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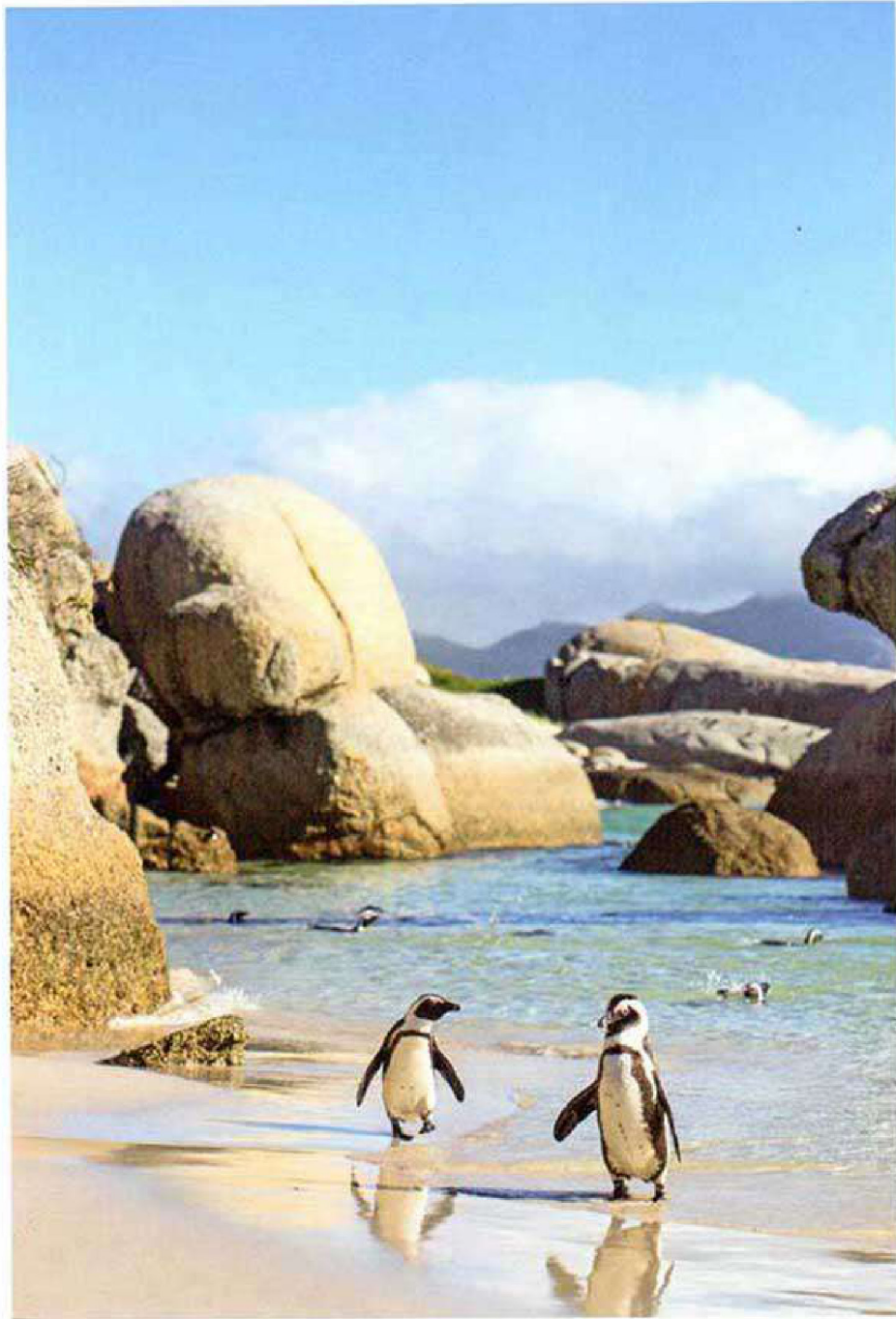
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seated at nature's door

FOR THE FAMILY WHO HAVE HOLIDAYED HERE FOR DECADES, THIS HISTORIC BEACH HOUSE IN SIMON'S TOWN IS A TIMELESS SUMMER ESCAPE

TEXT **GRAHAM WOOD** STYLING **JEANNE BOTES** PRODUCTION **GEMMA BEDFORTH**
PHOTOGRAPHS **TOBY MURPHY**



OPPOSITE Sid and Elle Katzeff escape for family summer holidays to their much-loved home on Boulders Beach. THIS PAGE In the kitchen the old German school map is from Sarah Ord (sarahord.com). The slip-covered kitchen chairs are from one of Elle's favourite shops, Brocante Society in Wynberg (021-797-2228).



