

# TOWN & COUNTRY

A Pretoria home is a colourful, comfortable reflection of the professional and family life of its trend-conscious owners

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## FAMILY HOME

George the schnauzer in the lounge of Cornel and Neill Strydom's Pretoria home. The Queen Anne chairs are covered in towelling; the round sofa is covered in Denver in Wasabi from The Fabric Library (fabriclibrary.co.za). OPPOSITE The lounge opens onto a garden that combines flowers, shrubs and vegetables.





Cornel painted the image on the kitchen wall. It's a space where everyone, including Chloe the whippet, feels at home. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The Strydom family at their cheerful front door; the Gustavian bench in the open-plan kitchen-dining area is Cornel's favourite spot; Christi's fabulously bright teenager's bedroom.



'We call this our weekend-away place for every day,' Cornel Strydom says with a laugh as she strolls through her vegetable and indigenous-grass filled garden. With views overlooking a dam below the property and across to rolling hills, it's hard to believe that this neat, grey, farmhouse-style dwelling, surrounded almost entirely by bush, is in fact very much part of the busy, booming eastern edge of Pretoria. It's also the place that Cornel and her husband, Neill Strydom, along with their daughter Christi, 14, and sons Sebastian, 8, and Benjamin, 5, call home.

With Neill heading up local fabric house The Fabric Library and Cornel running her interior-decorating company, Good Things Interiors, and her creative blog, it should come as no surprise that they've created a home that is filled with stylish *objets* and dressed in on-trend fabrics. Neill frequently travels abroad and comes home brimming with enthusiasm for the latest trends in colour and design.

'As a child I loved playing with Lego, so I designed the house using similarly simple design principles,' Cornel explains. 'I even made a tiny model of the house so that we could get an idea of what we wanted.' In the absence of a project manager, the couple took on the job of the house build themselves – and, perhaps indicative of an owner-run project, their dream home was completed in an amazing five-and-a-half months. 'We loved being so hands-on,' says Neill.

The finished project is impressive, with an appealing flow between indoors and outdoors. The living room, double-volume kitchen and main bedroom feature French doors that open onto the front lawn, while the children's upstairs bedrooms boast views across the estate.

The couple already owned key pieces of furniture that they wanted to use, and set about incorporating them into room schemes that burst with sophisticated colour, beautiful fabrics and textures, and loads of easy-living appeal. > (Continued on page 100.)







The dining chairs are from La Grange Interiors (lagrangeinteriors.co.za). OPPOSITE The front door is painted in Gold Finch by Plascon (plascon.co.za) and the eye-catching Romo wallpaper in Anoko W206/03 is from The Fabric Library.





That the Strydoms are consummate entertainers is reflected in the design of their home. 'It's great for having people over in summer, when the house opens up entirely,' says Neill. While the kids play on the lawn, he tends to the braai in the pool house or Cornel whips up meals in the open-plan kitchen and dining room. Light pours into this space, illuminating the floors, moodily painted walls and an eclectic mix of furniture, making it instantly inviting. 'I love to sit on the Gustavian bench in the dining area, crocheting while the boys play cricket outside,' says craft enthusiast and blogger Cornel, who painted the striking floral image on the kitchen wall. 'It's a copy of an engraving from 1678 – I painted it onto the wall with the help of an overhead projector,' she explains.

The Strydoms don't shy away from colour and many of the happy hues used throughout the house took their cue from nature. 'We painted the front door in Plascon's Gold Finch as a nod to the birds in our garden,' says Cornel. She also chose flower-festooned fabric for the kitchen curtains because they reminded her of the wild grasses growing outside their door. By contrast, the main bedroom is a sanctuary of pale tones, with Belgian linen curtains and a four-poster bed. This is the couple's private, restorative space. With the exterior doors folded back and warm summer breezes drifting in, it's like a little piece of the outdoors – with all the loveliest creature comforts you could imagine. □

**Good Things Interiors, 082-571-4685; The Fabric Library, fabriclibrary.co.za; ilovepom-poms.squarespace.com**

## CORNEL & NEILL'S HOME TRUTHS

**Trends that will be big this year include** individuals who feel free to express their creativity without following particular design rules (Neill); handcrafted products (think embroidery, quilting, knitting, crochet) and soft furnishings – they will be bigger than ever (Cornel). **My New Year's resolutions are** to do the Sani2C mountain bike race (Neill); to consume very little meat, gluten, dairy, alcohol and caffeine (Cornel). **On my shopping list for 2011 is** a faster car (Neill); a Nest by Porky Hefer (Cornel). **My favourite recipe is** the deli burger from Reuben Riffel's *Reuben Cooks* (Neill); almost anything from Reza Mahammad's *Rice, Spice and All Things Nice* (Cornel). **The perfect soundtrack for entertaining is** *This Is Cuba* (Neill); the singing of frogs or any other sounds coming from our pond (Cornel). **My favourite way to relax is** spending time with my wife and kids (Neill); practising one of the gentle arts of domesticity – baking, gardening, crocheting... (Cornel). **My favourite thing about living in Pretoria is** that it feels more like a town than a city (Neill); I can go to Li-bel (Lientjie Denton's eatery) as often as I like (Cornel).

**TOP** A glimpse of Neill and Cornel's en-suite bathroom. **BOTTOM** The main bedroom is dressed in tranquil shades. **OPPOSITE** Sebastian and Benjamin's bedroom is the perfect boys' hangout. Cornel sewed the canopies above their beds, which were made from an old picnic bench set.

