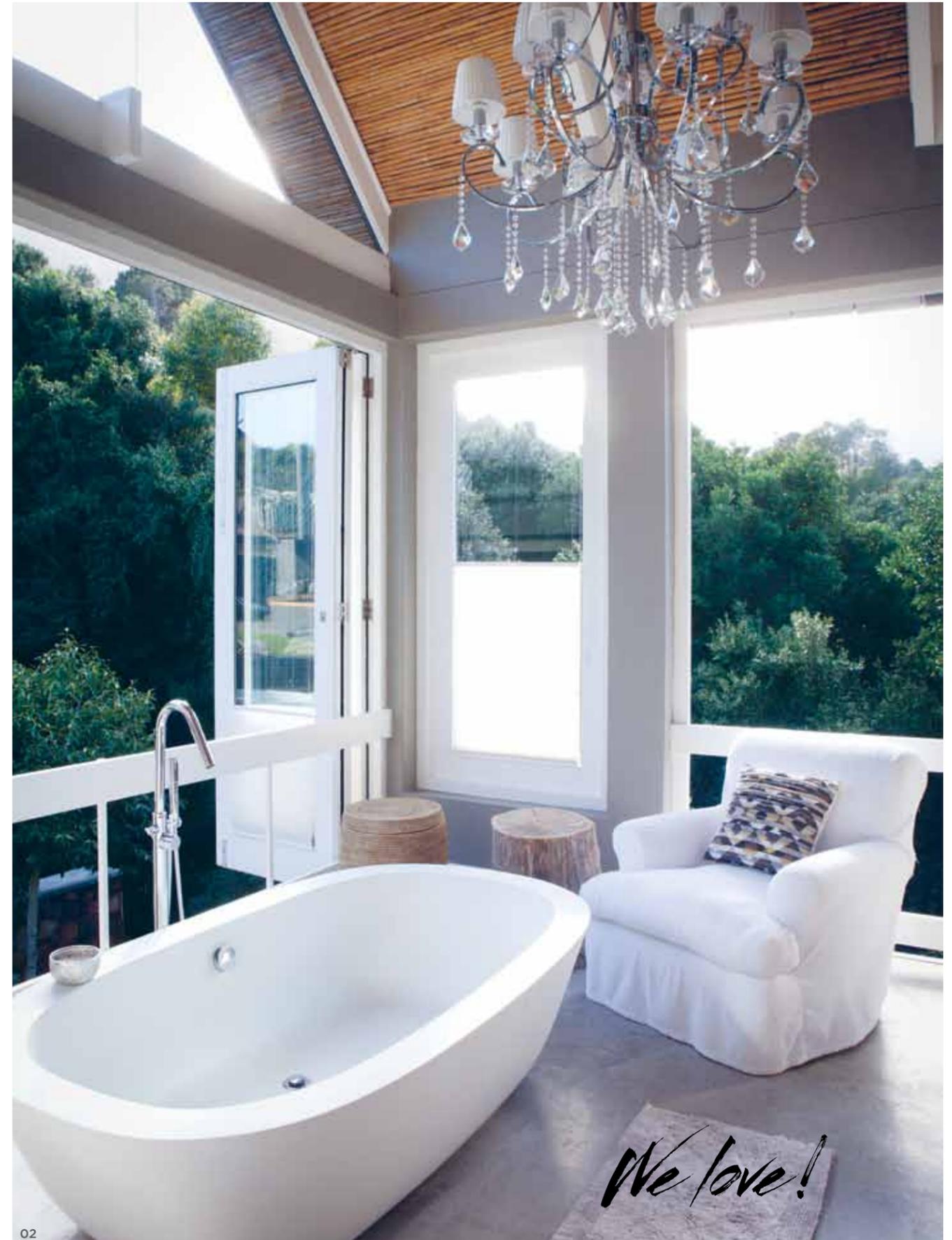
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- 01** A sitting Buddha presides over the inner pond, where koi glide gracefully through the water.
- 02** Glass Buddha heads lend to the feeling of serenity created by the constant sound of running water on the indoor/outdoor lanai.
- 03** The lanai is where incoming guests are welcomed with a platter of local cheeses and cured meats, home-made breads and South African wines.
- 04** The main entrance is accessed via a boardwalk that spans a large pond surrounding half the building, making it appear to float among the water lilies and papyrus. The window allows a glimpse into the small lounge.

