

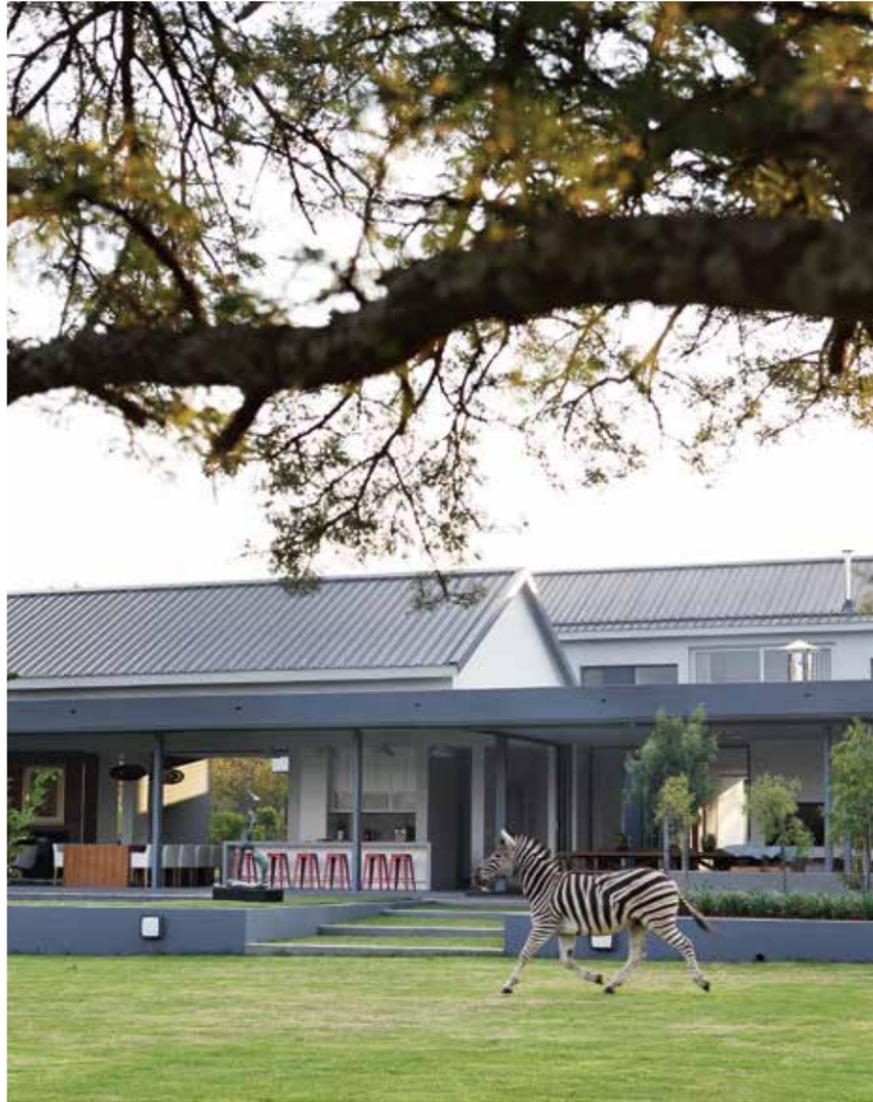
PASTORAL SYMPHONY

IN THE PRETORIA COUNTRYSIDE, NESTLED BETWEEN TWO RIVERS, THIS WEEKEND HOUSE BEAUTIFULLY BLURS THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN INDOORS AND OUTDOORS

TEXT BAMBINA OLIVARES WISE STYLING LEANA SCHOEMAN PHOTOGRAPHS ELSA YOUNG



Clean, practical, stylish and functional is the design mantra that the Lüderitz family applied to their weekend retreat in Pretoria. The kitchen area on the stoep is pristine, save for a splash of red in the stools that were found in Italy. OPPOSITE 'The house is elevated a little bit; it stands one metre above the lawn,' says Werner Lüderitz 'so you have a beautiful vista of everything around you.' The builders on the project, father-and-son team Erich and Reiner Birkner (082-492-4459), 'put their heart and soul into it', he says.



IT'S A RESOLUTELY MODERN HOUSE IN AN UNDENIABLY PASTORAL SETTING; A CRISP MEDLEY OF GREY AND WHITE, CONCRETE AND WOOD IN THE MIDDLE OF ENDLESS GREENERY,

clusters of trees, a burbling river and blue skies. Every now and then, zebras wander into the garden. You'd never imagine it was a mere half hour from the Pretoria CBD.