In the 'Grand Salon' the 18-drawer dresser was found on Gumtree (gumtree.co.za). The toy boat was purchased at Larijworks (083-977-9182). OPPOSITE Baxter House was in great need of renovation to ensure that it would withstand the test of time, hopefully for another century. Fortunately, the building contractors were able to salvage two of the original rooms, which remain untouched.

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or more than a century, Baxter House has stood sentinel within walking distance of Boulders Beach in Simon's Town. The timber house was built at the turn of last century, and was used as a ration store during the Boer War. Elle and Sid Katzeff first saw it many years ago on a windless summer's day. 'I was immediately smitten with its higgledy-piggledy charm,' says Elle. The electrical wiring snaked around in conduits on the walls and the kitchen floor sloped towards the back door. Signs of alteration were everywhere as rooms had been added and doors boarded up over the years. 'The sash windows stuck and the doors jammed,' she says. 'In a word, it was perfect!'

They took occupation that April. 'We lay wide-eyed in bed as the paintings gently flapped against the bedroom walls.' They had discovered the South Easter!

For Elle and Sid and their four children, the cottage was a safe haven. 'We'd leave the doors wide open and the house unattended while we spent days on the beach,' she says. 'Evenings were spent around the dining room table playing cards and board games, and books piled up on bedside tables as we read late into the night.' The giant boulders became their playground, and they lost count of the towels, clothing, and even a mattress (dragged down early one evening for more comfortable reclining) that got blown off 'Big Bertha' into the sea. 'In their bunk beds the children slept sweetly, soothed by the silence and the sea air,' says Elle.

And always, the penguins. 'They'd come trudging up the hill at day's end, like businessmen returning after a hard day at the office,' says Elle. 'They'd nest under the house, and make impolite noises at three in the morning.'

Even after all these years Elle is moved by the quiet beauty of Boulders Beach with its lone surviving beach hut. ▶



'The sash windows stuck and the doors jammed,' she says. 'In a word, it was perfect!'

'It is here that we find our dear friend Jean Lowe, who at 90 is still to be found on the beach most days, supplying deck chairs and buckets and spades to passing tourists and locals alike,' she says.

'And the wind that so unsettled us when we first moved in all those years ago, has no place here, sheltered as it is by the giant boulders. In time, you get to love that wind, to make friends with it, as it blows rain clouds across the bay, clearing the smog and the detritus of the ocean. Without it, we would be stuck here mesmerised by the sheer beauty of a summer's day. The wind gets us moving, stirs us to action.'

As for Baxter House, no amount of painting and patching could sustain the little build, so eventually the Katzeffs relented and began a renovation. Peter Silberbauer of Rustic Homes and heritage architect Hanneke De Wet oversaw the transformation. 'We had hoped to use salvaged wood and refurbished doors and windows, but Peter insisted that new treated wood be used,' says Elle, finally convinced that this decision would ensure Baxter House will still be standing in another hundred years. Just two of the original rooms remain untouched. 'When we finally took possession of the new improved Baxter House, Peter had placed a specially commissioned museum sign over the entrance to this nostalgic part of the home,' Elle recalls.

It's filled with treasures collected from Elle's favourite decor and junk shops. 'We furnished Baxter House with joy,' says Elle. 'Despite my best intentions there was no colour scheme or decorator's plan.' Disparate pieces find a happy home here. 'I find that lovely things are just like lovely people. Put them together in a room, and they all get along fine in the end.'

Just as the house nurtured their children through the wonders of childhood, today it calls them back from their busy adult lives. And for Elle and Sid, 'This place of light and whimsy is a love nest, a romantic hideaway to which we escape with our Labrador Baxter, as often as we can. Friends join us for festive dinners and lazy sleepovers, and Baxter takes us for walks along the beach. The house welcomes our family back each time like an old friend, tenderly making room for connection and renewal, nurturing all that is beautiful, good and true.'  Rustic Homes, rustichomes.co.za; Hanneke De Wet, 021-780-1733; This home is available for holiday rentals through Perfect Hideaways, perfecthideaways.co.za





In the light and breezy kitchen the dinner plates are by Wonki Ware (wonkiware.co.za) and the woodpeckers are from bbellamy & bbellamy (bbellamyandbbellamy.com). OPPOSITE The pink server was purchased at Block & Chisel (blockandchisel.co.za) and the sailing boat from Larijworks (083-977-9182).



