

# HOUSE AND LEISURE

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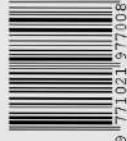
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# the collector

Words by Fleur Lategan Photography by Elsa Young a Frank Features production

An historical homestead in Tulbagh has been sensitively restored to even greater heights by its new owners



**Previous spread** The central hallway connects bedrooms and living spaces, anchored by a Cathy Abraham painting against Paen Black walls from Midas Tygervalley. A coir runner softens the geometry, while a handmade clay vessel by Atelier Vierkant hints at the owners' sculptural leanings. **Above** The front exterior is quintessentially Cape, its crisp white façade a nod to the home's architectural heritage. At the entrance, custom light sconces by Leon Electric frame the doorway, while a pair of Taj clay vessels by Atelier Vierkant stand as sculptural sentinels. **Opposite** In the dining room, an artwork by Cathy Abraham is paired with a handmade Anthos vessel, the two forming a conversation in texture and tone. The clay slab and brass dining table by Atelier Vierkant is surrounded by Cecile & Boyd dining chairs. The rich Bancha green of the adjoining lounge grounds the open-plan space, while a brass wall sconce and antique Chinese jars complete the layered vignette.





If it's true that the topography of a place can shape its character, then the town of Tulbagh in the Western Cape was destined for greatness. Encircled by not one but three awe-inspiring mountain ranges – the Obiqua, the Groot Winterhoek and the Witzenberg mountains, Tulbagh is a place of wide-open spaces and dramatic beauty. This may go some way to explaining the town's resilience in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in 1969 that measured 6.3 on the Richter scale.

Like a phoenix arising from the ashes, Tulbagh built itself anew with the help of the late, great architect Grawie Fagan, whose vision sought to preserve the town's architectural heritage. Almost 60 years later, it's best described as a living museum, home as it is to a staggering 32 national heritage monuments, all situated on the main street.

If the weathered walls, ancient beams, hidden courtyards and elegant gables of these homes could talk, they'd surely tell fascinating tales of the characters and lives that have played out here. None more so than Ballotina, a grand house built in 1815, that is believed to have been designed by French architect Louis Thibault. With its stately symmetry, classical style and baroque hol-bol gabled profile, it's hard to believe it was condemned for demolition in the wake of the earthquake.

While its history and proportions are dramatic, today the home invites cocooning from the moment you step into the hallway. 'Deciding on the way forward with an historical home is a lot like an archaeological dig,' says Jamie White, who with his partner, Joakim Silvandersson, bought the house five years ago. Entrepreneurs and aesthetes in equal measure, Jamie and Joakim fell in love with the history of the house and the many personalities who had ensured its survival.

'A lot of strong personalities have lived here,' says Jamie, in reference to the previous owner Dr Mary Cook, who oversaw the restoration of the house after the earthquake. 'It was important to us that the house retained its strong character, too.'

For Jamie and Joakim, the realisation that they needed to treat the interiors with as much power as the all-white exterior led them to a choice of darker colours indoors that work to amplify the spaces – beginning in the entrance hall. 'We wanted guests to feel transported to another world, the minute they walked through the front door,' explains Jamie.