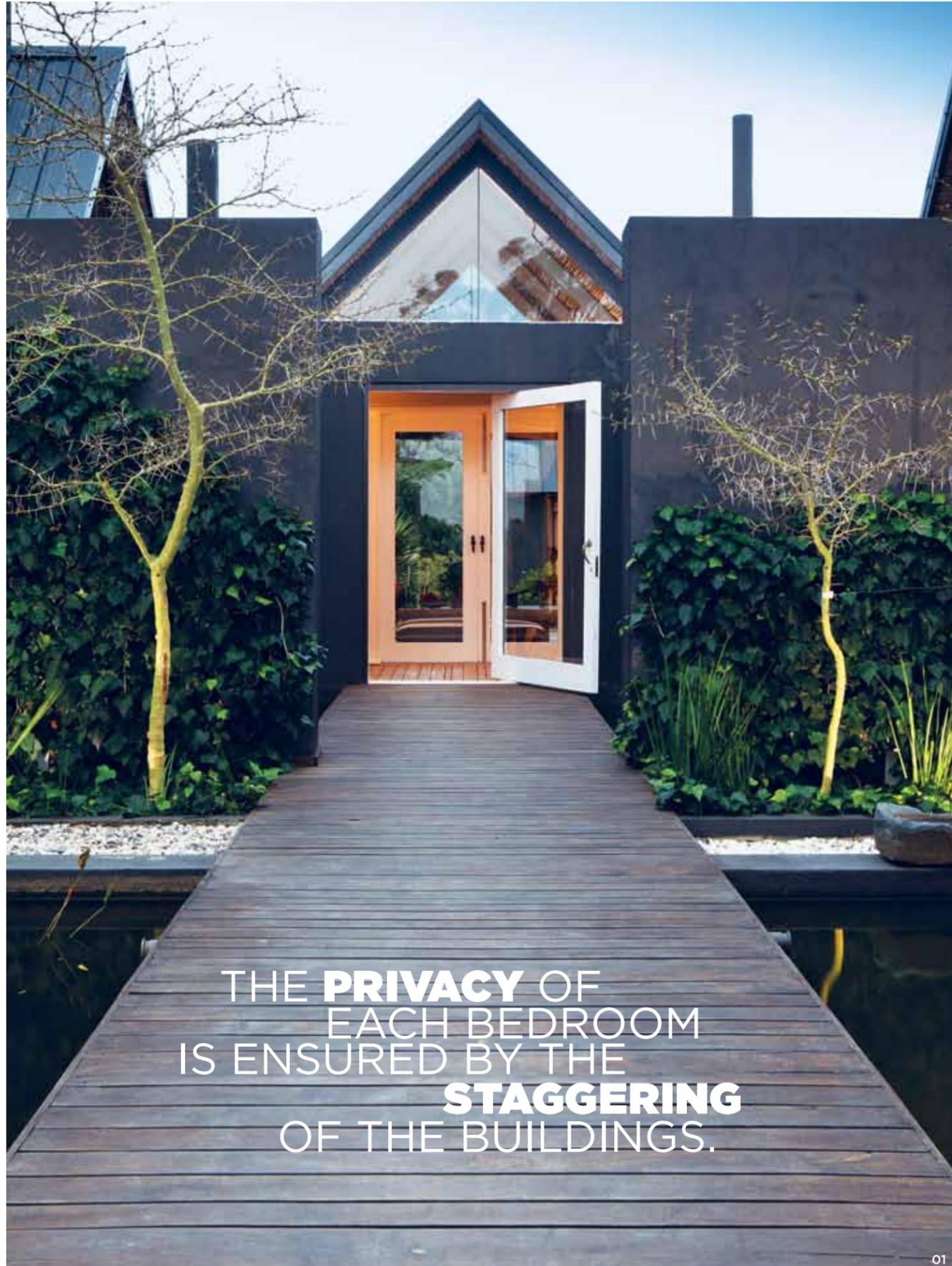
- 01 The Fynbos guest bedroom is one of three similar yet distinctively decorated rooms. Two of the rooms feature an attic loft space that is perfect for children. The bed linen throughout the house is from West Elm.
- 02 The master bathroom affords 180-degree mountain views by way of floor-to-ceiling windows with adjustable shades for bashful guests.