An 'Instoolation', as named by Elle's friend, Cathy, was made using stools from Koöperasie Stories (kooperasiestories.co.za). "We hired an assortment of them from Okasie (okasie.co.za) for my daughter Skye's wedding, and couldn't help buying a few when we discovered them in Simondium. The sailing vessel is from Mr Price Home, circa 1990 (mrphome.com). OPPOSITE The pink shelf in the kitchen was bought at Onsite Gallery (onsitegallery.co.za). Assorted crockery is from Serendipity Antiques and Collectables (021-762-5209).





ELLE'S HOME TRUTHS

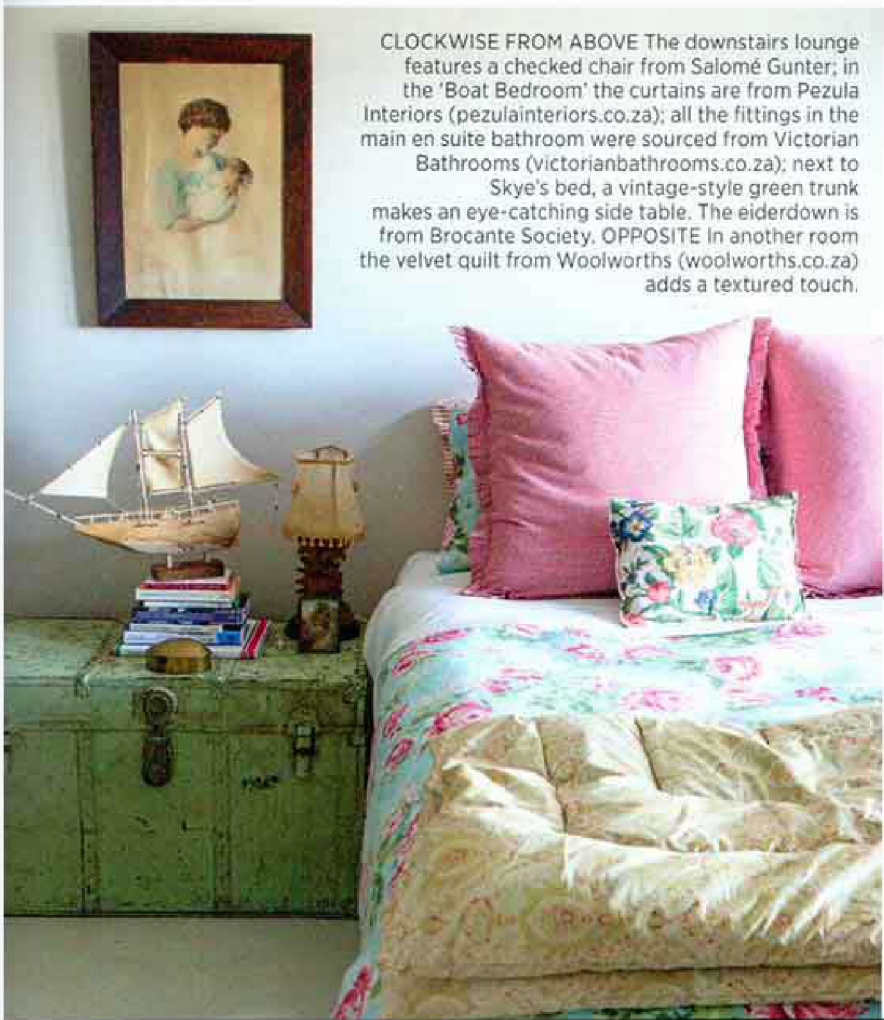
The best thing about living here is the fact that anyone can access and be sustained by the physical beauty of the Cape – it has no price tag. **For me, the best time of year is** that moment when you suddenly feel the promise of summer. **My personal style is** part gypset, part drama queen, part Mother Hubbard. **My interiors motto is,** if you love it, and it makes you happy, bring it home. **I believe you can cultivate style** but when it's innate it has a different edge to it. My friend, Carol Phillips, makes advanced style look more covetable than youth. **My pet design hate is** homes like small boutique hotels, and anything faux unless it is ironic. Minimalism. **Among my most treasured decorative pieces are** the minutest African sea urchin shells I find on the beach, which are as beautiful and fragile as life itself. My vintage paintings and tinted photographs of the Cape. **My entertaining style is** generous and relaxed. **My signature dish is** grilled fish caught fresh from the bay by our neighbour, Alex. **In my fridge you'll always find** tomatoes, garlic, chilli, basil, parmesan, fresh pasta, smoked salmon. **My most inspiring places are** Babylonstoren and Halfaampieskraal. And, as travel destinations, Paris, Sintra and Istanbul. **The soundtrack to a perfect weekend is** silence, laughter, the sound of the sea. **A blog I'm obsessed with is** 'Have some decorum' Eleanor O'Connell.