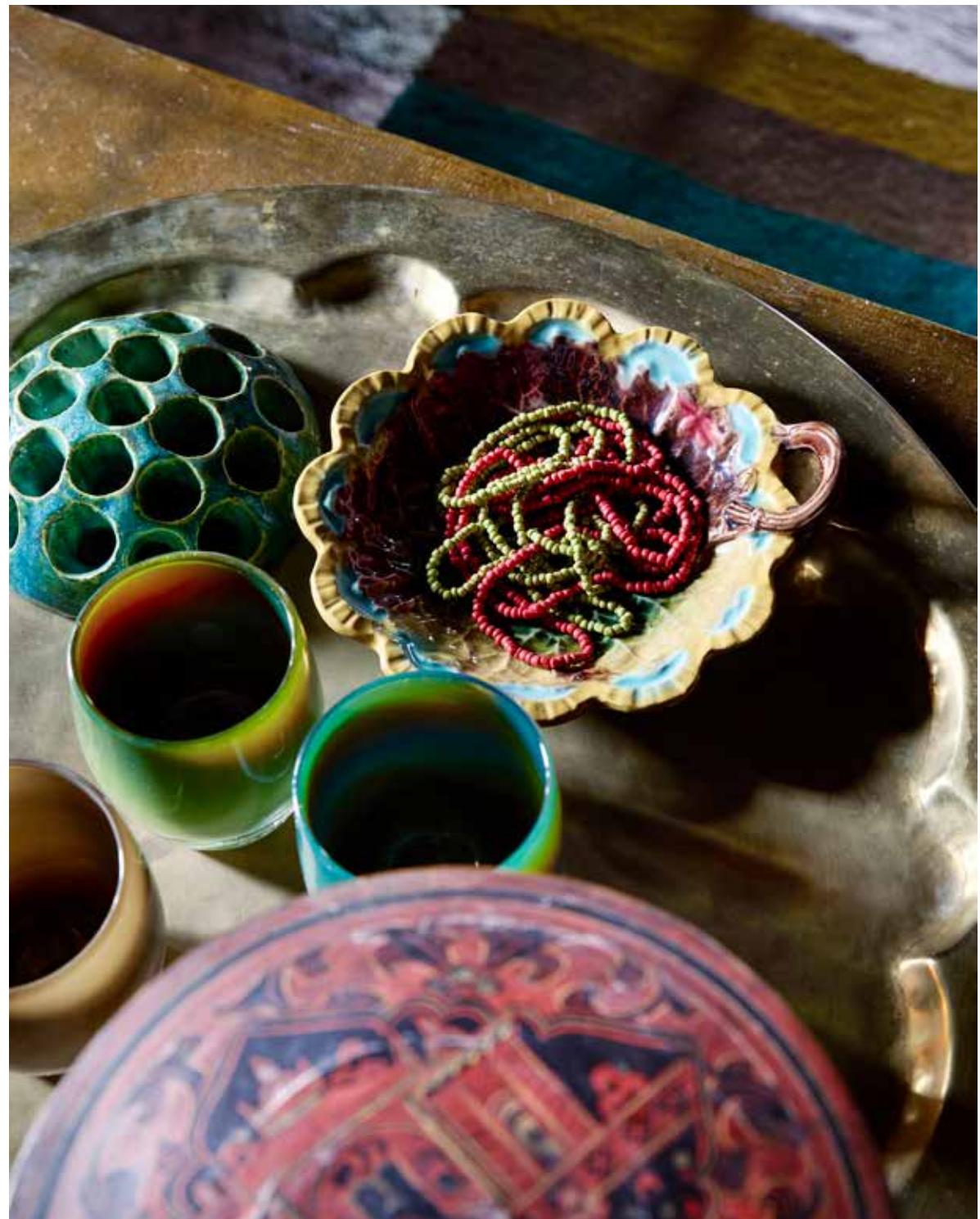
As the central entrance hall becomes a long, narrow passage with immensely high Burmese teak ceilings, the idea of using colour to lead you sequentially through the space was genius. 'Historically, many Dutch houses were drenched in deep colour so this approach just felt appropriate,' explains Jamie. 'We chose an almost inky warm black (Paean Black) to recall a balmy night sky or a deep reflecting pool, while the other rooms are meant to feel earthy and organic and play off the mystery of the hallway, alternating from a wrinkled elephant skin (Charleston Grey) to a wet lichen (Bancha) and a forest at midnight (Studio Green).'

While the generous fireplace in the main living room is the place to be in winter, on blazing summer afternoons you can move from the shade of the pergola in the outdoor courtyard to the pool in the garden, with its views all the way to the hill on the horizon, silhouetted with bluegum trees.

To wake up here – in generously dressed, uber-comfortable beds set beneath ancient beams and surrounded by walls marked by the hands that crafted them – is a privilege. ●

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**Opposite** In the living area, a black and white photograph by David Ballam commands attention, its graphic lines mirrored in the Tuareg table from Out of This World. The seating area's armchairs, marble side table and bronze drum, all from Cecile & Boyd, form a tactile mix of surfaces and shapes. A blue and white clay vessel from Morocco adds a crisp, contrasting note against the walls in Bancha from Midas Tygervalley. The chandelier from OnSite Gallery introduces a hint of glamour, while the woven coir rug by Coortex and scatter cushions anchor the space in comfort.



**Above** Jamie and Joakim's eye for beauty is everywhere, here a table holds a Burmese Etched Lacquer Wedding Box, a Majolica Flower Frog, a Majolica Dish and a Glassybaby Votive. **Opposite** The kitchen takes on a dramatic air with walls in Studio Green from Midas Tygervalley. A generous wooden table, serving as both island and workspace, anchors the centre, while a wooden vessel from Out of This World adds a rustic touch. Above the orange hob, custom-made to Jamie's specifications by Custom Concrete, hangs a framed blue-and-white platter by Juanita Oosthuizen.







**Previous spread** A cosy retreat for late nights, the Club Lounge features a bold Mexican Otomi textile, custom Maxim Decor sofa, and Cecile & Boyd's chairs with vintage Ikat cushions. Paen Black walls set a dramatic backdrop for jewel-toned accents, including a turquoise lion, Jessica Grönwall's clay figure, and a Yoruba beaded hat. A Lund carpet, Rubn Lighting lamps, and a vintage Cape oak cabinet complete the scene. **Above** In the en-suite, soft natural light plays across the St. James bathtub and Växbo Lin linens. **Opposite** The bedroom pairs vintage charm with layered comfort, a chandelier from OnSite Gallery, King chairs, a Cecile & Boyd's bench draped with Kaseholm lambskins, a Coirtex rug, Mungo throw, Rubn lamp, and a barley twist table from J&L Redelinghuys Antiques.

