

NO. 14 SARIE DECOR 2022/23

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That's all
Dawid Yzelle, Bethlehem

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A TOUCH OF PARADISE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE



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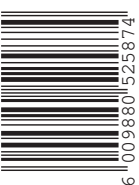
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COVER IMAGE

COMFORT IN COLOUR ▶

The living room comes as a surprise with its colourful elements, and Marielise van der Merwe had some of the furniture custom-made.

The unusual fireplace is an interesting and aesthetic division between the living and dining areas. The screed cement floors not only match the wall colour, but are also practical and easy to keep clean.

Loose rugs contribute to the room's various textures. The pink and bright-green chairs in the background form a small and intimate nook by the fireplace and are also an interesting colour element. They're all part of the new open-plan wing that includes the kitchen, living and dining rooms.

This ensures maximum vantage of the lovely view, while the wooden ceiling gives a more intimate feel to the living and dining rooms.

The new part of the house has a double-volume wall that does justice to the two three-metre high paintings by Diane Victor – a normal house's ceiling is usually about 2,4 m high. The high ceiling also accentuates the five-metre-long kitchen island. The colourful items on the shelves complement the vibrant palette.





To tackle a renovation project more than 1 000 km away takes a lot of courage. That's exactly what Marielise van der Merwe, an architect from Pretoria, did. She and her family enjoy driving and it was while visiting relatives in the Karoo that her husband came across a beautiful farm near Prince Albert. The dilapidated farmhouse dated back to 1825. He made an offer then and there, and only later let Marielise know. After she'd seen the house, she was enthusiastic about restoring it and transforming the old ruin

into a stately residence. During the renovation she added a contemporary open-plan wing with a modern kitchen-living room so that old and new were seamlessly connected.

It was quite a challenge to build and renovate from so far away. Marielise didn't want to take any shortcuts and waited until she had found the best craftsmen in the area. Finding the right building material in a small village wasn't easy either and it sometimes had to be brought in from quite far away. She realised that she couldn't rush the project so it took about two years to restore the place to its full potential.

▼ COOKING FOR A LARGE FAMILY

The five-metre-long concrete island affords enough space for the many cooks in the extended family. The beam above the island is the side panel of an old ox wagon that Marielise bought at an antique shop in Oudtshoorn. It's exactly the same length as the island and a row of modern lights is mounted on it for task lighting. The expanding joints prevent it from cracking and has been trimmed with a thin copper strip. It fits in with the mosaic tiles and the copper-toned bar stools. The freestanding fireplace can be stoked from both sides.



Even though many people advised her to demolish the original building, she preferred to keep the warm heart and soul of the old house. The beautiful yellowwood floors and beams were removed and perfectly restored before being reinstalled. The ceilings are still in place, as well as an old Aga stove.

There's also a second, modern kitchen, because they enjoy entertaining and the house has been designed precisely so that nobody has to cook alone. Marielise says she and her guests love cooking together when they are on the farm. The kitchen then becomes a happy space filled with lots of laughter, and everybody enjoys good wine and gourmet dishes.

Her husband has discovered his inner farmer and thoroughly enjoys the part-time farming, to which the splendid flock of merino sheep and green lucerne fields attest.

There's no lack of comfort. The winters and early mornings can be bitterly cold in the Karoo. All the windows are double-glazed and in the newly built wing of the house, the

screed cement floor has underfloor heating. For the hot summers, there are deep stoeps and the cool cement floors help to regulate the temperature. In the original part there are heating panels against the walls and ceiling fans in the rooms.

The natural surrounds have that uniquely rugged Karoo beauty with the mighty Swartberg mountains as the backdrop, while the merinos, oryx and springbok graze peacefully in the veld or drink at the farm dam. >

▼ THE OLD PORCH

The old house's porch has been painted mustard yellow and the original yellowwood wall cabinet is now a drinks cabinet. The light is Scandinavian and the artwork against the wall dates from the seventies. The latter was part of a special collection, and they bought it at Jeremy Stephen Antiques in Johannesburg.





< The farm borders on the Swartberg Nature Reserve, a paradise for photography enthusiasts as well as hikers, with many walking trails in the area. Other activities to enjoy include a visit to Die Hel or the lovely town of Prince Albert, or exploring the more than 600 species of fynbos on the farm. One can also drive to the scenic Meiringspoort or visit the Kango Caves. Renovations are currently underway and the farm will eventually sleep 20 people.

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▲ **VOORHUIS OF DAYS GONE BY**

All the yellowwood floors and roof beams in the original living room were removed, restored and used again. The furniture is a mixture of Scandinavian and Eastern-inspired antiques, all of which Marielise bought at Jeremy Stephen Antiques. The painting is by Wayne Barker. The framed map and old photo don't look the least bit out of place in the room.