The headboard in the main bedroom is from Block & Chisel, decorative cushions from Salomé Gunter (salomegunter.co.za). The bed cover is from Harridans (harridans.co.za). OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT The swimming towels are from Woolworths (woolworths.co.za) and the umbrellas in the old wine barrel from Onsite Gallery are from L'Orangerie (021-761-8355) and Pick n Pay (picknpay.co.za); in the upstairs lounge the striped chair is from Chandler House (chandlerhouse.co.za). The suzani was bought in Istanbul; Elle sits out on the wraparound deck, which the family is able to access from the communal living areas.







CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE The downstairs lounge features a checked chair from Salomé Gunter; in the 'Boat Bedroom' the curtains are from Pezula Interiors (pezulainteriors.co.za); all the fittings in the main en suite bathroom were sourced from Victorian Bathrooms (victorianbathrooms.co.za); next to Skye's bed, a vintage-style green trunk makes an eye-catching side table. The eiderdown is from Brocante Society. OPPOSITE In another room the velvet quilt from Woolworths (woolworths.co.za) adds a textured touch.



happy valley

THE GLORY YEARS OF THIS VALUABLE OLD CAPE MANOR HOUSE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT BACK AND GIVEN A FRESH SPARKLE, MAKING IT THE QUINTESSENTIAL HOLIDAY HOME

TEXT **HILARY PRENDINI TOFFOLI** STYLING **KATHERINE BOTES** PHOTOGRAPHS **INGE PRINS**



Nestled beneath the Langeberg mountains, this little cluster of beautiful old farm buildings now known as Penhill Manor was once the furthest post of the Dutch East India Company.





The long dusty wagon trail from Cape Town to Swellendam and the north once went right past the stoep of what is now Penhill Manor. Travellers on ox wagons used to stop here to get their supplies and refreshments beneath the tallest, skinniest and possibly now oldest palm trees for miles around.

Situated in breathtaking scenery at the foot of the Langeberg mountains in Toontjiesrivier – the origin of the area’s quaint name is obscure – Penhill Manor was built in 1840 on a farm that started off as the furthest outpost of the Dutch East India Company. As time passed this cluster of lovely Cape Dutch buildings was patched and added to, not always sympathetically. Still, when Gareth and Kate Penny first set eyes on the place two years ago they were overwhelmed.

‘We just completely fell in love with it – the views and the setting,’ says Gareth. ‘We couldn’t believe we had found such an architectural gem in such a perfect setting and in need of TLC and restoration.’

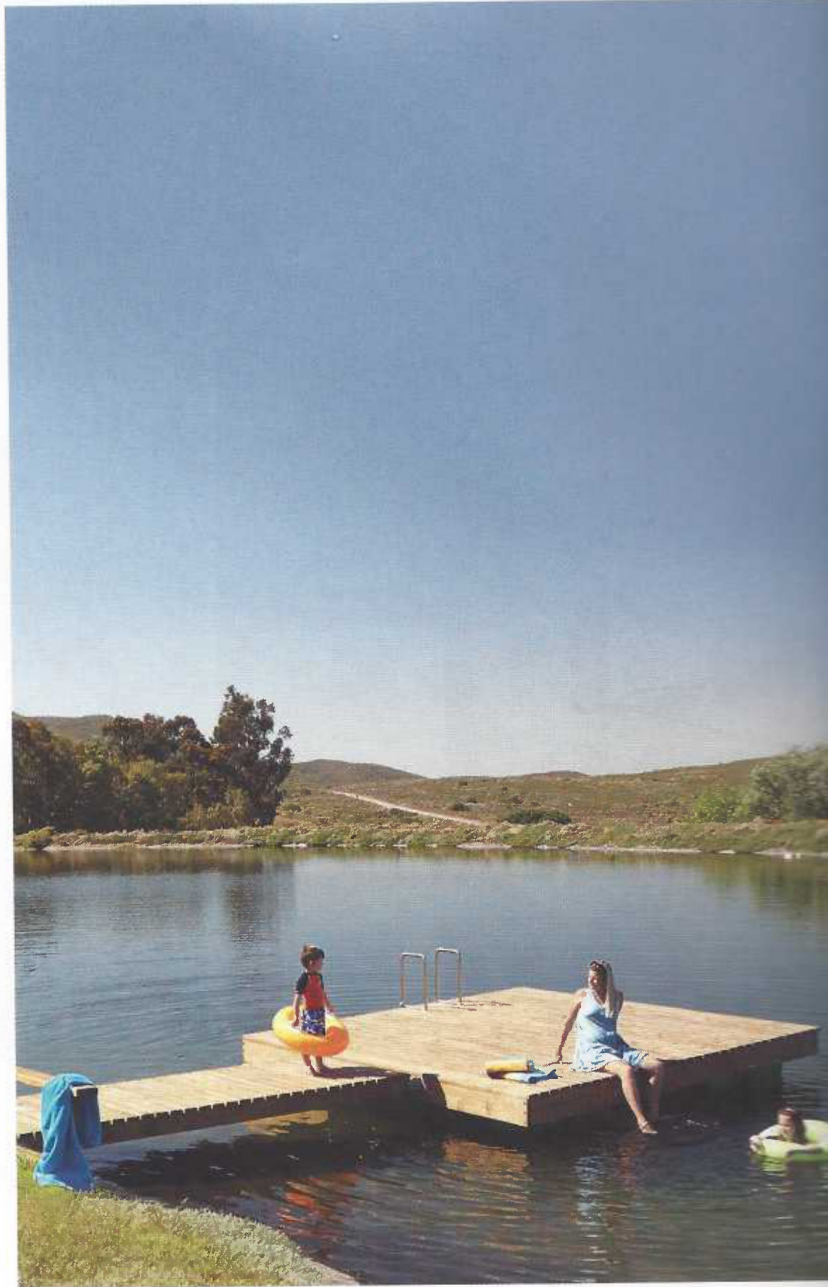
With Stellenbosch architect Rick Stander, they set about bringing it back to its former glory. Toontjiesrivier had once

