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LATE BLOOMER

Tinged with romance, this stylish
homecoming was well worth the wait

DECOR

It was a long time in the making,' says architect Joe van Rooyen, whose clients had waited for almost 10 years for someone who could realise their vision. Not that they had unreasonable or unattainable demands. What they wished for was really quite simple: a beautiful, warm home that was to be... nothing like it was before.

Convinced that Joe was the man for the job, the hard-working professionals moved out of their home for a year while the refurbishment took place. Cold, dark and inverted, it was in dire need of liberating. Its conventional windows and narrow, standard-height double doors were completely out of sync with the robust proportions of the structure. Inside, a compartmentalised approach to the interior saw it space-strapped and weighed down by uninspiring finishes. 'I knew that with some simplifying and refinishing, the house could be transformed into a "lifestyle" for my clients,' says Joe.

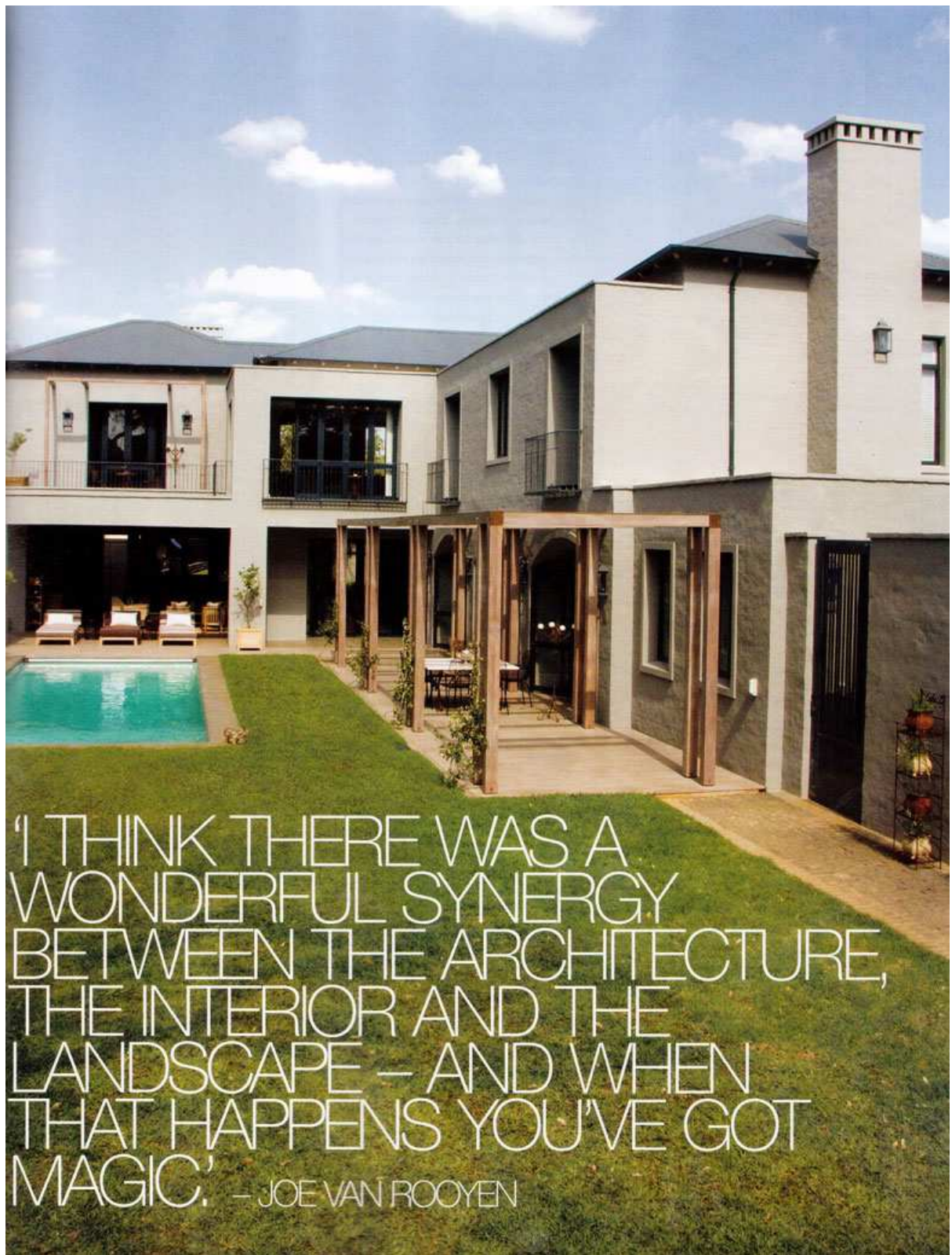
Where previously the house was entirely disengaged from its exterior environment, features have been put into place to re-establish the connection. Windows and doors, now apertures of a far more generous nature, beckon in floods of sunshine and every bedroom is given access to the garden through Juliet balconies and roof terraces. The once awkwardly separated dining room and kitchen have been transformed into a sun-filled living space



