

spaces



# effortless living

The house is unimposing, with the modesty of a farmhouse that alludes to simpler times. However, it's anything but old fashioned, instead we discovered a modern, cool and calming space with the occasional gleam of high-end finishes and a hint of Joburg gloss

**Words** Diana Tipping Woods **Photos** Hilton Kotze, Anthon Wessells





“Its overall design translates into an understated, comfortable family home in the bush,” says architect Reiner Förtsch from Förtsch+Associates. Homeowner Sean Flynn confirms that this is exactly what he and his wife Desirée wanted from their four-bedroom house on Zandspruit Bush and Aero Estate in Hoedspruit. It’s a space that suits their family, lifestyle and interests. “We never conform. We’ve built a house that’s right for us,” says Sean.

After visiting the Lowveld regularly for about 15 years, the family knew what they wanted from a bush house and each choice was a conscious one. “In Joburg we live in an apartment. We had a house, but on weekends we’d be away and we hardly used the pool and garden. We used our balcony once,” he recalls.

Reflecting on the time and energy wasted in running a house they





never fully utilised, the family made a deliberate decision to uncomplicate things and minimise life's daily stresses. Their apartment building has a gym, the kids walk to school and they have everything they need for safe and comfortable city living conveniently close.

They've applied the same ethos to their home in Hoedspruit; it's designed for what's important to them about the time they spend in the bush as a family. Nothing is redundant. There is no clutter and no visible excess. "The two properties work well together. If we didn't have this house to come to, apartment living would be a mistake, but we've balanced what we miss in the city with what we have here," explains Sean. As a result, their Hoedspruit home reflects different priorities to their life in Joburg. "We love coming here from the city; we'll get up on a Saturday morning and head home on a Sunday," says Desiree. "This place represents peace for us. We love nature and being with nature."

With this in mind, Reiner's design appears to effortlessly marry the interior spaces of the property with the wilderness outside. "It's a bush house but not in a traditional sense, rather, you see the bush through the house all the time," he explains.

While the house sits effortlessly on the banks of the Sandspruit River, a significant amount of work went into maximising the advantages of its position. "The site was a bit flat so we couldn't just build off the natural level. A lot of thought went into that and in this way we've achieved great views of the river and the bush from every room," explains Reiner.

The patio, covered by a steel and latte canopy, is slightly lowered so you look over it from the living room, which opens up completely to the outside. "This is a feel and a theme that runs through the house. You want to see trees and branches, not the side of a roof or a wall," explains Reiner, whose design maintains the same lightness throughout. He's also worked with long, horizontal lines that draw the eye and subtly enhance the flow of the house, which is cleverly contoured around a central garden courtyard.

"The house has taken the farm house design (one of three styles that conform to Zandspruit's estate guidelines) to a new level," suggests ZE developer Martin den Dunnen. He believes the home has added real value to Zandspruit. "While most of the nearly 50 houses on the estate make use of one of several available architectural plans, this house is a great example of what you can do when you design your own footprint," he notes.









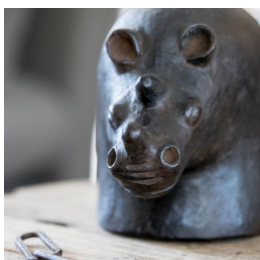
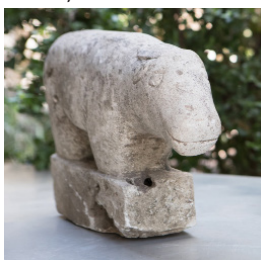
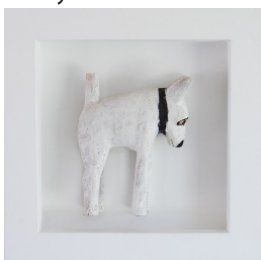
Designing their own footprint is something that comes naturally to Sean and Desirée, who've been doing just that for the last 30 years, both personally and professionally. Self-made entrepreneurs, they are uncompromising about what they want, but equally happy to outsource the details to the professionals; "we gave the architect Reiner carte blanche," Sean notes.

Interior designer Chazelle Brink, who worked on the home's soft furnishings, was given the same freedom. "You don't see any appliances in the house and the cavity doors make the space modern and uncluttered. I worked with that to give the house a clean and neutral core that is easily updated with splashes of colour," she explains.

The fact that the family can fly into the estate directly is part of what they like about this 1000-hectare residential reserve and they were early investors in the property. Sean actually swapped an aeroplane for this river stand; he has never been afraid to take risks. At the same time, the house demonstrates an appreciation for order. It's no surprise to learn Sean and Desirée are in the precision electronics industry. "There is always a sense of order in the design. Nothing shouts, but if you look around, it's there," says Reiner.

This family likes to live without pretense or fuss; but in comfort, style and peace. And the design has achieved this. "The estate also contributes towards a peaceful environment," says ZE co-developer Gerrit Jan van der Grijn, who is responsible for the overseas marketing, "We have a lot of overseas home owners, meaning less permanent home owners, which results in a quiet and peaceful estate."

"We have achieved what the family wanted to achieve – a good, happy family life – with the least effort," concludes Reiner.



### Quick chat with interior designer Chazelle Brink

#### Describe the style of the home:

This is a family home of city people spending most of their free time in the Hoedspruit area. They wanted a simple, easy and modern look. **Colour palette:** There is a simple neutral backdrop. The black window frames provide a strong element. Ivory and grey floors complement the landscape.

**Fabrics:** I mostly used my favourites – Mavromac and mixed in linens and other natural fibres. I also had fabrics made up with Juelle Botha from Plettenberg Bay. **Favourite room?** The lounge and deck as they open up into one space with a magnificent view over the riverbed. **Where do you source your décor and accessories?** Art from Mark Atwood; Artist Press; Jason at Courtyard Framing. I used furniture from La Grange; The Gatehouse; Block & Chisel; Darkie Designs; The Waxbill Trading Store and Hans van der Merwe. **What inspires your own personal style?** Nature, the environment – where the project is, the architectural style of the house and obviously the client and their brief.

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