been part of Willem Adriaan van der Stel’s Vergelegen, and the birthplace of a Boer Republic president. The Pennys’ mission was to restore not only the Manor House but also the original low-slung homestead built in 1750 of mud bricks and poplar beams, as well as the fruit barn and the cellar where Jacobus Klapper distilled his brandy during the late 1800s.

Extras included three new cottages planned as an organic part of the whole, and a tennis court that enjoys a magnificent view into the mountainside. What Gareth refers to as ‘the class’ can be accommodated in four attractive self-contained two-bedroom cottages and the beautiful old four-bedroom Manor House.

First step in the renovation was to remove what the architect describes as ‘the really nasty add-ons’ of the 1980s. He has worked on numerous historic farm buildings, including Dornier wafels in Stellenbosch and Twee Jonge Gezellen in Tulbagh, and the biggest challenge is to restore them to a state where they can function as modern living units while retaining their historic feel.

‘You have to be careful when adding modern amenities like bathrooms and kitchens that you don’t destroy the original



envelope of the building,' he says. 'I believe in keeping architecture honest. It must retain its sense of place in the environment. At Penhill we tried to keep it simple in terms of finishes – cement floors, concrete work and vanity tops – and kept all the roofs thatch, the best and most natural insulation.'

Kate says that when it came to decor they also paid homage to history: 'The original occupants would not have been wealthy or pretentious. They would have been down-to-earth, conservative and hard-working. They would have had a few good pieces of furniture, but to a large extent made do with rustic things they could trade with travellers and locals. We've tried to replicate this. The Manor House would've been the showcase. Other buildings would've been utilitarian. So we've made the Manor House slightly smarter.' She spent time trawling Cape Town with interior designer Anna Carst, on the lookout for natural fabrics – linens, hessians, cottons – lighting and furniture that would 'pay respect to the architectural heritage but bring the property into present time with interiors that are elegantly casual and comfortable with a contemporary up-to-date touch.'▷

FROM FAR LEFT The Manor House was built eight years before the start of the Great Trek. Trekkers would stop here under the palm trees to buy supplies; the farm dam is always the first summer stop for visiting children; some mothers prefer to just dip their feet.





They've collected some graceful Cape stinkwood Regency chairs made in Robertson in the 1800s. They also have two wonderful old portraits of the Hugo family who lived here from 1896 until 1969 when they sold it after South Africa's biggest earthquake apparently caused the Toontjiesrivier to stop flowing. Meanwhile, Kate and horticulturists Klaas and Bev Havenga have been creating a garden remarkable for its diversity. The range includes a charmingly formal traditional knot garden with indigenous rhus plants around the Manor House, a more natural picking garden outside the kitchen, and a grasses garden in the free-and-easy style of Dutch landscaper Piet Oudolf, tailing off towards the vineyards. Around the fruit barn they've planted pear, cherry and crab apple trees, and hedges everywhere to create privacy. It's early days but already this 300-year-old farm is launched on yet another new and brilliant life cycle. ☐ **Penhill Manor, penhill.co.za; Rick Stander, rickstander@standerorchard.co.za; Anna Carst, annacarst.com; this home is available for holiday rentals through Perfect Hideaways, perfecthideaways.co.za.**