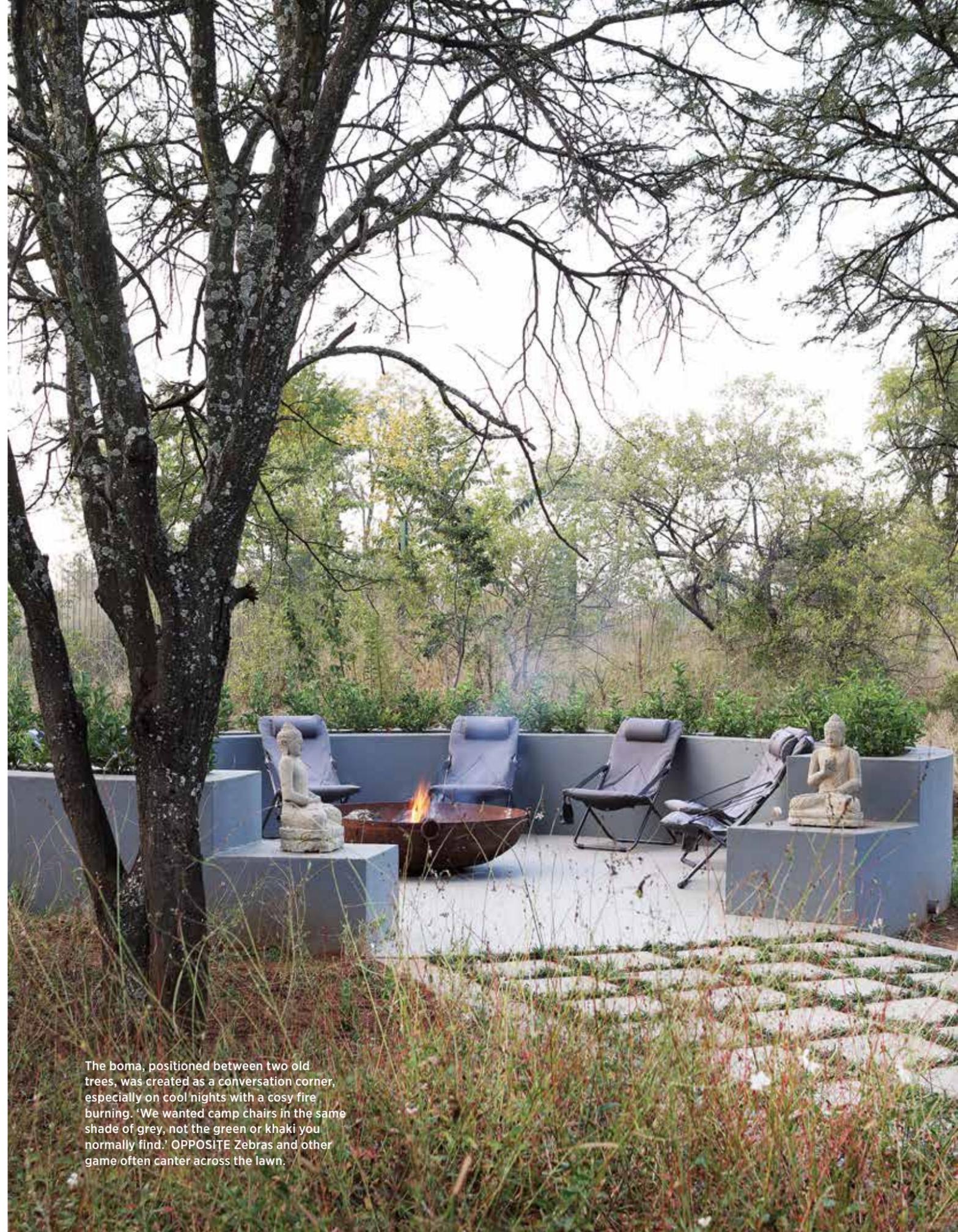
'We like to think of it as an urban farm,' explains Grete Van As of W Design Architecture Studio who, together with her partner, Johan Wentzel, designed the house for Werner and Karen Lüderitz and their brood of three young boys, Adolf, eight, Karl-Werner, four, and Reinhardt, three. 'You're very close to town, but in the bushveld, too,' says Grete.

It's near enough to the city that the Lüderitz family has made it their permanent weekend home, arriving Friday afternoons and staying on until Monday morning; longer during the holidays.

