

# mouse

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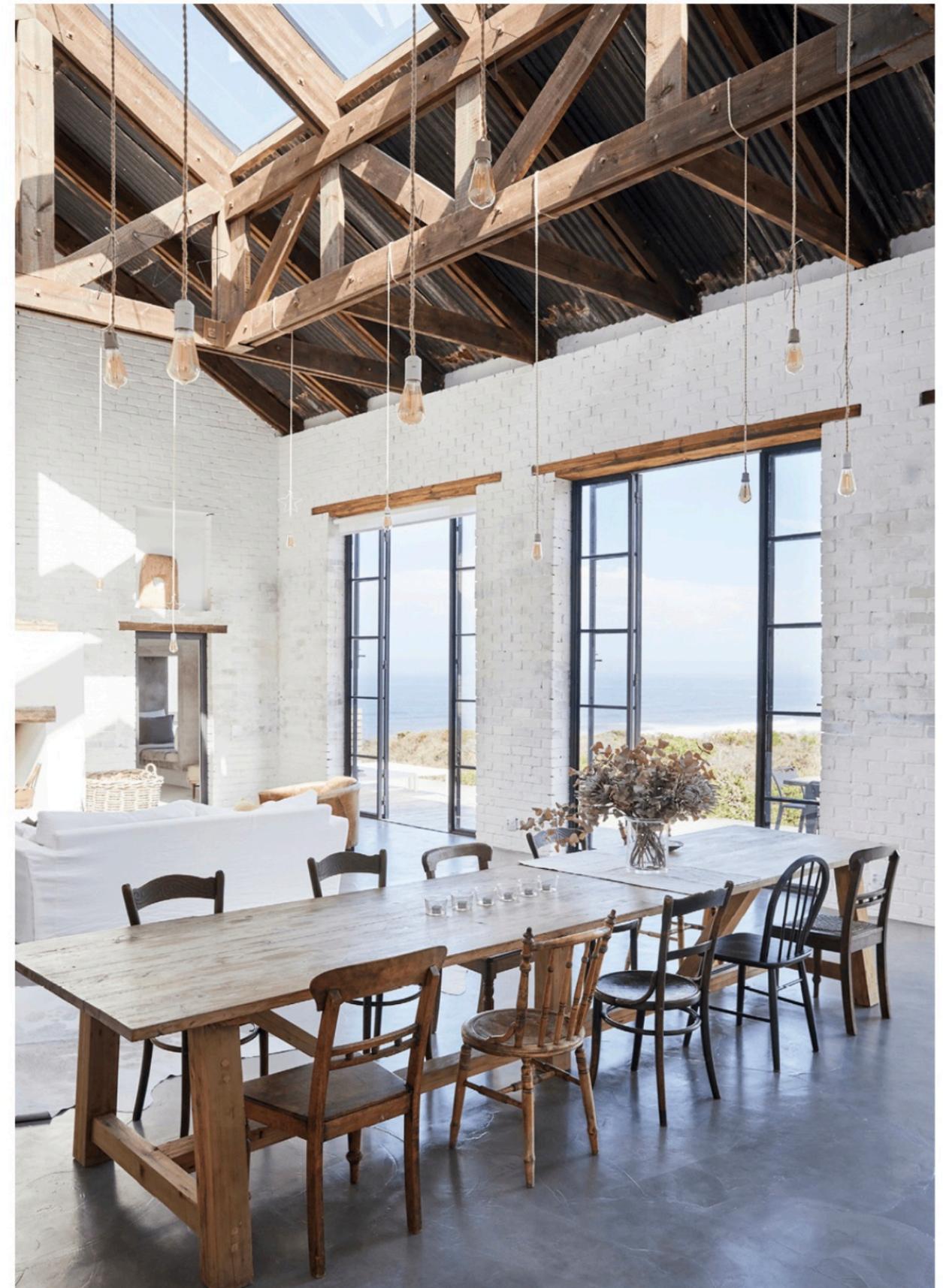


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MOUSE N°15

# B A R N C H I C



Situated on South Africa's untamed west coast, Jochem and Evi Elsner's home combines authentic vintage details with contemporary comfort and relaxed ease.