FROM FAR LEFT Visitors and friends of the Penny family enjoy lunch on the stoep with Penhill Manor's manager Romano Hoffman, right. The table in balau wood and wrought iron is from Hope Garden Furniture (hopegf.com) and the lanterns from Classic Lighting (021-761-7238); in the Manor House kitchen the cast iron stove bought in Dassiesfontein harks back to the farm's earlier days. The pendant lamps are from La Grange Interiors (lagrangeinteriors.co.za); a cluster of weavers' nests hangs above the thatch.



GARETH AND KATE'S HOME TRUTHS

We're excited about summer at Penhill because it's the perfect holiday – family, friends, good food and wine (mostly Conradie of course, the winery down the road with whom we are in partnership), lots of hikes. And all in paradise! **The first thing we do when we arrive is** walk around the gardens with a gin and tonic and then swim in the farm dam. The kids skip the G&T and head straight for the dam. **Our summer entertaining style is** a long table with all the family's generations intermingled, three to 80 years. We usually ask a wonderful chef from Worcester, Nola Neethling, to cater for us when we have a crowd. She cooks Mediterranean style and traditional Cape fare, which is so much in keeping with the whole concept of Toontjiesrivier, the replenishment station! **We like to think this house is** a sanctuary. A place where travellers come to rest and be looked after by our manager Romano Hoffman and his wonderful team. **Summer nights in Toontjiesrivier are** a combination of fynbos smells, the sounds of owls and the bush, and vistas all the way to the Hottentots Holland Mountains. **Summer weekends are spent** hiking, swimming in the dam, playing tennis, boules, croquet, or going horse riding or wine tasting. **The most unpredictable thing we've ever done is** to buy Penhill. **What we're really looking forward to right now is** Christmas at Penhill.



FROM FAR LEFT A Manor House bedroom has an old teak and yellowwood headboard and nightskirt in fabric from The Silk and Cotton Co. (silkco.co.za). The Malawi chair is from Weylandts (weylandts.co.za); in keeping with the farm's vintage feel, the bathroom has white subway wall tiles from Douglas Jones (douglasjones.co.za), black and white floor tiles from Italtile (italtile.co.za), a bath from Victorian Bathrooms (victorianbathrooms.co.za), and a Madagascan jute reed basket from Madwa (madwa.com); Kate collected the African and Spanish grass reed mats on the dining room wall. The Shanghai dining chairs are from Weylandts and the lanterns from Gatehouse at Mavromac (thegatehouse.co.za); in the Manor House main bedroom, both the four-poster and the chest of drawers next to the bed were made by Hans van der Merwe in White River (hansvandermerwe.co.za). The carriage lantern is from Le Brocanteur in Constantia (saada.co.za/le-brocanteur) and the curtain fabric from The Silk and Cotton Co.



'WE JUST FELL IN LOVE WITH IT. WE COULDN'T BELIEVE WE HAD FOUND SUCH AN ARCHITECTURAL GEM IN SUCH A PERFECT SETTING.'



FROM LEFT Kate has created a garden of remarkable diversity with Penhill managers and horticulturists Klaas and Bev Havenga; the living area in one of the cottages has a surveyor's lamp from Randall Hare Antiques (021-762-9362), palm tree ottomans from Madwa, a coffee table from Weylandts and cushions made up with Ardmore fabric (ardmoreceramics.co.za), on a sofa covered in St Leger & Viney ticking (stleger.co.za); herbs and veggies thrive in Kate's picking garden outside the kitchen; the pool is filled by water jets spurting through a traditional dry-packed stone wall.

SITTING ON THE SEA

YOU DON'T GET CLOSER TO THE BEACH - AND FURTHER FROM THE
CROWDS - THAN THIS RUSTIC RETREAT CLOSE TO CAPE POINT

TEXT LEIGH ROBERTSON, MICHAEL SEAN WALTERS STYLING GEMMA BEDFORTH, JEANNE BOTES PHOTOGRAPHS GREG COOK



BEACH HOME

Overlooking the big blue and Castle Rock Marine Reserve, this Cape family cottage sits on the edge of the sea between Simon's Town and Cape Point. Holidaymakers who visit find the deck a favourite spot from which they can admire the sweeping ocean view. The towels are from Woolworths (woolworths.co.za) and Mr Price Home (mrphome.co.za). The chair pads are from Woolworths.