'We have 5km of riverfront, a bit of game, and horses,' says Karen. 'Here the boys can fish, run around, play rugby and cricket with their friends, anything but hang around in malls. Plus we get to spend quality time together as a family.'

With such a spectacular setting, the Lüderitzes could have opted for grand and manorial; instead they chose to go clean and contemporary, focusing on creating a home that blends into its surroundings with subtlety and simplicity.

The farmhouse elements are obvious, but have been given a modern twist – a long, rectangular structure, sloping tin roofs, exposed rafters, a boma and a large, light-filled stoep that fronts the pool▷



The boma, positioned between two old trees, was created as a conversation corner, especially on cool nights with a cosy fire burning. 'We wanted camp chairs in the same shade of grey, not the green or khaki you normally find.' OPPOSITE Zebras and other game often canter across the lawn.▷

and runs the length of the house, serving as informal lounge area, kitchen and dining room in one.

There is also a marked absence of fences or walls, further enhancing the luxurious sense of openness and space. Upon closer inspection, there are indeed walls, but cleverly made of glass, and as the trees planted alongside the glass mature they will eventually form a natural division between the home and the veld.

'We designed the house around a set of courtyards,' says Grete. 'So in the evening, the family can close it up while inside, but still remain open to the outdoors. During the day everything is open. The bedrooms, located upstairs, are in a more private, separate area, but the main building is in the middle of the veld. You never lose sight of the fact that you are surrounded by nature.'

Although Werner planted several more trees around the property, there are two big trees in particular that stand out, and Grete recounts that 'the whole house was actually positioned so that the boma could be between these two trees. If you have a look through the house, you'll see the two trees framing the boma.'

The property was also situated to maximise the natural sunlight streaming into it throughout the day. 'It's not totally north-facing; it looks to the east and gets fantastic light,' adds Grete.

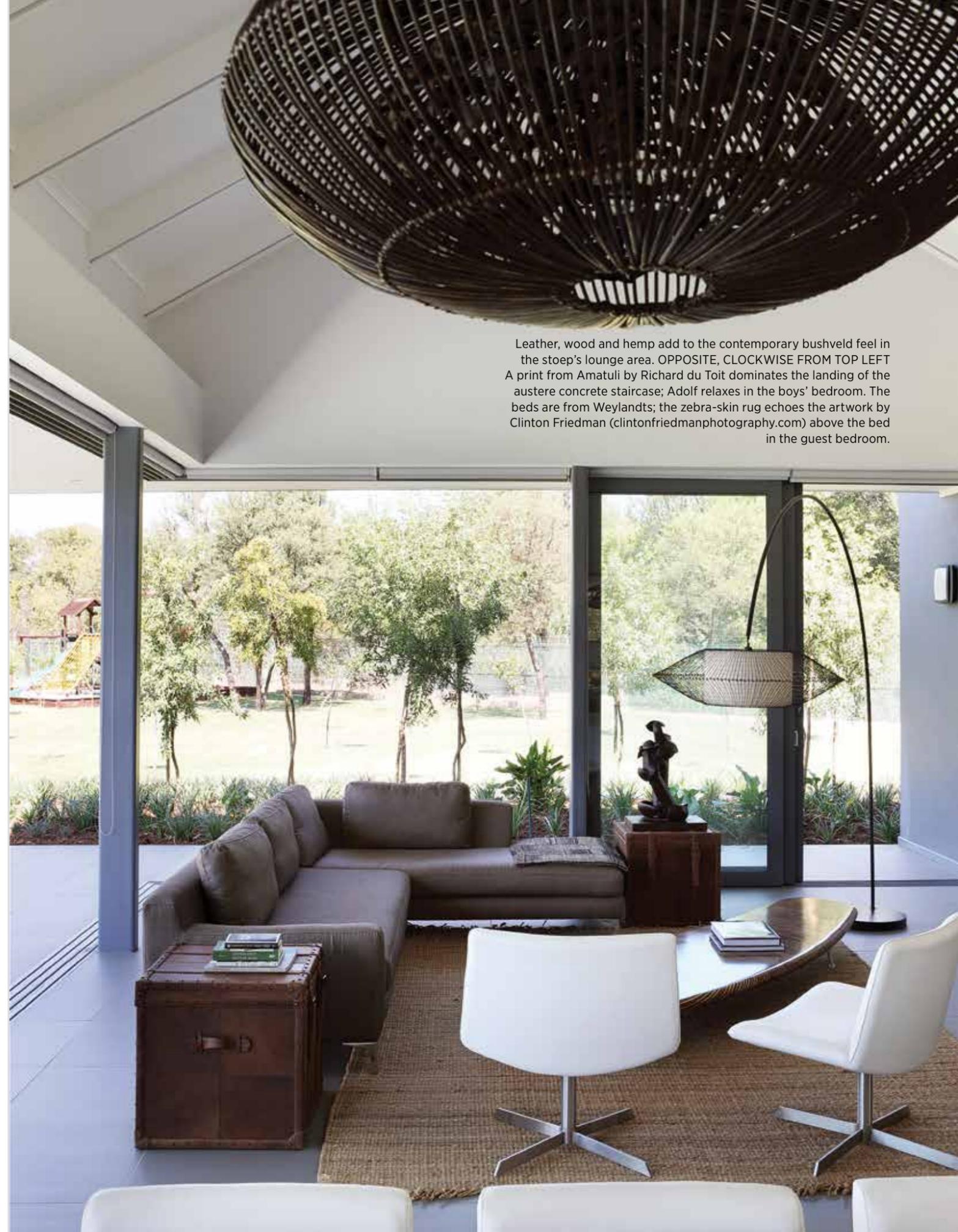
Inside, the Lüderitzes furnished the home simply but stylishly, always allowing the outdoors to be the main spectacle. Yet even indoors, where the colour palette is almost monastically neutral, there are some show stoppers, such as the artwork on the walls, powerful and evocative photographic images culled from nature, often oversized and displayed with dramatic effect on an otherwise bare wall. And outside, an Edoardo Villa bronze sculpture stands guard over the pool, its oxidised patina also skilfully blending into its surroundings.