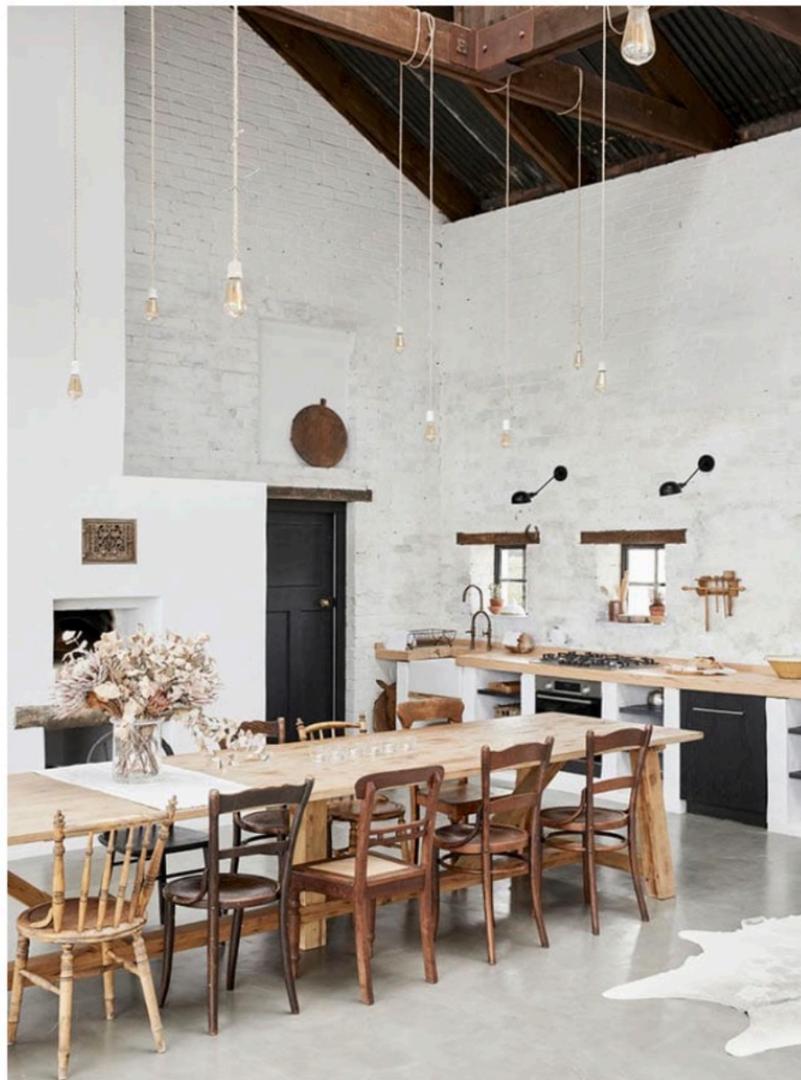
Jochem and Evi Elsner have created many homes, but none is quite as close to their hearts as this one.

The couple – Jochem is the ever-practical, hands-on builder, and Evi is the interior designer who is a connoisseur of the flea market and the vintage store – have been building, decorating, and selling houses for over 20 years. After moving to South Africa from Germany and spending several years in Somerset West, they relocated to their present home town, the burgeoning coastal village of Yzerfontein.

The choice of this seaside location only just won out over a more rural one, as both Evi and Jochem are lovers of nature and animals. They initially toyed with creating a large greenhouse on this plot, which they purchased during COVID. The site is situated on slightly higher ground than the beachside homes nearby – Jochem naturally knows the precise elevation; it's 46 metres above sea level – and as a result, this house is both surrounded by the region's protected dune fynbos vegetation and enjoys beautiful vistas of both the ocean and the surrounding landscape. On clear days, it's possible to see the outline of Cape Town's famed Table Mountain on the far horizon, around 90 kilometres away.

Of course, the fact that the closest beach is just a few minutes walk from the property adds a further dimension to its charm.

When the local planning authority nixed the idea of a greenhouse – the area is strictly reserved for the development of dwellings – Evi and Jochem devised a new plan: create a barn-inspired contemporary home



dedicated to the pursuit of total relaxation. Conceived to seem as if it is an updated farm building, the house has a resolute simplicity of design: the central “barn”, with its steeply pitched roof, contains the open-plan living, dining and kitchen space, and this is flanked on either side by two large bedrooms with bathrooms en suite.

