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# ON THE *seashore*

The Bellises took a tired cottage in the most perfect location and over many weekends, transformed it into a gloriously stylish beach house

## WHO LIVES HERE

John and Joyce Bellis, a semi-retired couple who spend most of their weekends and holidays here, often joined by their daughters.

## THE HOUSE

A single-storey whitewashed cottage at Kommetjie on the Cape Peninsula, with four en suite bedrooms, a living room, TV snug, kitchen and wide veranda with extensive views. ▷

TEXT ANNE SCHAUFER PHOTOGRAPHS FARNIENTE/PERFECT HIDEAWAYS/HENRIQUE WILDING



**THIS SPREAD, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** ● From the **veranda**, there are views of Hout Bay and Chapman's Peak. ● Framed by dune vegetation, this charming **cottage** was extensively renovated while maintaining the Cape coastal style.



The property is available to rent through Perfect Hideaways. [perfecthideaways.co.za/accommodation/farniente](https://perfecthideaways.co.za/accommodation/farniente)

From this ultra-social, wining-dining-relaxing **veranda**, guests can enjoy the sunset, or watch surfers right in front of the house.

This is everyone’s dream beach cottage. Just perfect, with the white beach, dune vegetation and ocean as the front garden. But it wasn’t always like this. The house has been a labour of love for Joyce and John Bellis of Cape Town, who poured their creative energy and roll-up-your-sleeves attitude into it every weekend for four years. When their twin daughters went off to university and their ties to urban commitments eased off, they began looking for a weekend spot, one where

the extended family could get together, and which could possibly become their permanent home on retirement. As lovers of the sea, they’d set their hearts on Kommetjie: “We thought we’d find a plot and build,” says Joyce, “but we couldn’t find one that worked for us.” In the middle of winter, the estate agent

phoned ... “a house in a sad state, but in a fantastic position”. “It was thatch – we didn’t want thatch – and after a long-term let, it looked very tired.” Still, the position trumped all. The Bellises made an offer, and that was it. The house is one of a group of 20-something-year-old thatched >

**OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:** ● Cleverly designed as protection from the elements, the **pool area** is perfect for summer swimming and lazing under the grapevine. ● The charming **courtyard** corner space is the ideal spot to socialise, escape poor weather, or chill solo with a book. ● From the house, **boardwalks** meander through the dunes to the beach.





homes, all unique, but part of a homeowner's association with a common architectural code. Code or not, there was ample leeway for the Bellises to accomplish what they wanted. They're no strangers to renovations, having done the same to their previous home in Simon's Town.

"The house had been cleverly and thoughtfully designed," says Joyce, "It was quirky, with interesting windows, which we liked. We only did what suited the house." In essence, they made the home more comfortable for their family: "We added two bathrooms to make all bedrooms en suite, extended one bedroom, and prettied it up."

The house is in four sections arranged

around a sheltered courtyard, ideal when it's windy on the sea side. At the sea-facing front is the main section, comprising the living room, kitchen, main bedroom and bathroom, a TV snug on a mezzanine level, and the big, deep veranda. In a separate two-bedroomed cottage the Bellises incorporated the existing bathroom into one bedroom to make it en suite, and added a new bathroom to the other bedroom; the fourth is also in a separate building, which they reconfigured and extended. The last building houses the garages.

The house is essentially white – the code here – but Joyce laughs as she recalls the endless paint pots she

brought home when choosing the accent colour: "I didn't want the original olive green used on the shutters, doors and windows, so I worked hard to find the perfect green-grey."

The Bellises did everything themselves and loved it. They re-screeded the bedroom floors and even reinstated the pool from its former

**ABOVE:** This massive open-plan space houses the heart of the home – the kitchen, dining and, this side of the railing, the living room. Up a few steps is the TV snug, which has its own balcony. They left the rafters in their natural state as a contrast to the white walls.



life as a flower bed. The garden was a bland surround of patchy lawn and sand, and they lifted it all to make way for some creative hard landscaping. "John is very into planning, so he loved designing the gravel pathways and wooden boardwalks that lead through beds of succulents and indigenous plants, and out through a gate to the beach."

The whitewashed Greek island look is an integral part of the home, so once the alterations had provided

that next level of comfort, Joyce embarked on the interior design. She spent hours sourcing the right accessories, sitting through auctions, and rifling through charity and second-hand shops. She's not complaining though, because with a retail fashion buyer background, this is her happy space. There's a wonderful sense of authenticity to the decor, and nothing feels forced; natural wood and chosen colours complement and warm the >



**THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT:**

- The practical **kitchen** has concrete countertops and built-in shelving. Two steps down, is a handy utility room (not visible).
- A dressing room links the **main bedroom** to the en suite bathroom. From the window, there's a view of the sea.
- The views are even visible from the built-in concrete bath in the **en suite bathroom**.



white surfaces, and although the cosy interiors are by no means minimalist, they're not cluttered.

As Joyce loves cooking and entertaining, the kitchen was important. "We're fortunate to have a great deli nearby and locally grown organic vegetables are sold at the local school. The Pepe Charlot cheese shop with their delicious range of goat's cheeses and a good seafood shop are close by, so it's easy to source fresh produce. We sometimes collect mussels off the rocks along the Slangkop lighthouse path or from Scarborough beach, cook them up and serve with a crusty loaf of bread from Cape Point bakery."

That gorgeous, vast table on the veranda is well used for entertaining. Actually, the 'stoep' is a favourite spot

for sundowners and sunsets as well. "And, from July to December you often see whales."

Their focus from the start was not only on comfort and low maintenance, but their lifestyle: "We love walks on the beach – the shoreline changes almost daily with the wind reshaping the sand. The walk left along Long Beach is wonderful for watching the surfers, dog owners and dogs enjoying the beach. Turn right, and we head

**THIS PAGE, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:**

- Decorated with furniture found at auctions and antique shops, the fourth **bedroom** overlooks the pool.
- Joyce designed this en suite **bathroom** off the fourth bedroom to fit in with the style of the rest of the house.



SHOPPING **MANDY BUCHHOLZ** PHOTOGRAPHS **SUPPLIED** PRODUCTS ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY AND PRICES WERE CHECKED AT TIME OF GOING TO PRINT. SEE PAGE 2.

towards Noordhoek beach – great for birdwatching around the vlei – and reach the *Kakapo* shipwreck. From time to time, we walk the 4,5km along the beach to Noordhoek and lunch at the Red Herring pub, which has great beach views from the terrace."

"Then again," she adds, "we also simply spend time with a good book admiring the view and the birds in the garden." 📖

**ABOVE:** In the **courtyard**, an olive tree produces abundantly; straight ahead, steps lead down to a huge cellar which serves as a laundry, games room, and beach equipment store room.

**SOURCES** @home [home.co.za](http://home.co.za) **Bespoke Home** [bespokehome.co.za](http://bespokehome.co.za) **Duram** [duram.co.za](http://duram.co.za) **MRP Home** [mrphome.com](http://mrphome.com) **Takealot** [takealot.com](http://takealot.com) **Weylandts** [weylandts.co.za](http://weylandts.co.za)

**Get the look**  
Give an all-white kitchen rustic charm with natural textures and country-style accessories