This being a weekend retreat where the boys can run around freely, there is naturally an element of playfulness. The fire-engine red stools, for instance, along the kitchen island on the stoep, are a cheeky punch of colour against a white background. Hanging from the ceiling in the boys' bedroom are aeroplanes, apparently upcycled from outdoor signs by nifty craftsmen, a whimsical reminder that here, indeed, is where dreams do take flight. □

W Design Architecture Studio,
083-445-0424, wdas.co.za

The expansive stoep is the nucleus of the home, where Karen likes to prepare light and delicious meals. 'On Sundays, we make pizza in the pizza oven,' adds Werner. Here, with the pool, the lawn and the jungle gym (from Fleetwood Adventure Playgrounds, fleetwoodadventure.co.za) on site, hanging out at the mall is the furthest thing from the boys' minds. The farmhouse-style dining table and benches are from Amatuli (amatuli.co.za). The wicker chairs are from Weylandts (weylandts.co.za).





Leather, wood and hemp add to the contemporary bushveld feel in the stoep's lounge area. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A print from Amatuli by Richard du Toit dominates the landing of the austere concrete staircase; Adolf relaxes in the boys' bedroom. The beds are from Weylandts; the zebra-skin rug echoes the artwork by Clinton Friedman (clintonfriedmanphotography.com) above the bed in the guest bedroom.

KAREN AND WERNER'S HOME TRUTHS

Indoor-outdoor living to us means that we can enjoy the best of both, and that's what the farmhouse is all about (both). **The best things about living where we do are** the weather and the close proximity to the city (both). **Weekends are best spent** relaxing on the farm, with delicious food, wine and friends – spring being our favourite time of year. We enjoy the great outdoors with good food, good wine and good company (both). **Our style defined is** proportion and simplicity combined with functionality (both). **We collect** wine and art (both). **My favourite room in our home is** the lounge, particularly enjoying a glass of wine after the children have settled down, but my husband loves his study and the kitchen (Karen). **Our entertainment style is** to keep it simple. We enjoy long lunches on the veranda serving uncomplicated food to friends and family (both). **My signature dish is** broccoli, pear and Stilton soup with slow-roasted sticky pork shoulder, while Werner's is watercress and Gorgonzola risotto with stuffed quail (Karen). **In our fridge you'll find** a cold bottle of bubbly and Steenberg Sauvignon Blanc, Parma ham and a selection of cheeses (both). **Some of our favourite designs are** Circa gallery in Johannesburg and the beautiful lines of La Défense in Paris. I admire anything from French colonial to modernist on condition that it remains simple and uncluttered and everything is proportional. Design names I particularly like are Alessi and Philippe Starck (Werner).