‘T

HIS IS ABOUT AS FAR AWAY FROM THE GLITZ AND GLAMOUR OF CLIFTON AS YOU CAN GET,’

laughs the owner as she scrambles up from the smooth round rocks on the beach towards the whitewashed weatherboard cottage that serves as her home away from home. And she’s right. Shut your eyes and all you can hear is the roar of the ocean, a light wind susurrating – the leaves of bushes in the indigenous garden and occasional cries from the seagulls wheeling in the open sky above.

While the beachfront of Cape Town’s Atlantic Seaboard has its own allure during the summer months, a break from the crowds, a chance to soak up nature and

simply just be are the drawing cards to this more remote part of the peninsula. And this gorgeously rustic retreat feels as far away from it all as it gets.

The house sits on a promontory overlooking the Castle Rock Marine Reserve, a ruggedly beautiful coastal enclave en route from Simonstown to Cape Point. ‘Standing on the balcony facing the ocean feels like you’re on the bow of a ship,’ she says.

‘It’s a pristine piece of coastline, which is why we decided to buy here. Cape Point’s weather is often harsh and windy but it just adds to that feeling of being out at sea.’ Indeed, it’s the cottage’s panoramic 360-degree views, stretching all the way from Cape Point to Muizenberg, and which look across to Hangklip, that are its greatest asset. ▷

Light streams into the sunken living room, with an in-built L-shaped lounge – a sun-filled spot where kids can play for hours – that was once the garage before renovation. There are marine influences all over the house such as the ‘Gone Fishing’ sign (opposite) and the prominent leather light bought at Weylandts (weylandts.co.za) which reminded the owner of a sea urchin. The scatter cushions and the square pouffe by Olivia Villet are from Mr Price Home.





ABOVE The walls of the kitchen were removed to create a more social open-plan cooking area and to capture the seductive sea views. The vase is from @home (home.co.za). The kettle is from Le Creuset (lecreusetshop.co.za). OPPOSITE Large windows soak up the 360-degree views and connect the living space with the landscape. The scatters give the house a sunny holiday feel, while come wintertime a fantastic Morsø wood-burning stove (morsco.co.za) tackles Cape Point's windy and fickle weather, heating up the entire house.

Originally built in the early 1950s, the owner bought it eight years ago from a deceased estate with the intention of using it as a holiday home for her family as well as to let it out (it's especially popular with honeymooners and foreign visitors who want to unplug and get away from it all). 'It had not been touched for 50 years and had only been owned by one family,' she says.

It was, she adds, 'a simple brown wooden bungalow with small poky windows, but we recognised its special location'. She painted the entire property white both inside and out, sanded down the Oregon floors, converted the garage into a sunken living room with a built-in L-shaped lounge unit and installed as many floor-to-ceiling windows as structurally possible.

Walls in the kitchen were torn down to make the cottage more open-plan, the large sea-facing windows allowing the owner to cook in her bright, light-filled kitchen while drinking in that spectacular view. Other additions included an outdoor shower that faces the sea, while the bathroom is perfectly modern. The entire project took a speedy three months to renovate.

Decorating the three-bedroom home was purposely kept to a minimum so that little competes with the views. A broad palette of blue, from denim to indigo, accent the predominately white home, while a limited focus on furniture means the few pieces chosen stand out against the simplicity of the cottage.