With the addition of a petite entryway and a store room on the street side of the house, plus a large wooden deck at its front for outdoor dining and lounging, the basic layout of the home was complete.

The purity of the building's design

*Cleverly blending the classic and the contemporary, the pitched roof includes traditional-style wooden beams and sleek panels of glass that flood the interior with natural light throughout the day. Highlighting both aspects by drawing the eye upwards into the triple-volume ceiling space is the lighting design, which consists of multiple old-school filament bulbs strung from and around the roof beams at a variety of different heights and positions.*

*The vintage, extra-long dining table is surrounded by a varied mix of old wooden chairs in classic designs, which were sourced from flea markets and secondhand stores.*



“  
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”



is both enhanced and transcended by the Elsners' careful attention to every detail of its construction, finishes and interiors. For example, the triple-volume living-eating-cooking area features criss-crossing wooden roof trusses entirely evocative of an old barn. These thick, old-fashioned beams are very much unlike the narrow contemporary variety now generally used in construction and were installed by a firm that specialises in the creation and renovation of traditional-style roofing. The trusses are secured using old-fashioned hand-cut washers and steel end holders, and the beams themselves were hand-finished using a solution of vinegar in which steel wool had spent several days steeping.

Similarly, the interior brickwork has been carefully hand-worked to

generate an authentically old-school look and feel, while classic timber lintels and wooden doors were painstakingly sourced at flea markets and junk yards, and the steel-framed glass doors that open onto the deck at the front of the house add another dimension of vintage appeal. Evi's layered interiors further enhance these authentic finishes, which combine pieces collected over many years at markets and secondhand stores with the judicious use of contemporary

furnishings and all-natural textiles. "The contemporary-vintage blend is both deliberate and instinctive," she says.

Evi explains that her aim is always to create an atmosphere that is cosy rather than grand or precious, which is also why "some things go together, but not everything". And while, because of the very restrained colour palette – shades of white, with natural browns from wood, leather and basketware, plus highlighting touches of grey



Left: Grouped around the open fireplace is a sofa covered in a white linen slipcover and two ultra-comfortable leather armchairs that a friend gave to Evi. The cream rug is from Coral & Hive ([coralandhive.com](http://coralandhive.com)) and is layered with a cowhide from Kunene Craft & Skins ([kunene.net](http://kunene.net)); the coffee table was found on Facebook Marketplace. Below: The kitchen runs along one wall of the open-plan space, and features thick wooden countertops. The wall-mounted lights are from Eurolux ([eurolux.co.za](http://eurolux.co.za)).





The bedrooms are both spacious and tranquil, and are simply but cosily furnished with king-size beds clad in linen from Hertex Haus ([hertexhaus.co.za](http://hertexhaus.co.za)). The bed cover is from The Fabric House ([thefabrichousect.com](http://thefabrichousect.com)), the cotton rugs are from Weylandts ([weylandts.co.za](http://weylandts.co.za)). The window seats are home to a selection of cushions from Gister ([facebook.com/gistervintagedecor](https://facebook.com/gistervintagedecor)) and throws from Weylandts ([weylandts.co.za](http://weylandts.co.za)).

and black – it might be tempting to characterise Evi’s style as minimal in its ethos, she declares that it definitely isn’t: “I’m monochromatic, not minimalist,” she says decisively.

The house perfectly facilitates warm-weather pleasures when opened to the elements during the Cape’s long, hot summers. Its serene bedrooms each feature a wide window seat piled with cushions that frame beautiful views of the surrounding landscape, and elements such as this, as well as the home’s perfectly planned living space – flanked by an interior wood-fired oven and a large open fireplace – make it even better in the winter, says the couple. With the sound of rain thrumming on the roof, the interior becomes a cosy haven, warmed by the glowing fire and stove and lit with flickering candles. No matter the season, this is a home to disconnect from the bustle of modern life and reconnect with the natural world – a sanctuary to unwind in complete, cocoon-like peace. 🍷

[|thebarn.home-concept.cc](http://thebarn.home-concept.cc)



The bedroom windows have an exterior reflective coating that keeps the interiors discreetly private – and, when one is making use of the deck, reflects back and enhances the varied vistas of the surrounding landscape and beyond that, the Atlantic Ocean.

