

# HOUSE

## AND LEISURE

Vol. 5 : Winter 2022


retreat

find your happy place

R130 (incl. VAT)





A photograph of a modern stable in a meadow. The stable is a wooden platform with a swing hanging from a large tree. The swing has a wooden seat and two ropes. A small red apple is on the seat. A green lantern is on the platform. Pink flowers are in the foreground. The background is a lush green meadow with trees.

**A modern stable in a meadow:** The small town of Greyton in the Overberg is the very definition of picturesque: charming, quaint, pretty as a picture. As you travel inland along the winding road that leads you to this little village, you immediately feel the stresses of city life trailing away. It's this distinct sense that was so appealing to homeowners Nick and Robyn Gluckman.





**This spread** Nick's office pod – a separate bolthole from the main house – overlooks a serene pond that took quite some tenacity to build, but is now a pivotal part of this family homestead.





The down-to-earth couple – and parents of Stella (2) and Rosco (3 months) – had been on the lookout for a property in the countryside for about three years when, following a weekend away in Greyton, they thought: why not here? The discovery of their country home was not immediate though.

‘It was during December 2019, while on holiday in the Eastern Cape, that I saw this Greyton house come up for sale online,’ Nick explains. ‘It wasn’t an instant “yes”, but there was something about it that made me take note.’

A few days later, back in the Western Cape, Nick and Robyn, along with Zeanne Duminy from Zeanne + Goss Design Studio, drove up to view the space. ‘I knew that the property had potential,’ says Nick. ‘The house had belonged to a retired couple and was quite dilapidated and the garden was overgrown, but there was something special about it. I wanted to show Zeanne and James Goss [the other half of Zeanne + Goss Design Studio] to get their input too, and on seeing the place Zeanne’s response was: “we can make magic with this!”’

Having previously worked with the Gluckman’s on their home in Tamboerskloof, Zeanne says that one of the greatest compliments a client can give you is to work with you again. ‘Nick and Robyn have always brought to the table a clear sense of self; a steadfast knowledge of what they want from a space as a whole, and of what is important to them, but at the same time they have always allowed us to follow our own creative process. We have a clear directive when we work with them, but also the freedom to do what we do!’ says Zeanne.

Zeanne, James and their team worked on the project from beginning to end – from managing the process with the council and heritage bodies in Greyton, to hiring builders and designing the interiors. ‘It’s what we call “from plan to plate”,’ Zeanne says. ‘Basically, once we have completed the job our client arrives to their home and the table is set, the beds are made, the lights are on – the home is theirs to immediately enjoy and they can begin to add their own layers. It is the second time that we’ve done this for the Gluckmans, and we feel they know the advantage of it.’

There were two personal caveats though – Nick was set on an element of water throughout the house, and for Robyn, there had to be swings! ‘Swings were a magical part of my childhood – I spent many contemplative hours quietly swaying outdoors, so for me it was non-negotiable to have that for this special place of ours, where our children will grow up and spend time rocking to and fro themselves,’ says Robyn.

‘It was great to know the parameters that we were working within and the elements that were really important to the family. We had the swings custom made by a craftsman in Stellenbosch, and the pond opposite Nick’s office pod – although a task and a half to get right – is now an aspect that I completely adore. The pod in itself too – we worked with the team from Tiny Home who were a pleasure to deal with,’ says Zeanne.

Because Nick and Robyn see this as their home-away-from-home and not just a weekend escape, an office pod for Nick was also something that was in the brief from the get-go.

‘Although Greyton is a breakaway for us as a family, and somewhere for us to spend quality time together and recharge, realistically, to make it our second home, I needed a quiet space away from the house to get business done when necessary.’

Nick, who is the founder and owner of Oggie Flooring, is a busy guy – but, he’s also a very dedicated family man. ‘I literally finish work on a Thursday and drive straight up to Greyton – Robyn is usually already there with Stella and Rosco – and I drive straight into work on a Monday morning.’

The couple are really invested in the two-home lifestyle; ‘we have our clothes and toiletries here; toys and things for the children – pretty much a duplicate of what we have back in Cape Town, which has made the world of difference because we can just arrive, there’s no stress of packing and unpacking or worrying that you’ve left something behind.’

The family even have pets who live in Greyton full-time (cared for by their housekeeper when they’re away) and their daughter is enrolled in a creche in both Cape Town and Greyton. Nick and Robyn also love to entertain; they have friends and family over every weekend – for them it’s a privilege to be able to share their magical space with others, a testament to the type of people they are – extremely generous, unpretentious and welcoming.