CALM BEDROOMS ▶
Above right Colours such as white, grey and light blue are used in the bedrooms. Old wardrobes were bought at antique shops and in every room there is a small soft skin or rug next to the bed. The bedding is luxurious and soft and in the winter months, warm blankets are taken out. Wall lights were chosen instead of bed lights, and ceiling fans keep the heat at bay.

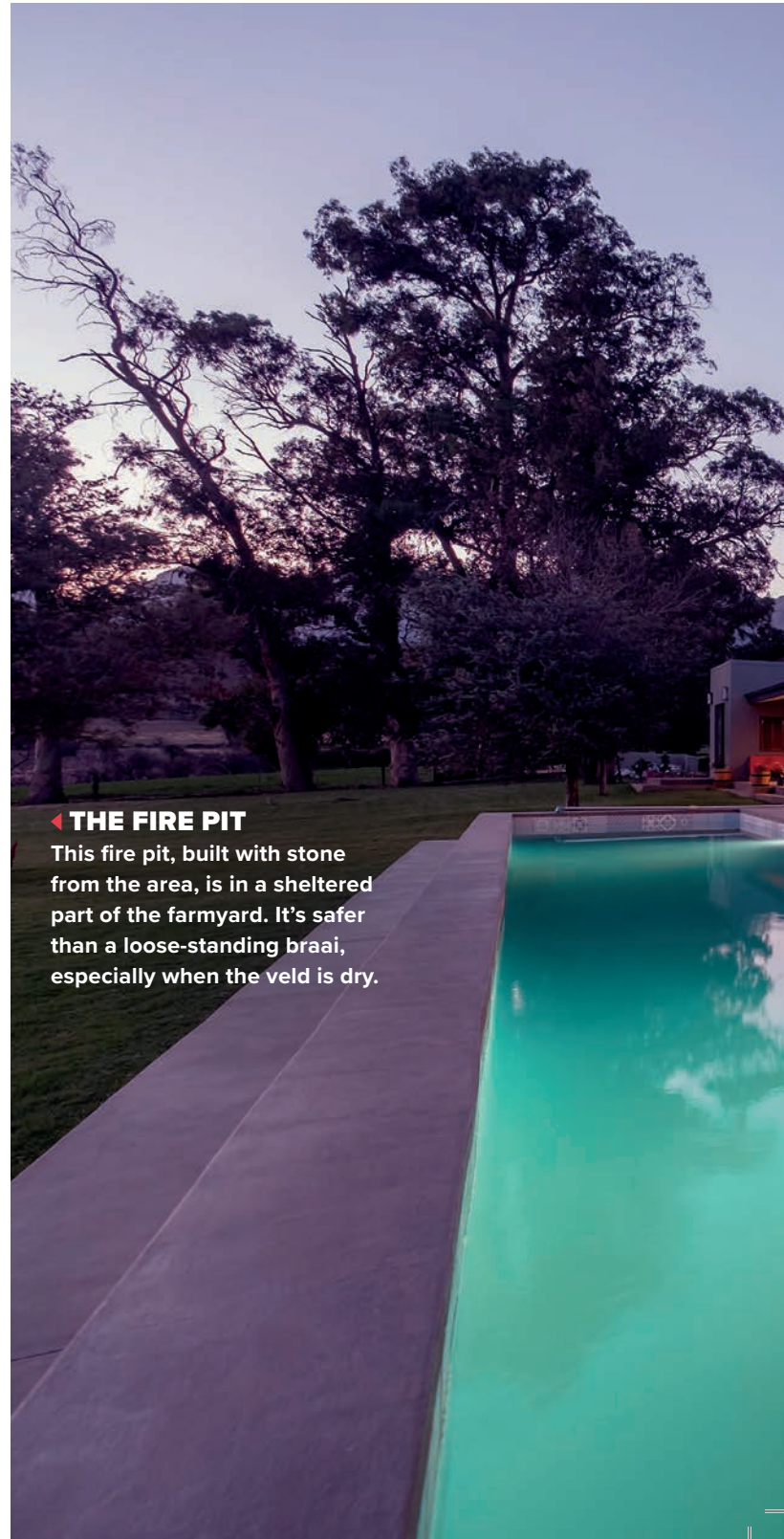
A BATHROOM FOR EACH ONE ▶
 Every bedroom has its own bathroom and Marielise chose copper taps and blue tiles for all of them.





◀ **BREAKFAST INSIDE AND OUTSIDE**

Early mornings the sliding doors are opened wide and breakfast is enjoyed with a view of the farm. And the cheeky little wire-and-bead sheep grazing under the tree add a bit of humour.



◀ **THE FIRE PIT**

This fire pit, built with stone from the area, is in a sheltered part of the farmyard. It's safer than a loose-standing braai, especially when the veld is dry.



OLD AND NEW ▼

The two building styles are cleverly connected to create a unique, modern farmhouse. The long swimming pool offers a welcome relief against the Karoo heat. Modern and antique furniture create various seating areas. ■

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