with large arched doorways that forms the heart of the house. The arch, Joe informs, being an old-fashioned method of softly linking the interior and exterior. Another breaching element, a solid oak pergola, has been placed along the length of the open-plan kitchen and dining-room wall, and another leading to the front door of the house. The pergolas provide a degree of extended solidity, preventing the structure from coming to a harsh and abrupt halt, and once the star jasmine trains its way around the pillars, the softening effect will be enhanced. Before this happens, the horizontal beams which have been clad according to a 100-year-old tradition in copper to protect the timber

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

Architect Joe Van Rooyen's objective was to create a 'lifestyle' for the owners by simplifying and refinishing the existing structure of the house, making it warmer through use of solid oak flooring, sculptural shapes and a curated assortment of natural textures.



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DECOR

will form a natural patina.

It's this contrast between simplicity and detail that follows through into the interior, with beautiful old French doors playing a starring role. They have been stripped down and the wood given an aged appearance that delicately counterbalances the individually sourced antique glass inserts. Architraves have been kept plain, providing a subtle yet intentional complement to the exquisitely detailed hinges. Responsible for this diverging harmony finding further anchor in the furnishings and interior finishes is interior designer Deborah English. In the main bedroom, for instance, the bedside tables are

completely mismatched. Used in the interim until the correct ones arrive, the simultaneously conflicting complementary pair reflects Deborah's approach to the interior as a work in the making.

'You need to live in a space to understand it and not to be too precious,' she says.

Her passion for pieces with history is reflected in an impressive assortment of antique cabinets, armoires and other singularly unusual items. Most had been collected over a period of a year and put into storage. When it came to placing them, a lot of reshuffling took place because where there was once a wall, Joe had had it removed. Everything now has



LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT The free-flowing kitchen and dining room is the centre of activity in this home. Joe and his team broke out interior walls and link interior spaces with the outside through a network of archways to become a seamless extension of the exterior deck. Pendant lights in the dining room by Successful Living from Diesel in partnership with Foscarini.



ABOVE The overall palette cool and non-specific, interior designer Deborah English opts instead to infuse character and history through a carefully considered (yet mismatched) medley of antique and contemporary furniture. Black and white photography is the medium of choice for artwork throughout the house.

DESIGNER SWAG



« HG
Benson
Footstool
R4 995
Weylandts

» Aloe
Script
Cushion
R99.99 Mr
Price Home



» Block mounted Penguin
book cover R999.95
Source for Boardmans

« Plantation Chair
R9 750 EBONY



» Original genuine fake bookshelf
wallpaper by Deborah Bowness

DECOR



Built in the 1920s, the home features a typical 'stoep' leading from the living room. Scatter cushions in fabrics by Halogen International. Evergreen lawn and limited use of annuals ensures the rambling panhandle property hardly changes in appearance from winter to summer. Sadly, an old lemon tree besieged with disease had to be removed, making way for the koi pond onto which the formal living room and guest wing lead.