‘Listen, having what we have is a balance that I never imagined I could have. I pinch myself often. We know just how lucky we are,’ says Nick. ‘There is just something so otherworldly about this place – it’s so calm, so silent; at night the stars take your breath away, and in the morning the sunrises do the same. We even have a resident owl in the garden who feels like a pet – really, it’s all we wished for and more!’ ●

**oggieflooring.com @oggieflooring zeannegoss.com @zeanneandgoss**

**Right** The poolside ‘Learning to fly’ sculpture by Marieke Prinsloo-Rowe has a special story behind it. ‘I called Nick and said I had found a piece that I wanted him to have,’ recounts Zeanne Duminy from Zeanne + Goss Design Studio. ‘It was a Saturday. It was expensive... but Nick hardly asked me any questions – he just said to me: “Will Robyn like it? Do you like it? Then go for it!” It was one of my most anxious days... procuring this piece on auction, and hoping that the couple would love it as much as I did.’







**Above, left** There are wild horses that roam freely in Greyton, adding to the magical energy of the little village.

**Above, right** A church bench anchors the home's entrance, something Zeanne bought as a special touch; 'Greyton is Nick and Robyn's spiritual place. It's a place for them to find peace and refuge, so that's why it felt like the perfect find,' she says.

**Left** The exaggerated A-frame and high ceilings within amplify the openness and spaciousness that makes the home feel airy and light.





**Above, left** The family room is light and bright and includes double bunk beds and adorable kids plush toys and accessories, including animal wall hangings from Kids Living. The family have two dogs – affectionately named Fanny and Dickie by Nick – who are full-time residents of the Greyton property. Pictured here is Fanny. **Above, right** The bedrooms were designed to feel like hotel suites – they are spacious and plush; here, hand-picked flowers from the meadow are placed in a vase from Pezula Interiors atop a chair by James Mudge. **Right** A special piece in the family room is Nick's mom's restored rocking chair.





**Left** The kitchen is the heart of the home; Nick loves to cook and both himself and Robyn adore entertaining friends and family. **This page, from left to right** With plenty of entertaining comes plenty of crockery and glassware! The Terracotta Sidi Low Vase is from Weylandts, the Egg Holder is from H&M Home, the White Smile Bowl and Black Eye Bowl are both by Lungiswa Joe available from LOOKBOOK Studio; all crockery from H&M Home and Giant Cappuccino Mug in Bamboo from Le Creuset; an Hourglass Coupé from Dokter and Misses, a Green Glass Vase from H&M Home, a Billy Carafe in green from Poetry, a Vivi Tumbler from Country Road and a Ribbed Glass from Poetry sit atop beautiful Oggie Flooring.





‘There is just something so otherworldly about this place — it’s so calm, so silent; at night the stars take your breath away...’

**This page** Robust finishes and a variety of textures add interest to the living room, which benefits from ample light yet still feels cosy and comforting. The bespoke couch was custom-designed by Weylandts and the baskets were sourced from Zimbabwe. **Right** ‘For Zeanne + Goss, and Nick and Robyn, the outcome of this project has been exceptional; we’re proud to say that 98% of the team that made this happen were local builders and artisans from Greyton and its immediate surrounds, something we believed in and pushed for from the beginning. Greyton is all about community, so it’s fitting,’ says Zeanne.







## **A spiritual sanctuary beneath the stars:**

‘Sterrekopje’ is an Afrikaans phrase that loosely translates to ‘the bright star above the little mountain.’ And it couldn’t be a more apt name for the farm that my wife, Fleur Huijskens, and I call home. It’s also a place so magical and mystical that we decided to share it with the world...





**This page** Flowers, trees, bushes and all forms of foliage abound outside, against various shades of pink; landscaper Leon Kluge, with the assistance of Tristan Woudberg, have created magic with Sterrekopje's lush gardens. **Right** A tented ceiling in the guest bathroom adds to the charm, and has become an instant attraction for guests.





When Sterrekopje and I found each other three years ago, I instantly knew her purpose and mine were intertwined, destined to unfold side by side. For years I travelled the world, looking for a place where I could build something extraordinary, not just for myself but for others, a place rooted in nature – a place with a soul, where people could come to find rest; to regenerate and reconnect. I envisioned cottages – like little nests – tucked into overflowing gardens, with long communal tables bearing an abundance of glorious fresh food. I pictured long, leisurely dinners under the stars, echoed by laughter; I imagined a place that would be a return to somewhere that felt instantly familiar, an extension of who we are – a place of belonging.