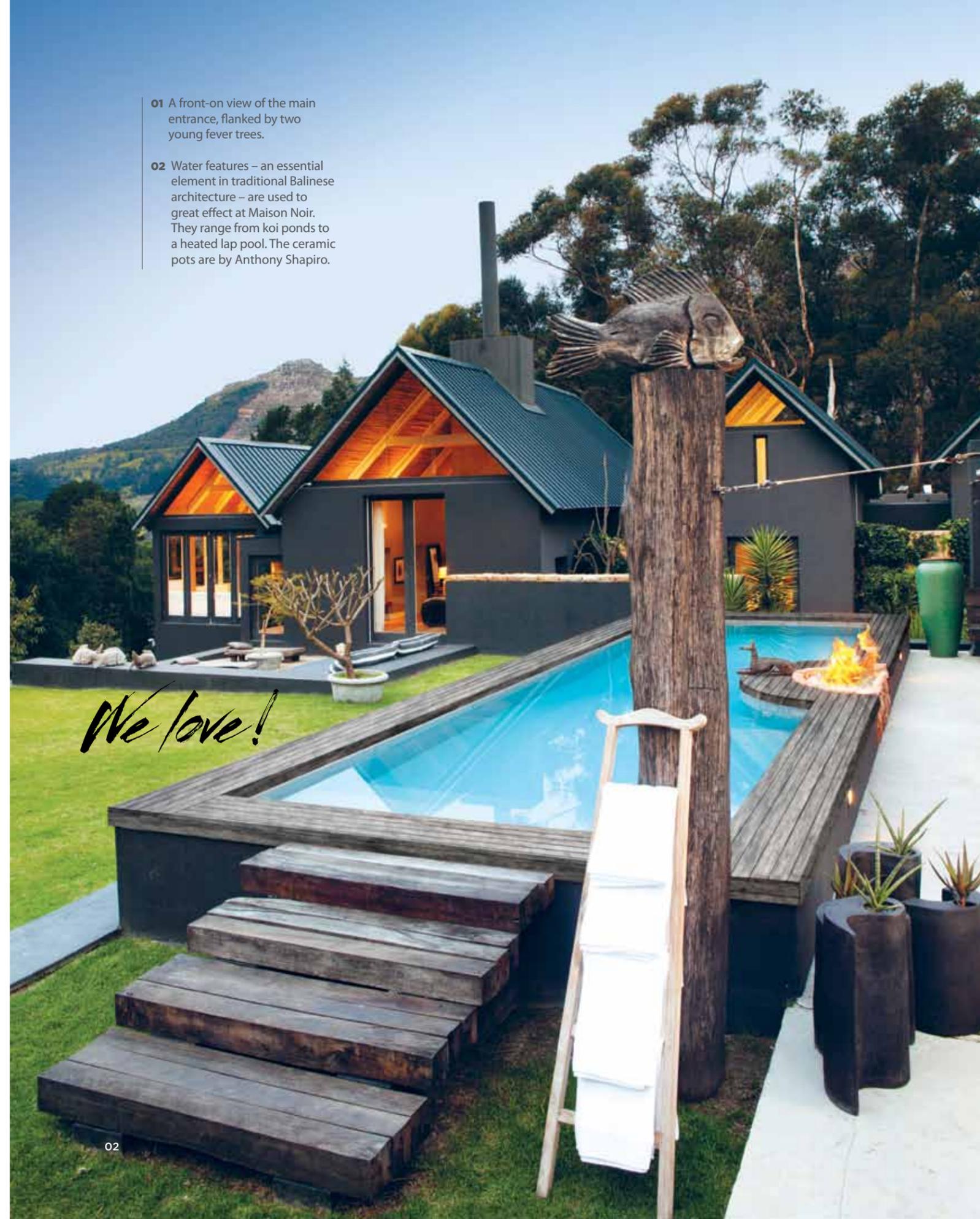
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THE **PRIVACY** OF  
EACH BEDROOM  
IS ENSURED BY THE  
**STAGGERING**  
OF THE BUILDINGS.



- 01 A front-on view of the main entrance, flanked by two young fever trees.
- 02 Water features – an essential element in traditional Balinese architecture – are used to great effect at Maison Noir. They range from koi ponds to a heated lap pool. The ceramic pots are by Anthony Shapiro.

*We love!*