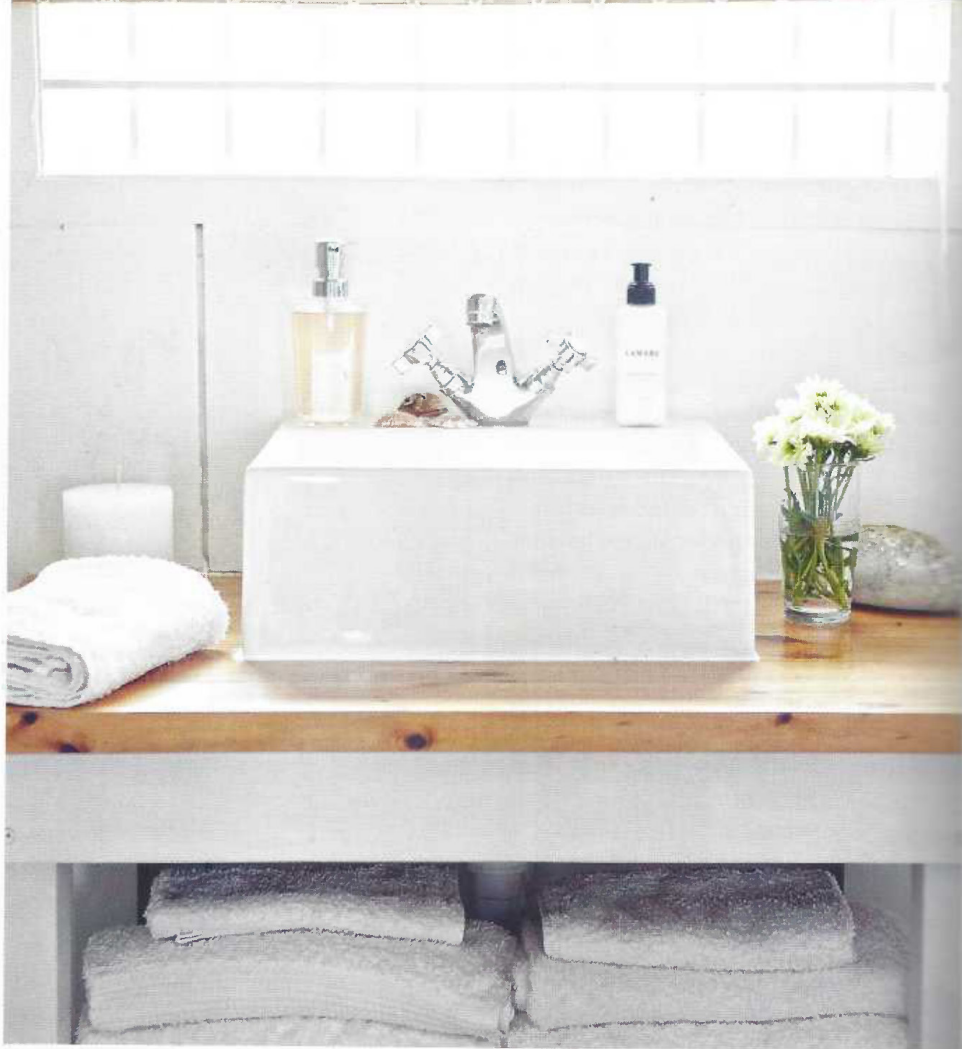
In a location such as this, who'd want to spend more time indoors than necessary – other than to sip morning coffee? (The first cuppa of the day is often taken down on the rocks.) While the house sits right on the beach, a smattering of big boulders just off the coastline provide sheltered swimming pools that are a delight for children. An abundance of marine life, including rare and harmless cow sharks that are specific to the area, means that whales can be seen in spring right from the living room.

'This is a place to go to be part of nature,' says the owner, whose family rarely watches TV or even DVDs here. 'We read a lot, play board games, braai, or loll about in the sea. And there's no better spot for sundowners,' she adds. ☺

This home is available for holiday rentals through Cape Villa Rentals, capevillarental.co.za and Perfect Hideaways, perfecthideaways.co.za



In a location such as this, who'd want to spend more time indoors than necessary – other than to sip morning coffee?



THE OWNER'S HOME TRUTHS

The best thing about our holiday house is that it's right on the beach, yet there are great restaurants close at hand. **My favourite part of the cottage** is our open-plan living area; it has a view on steroids. **My style** is simple and modern with a seaside feel. **I'm inspired by** recipe books, my first coffee of the day, and travel. **There's nothing like** savouring coffee on the rocks in the early morning. **I most love summer's** long days, bright light and daily swims in the ocean. **My best piece of design advice** is not to decorate out of one shop or with one 'look'. **I collect** kitchen equipment and heritage seeds. **On my bedside table** is an angel (gift from my girls), a recipe book, half a cup of cold rooibos tea... **My favourite piece of furniture** is the lobster pot chair, or as I like to call it, 'The Chair With a View'. **In my fridge you'll always find** avocados, tomatoes, lemons, Parmesan and anchovies. **This summer I'm entertaining with** early weekday dinners for small groups of friends, and one-tray cooking. **My signature dinner-party dish** is slow-cooked beef short rib ragu that I put in the oven in the morning on a timer, and serve with homemade tagliatelle pasta, and green salad. **The soundtrack to my perfect weekend** is Dido. **My favourite local dining spots** are Just Sushi in Simonstown, Olympia Café in Kalk Bay, and Bihari takeout in Fish Hoek. **We're celebrating the season** by braaing. **This holiday we're** going to Victoria Falls. **Our favourite way to relax** is to have friends over for a meal and bottles of wine.





'The rattan chair in the lounge makes me think of a lobster trap,' says the owner, 'but I prefer to call it The Chair with a View.' Similar styles can be found at Weylandts. OPPOSITE Clean and simple, the home's bright white approach extends to linen and towelling; denim blue accents in one of the three bedrooms highlight the marine theme.