Well, Sterrekopje is that place. I knew it from the first moment I met her. It was not something specific that I saw – it was a deep feeling, an innate knowing. From the depths of her soil to the top of her mountain. It was as if I had manifested this place into being. Just being among all her beauty – nature in abundance, a feminine energy, a sense of place and purpose – it does something to you... it grounds you; it allows you to surrender and to just be.

The name was given to her centuries ago by the farmers that called her home: ‘the bright star above the little mountain’ – the same then as she is today, always bright and guiding us home. Over the last three years, Fleur and I, together with our Sterrekopje family, have carefully restored the farm’s ancestral lands to be as fruitful and sustainable as they were all those years ago, returning nutrients to her soil, allowing her to flourish once again. Today, we grow more than 100 varieties of indigenous and heritage plants, using regenerative farming practices that encourage and support self-sustaining eco systems – just as nature intended. It is a simple yet abundantly rich and rewarding way of life – restoring this land has in turn restored us, taught us, and humbled us in ways we could never have imagined.

It was never our intention to create a hotel or a wellness centre; it was always to build a home, a sanctuary, a community and a safe place. From chefs and farmers to

practitioners and artists, to our ever-growing family of animals – we all come together to share, teach, serve and connect. I believe that we are all on a journey and mine led me to breathe new life into Sterrekopje. My dream is that everyone who comes here will uncover or rediscover the path of their own journey.

Scattered across the farm are 11 sanctuaries, each one of them a private retreat. Every room is a unique, eclectic yet calming merging of colours and textures that weave together a rich tapestry of cultures and stories – after all – a home is a place where you collect your most precious treasures and cherished memories. We have filled this home with such treasures. Walls are adorned with elaborate murals that have been masterfully painted by local artists; a collection of original art, one-of-a-kind antiques and custom furniture like hand-carved trunks and four-poster beds... Everything has been carefully curated to foster deep, restorative sleep and inspire contemplation and creativity.

Our Sterrekopje journeys are rooted in restorative and transformative rest, because we believe that it is from a place of rest that we discover a true path to growth. Together with our family of holistic practitioners we have developed a range of rituals that come together to restore every aspect of the intricately interconnected ecosystem of body, soul and earth.

Intuitive treatments, meditation and movement, and creative workshops are gently woven into the fabric of each day, along with our daily farm rhythms, from sunrise harvest and morning yoga to afternoon pottery classes and evening breathwork sessions.

The past three years have been an incredible journey, as we put our hands and hearts into restoring Sterrekopje.

As winter approaches and Sterrekopje closes for the month of July, we will take time to rest, to nurture fresh ideas and sow new seeds of intention for the coming spring. After all, this journey has only just begun, there is so much more to come. ●

**sterrekopje.com @sterrekopjefarm**



**Right** A family portrait in front of the bathhouse; pictured here are Nicole (left) and Fleur (right) with their two dogs (the official ground keepers and hole diggers of Sterrekopje) Winston and Frankie.





**Right, clockwise from top left** Sweet little design and decor details can be discovered in every corner. A view of the garden from the scullery. A vegetable mural in the kitchen was painted by the couple's friends, Keith and Di Christian. Harvesting fresh produce is par for the course at Sterrekopje. **Above, from left** A long wooden table with benches stretches the entire length of the U-shaped courtyard, where the olive trees cast beautiful reflections. The café-style living area offers many moments for guests to enjoy the soft morning light, or take shelter from the afternoon sun.





**This spread** The bathhouse, previously the main homestead, now houses a tented massage room, a floral treatment room, a tea room, as well as a turkish hammam, with a soon-to-be-launched herbal apothecary. Outside is a natural pool for cooling off in, the perfect spot to take in the sights and sounds of the garden.





Every room is an eclectic yet calming merging of colours and textures that weave together a rich tapestry of cultures and stories.

**This spread** Every bathroom has its own unique aesthetic and look, with some boasting murals by Tess Metcalf, and others display impressive tiling configurations and stone work, as well as many antique furniture pieces, and ceramic containers by Jade Ruijzenaars.





**This page** The bedrooms, like the bathrooms, are all different in look and feel, each with its own soft colour and artisinal decor, allowing guests to retire to a quiet refuge and retreat from the garden and farm life outside. Gregory Mellor Design was integral in assisting with the farm's interiors. **Right** Rattan furniture and comfy cushions can be found around every corner and on every stoep.





**Above** This outdoor shower and brass bath is the ideal spot to soak up the surrounds, with a full view of the garden beyond.  
**Left** An oversized daybed, overlooking the pool, is the perfect place to stretch out in the sun.