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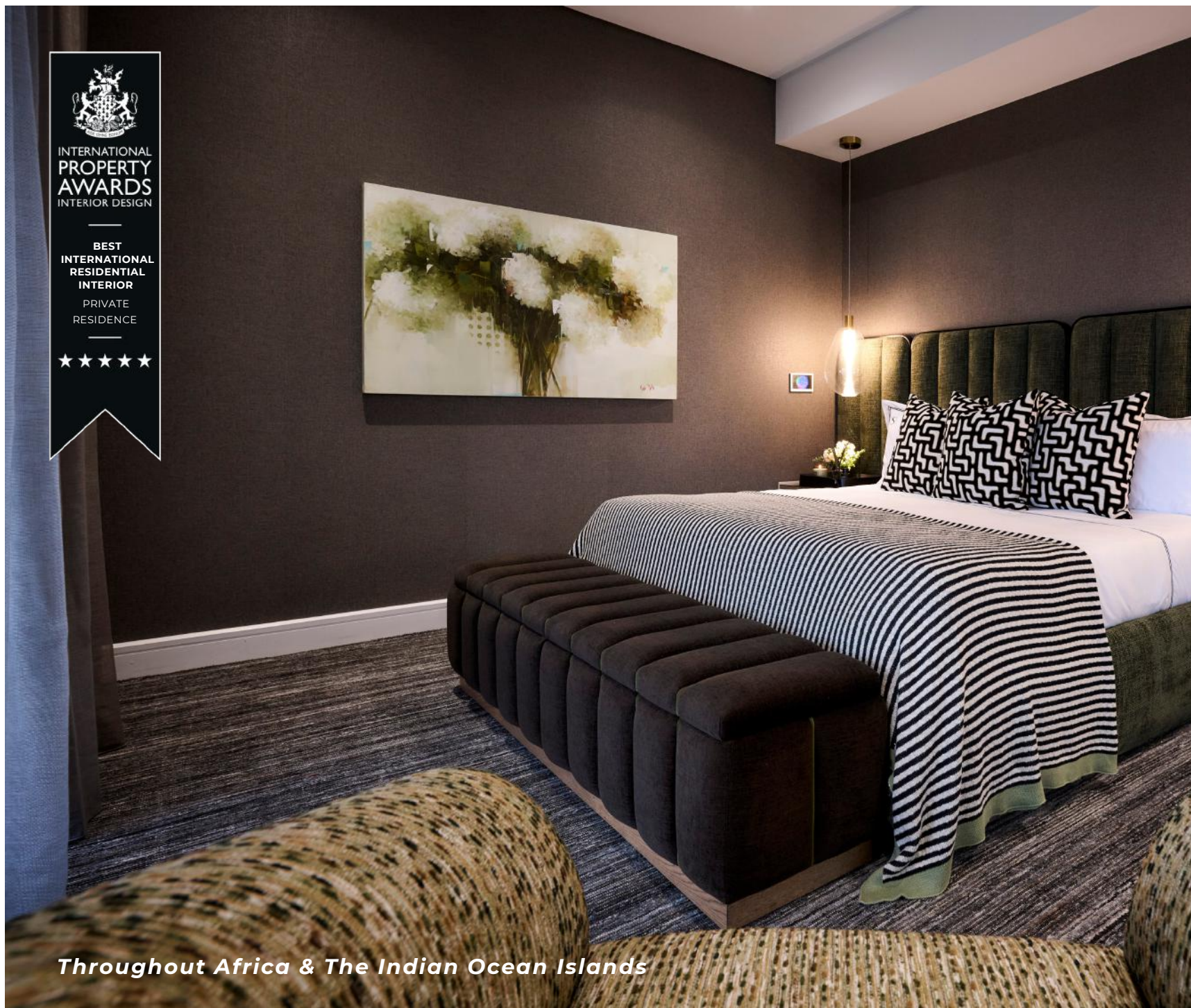
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PUBLISHER

North Coast Publishing (Pty) Ltd

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LIFE & STYLE

Our print publications, website and social media platforms have shaped opinion in the KZN North Coast region for over twenty years creating a media brand that is credible, authoritative, and universally acclaimed.

Having expanded the platform to include Ballito's only commercial radio station – **Radio Life & Style 88.0FM** that also streams digitally via free apps on every platform, we now own the local media scene.

Our advertisers enjoy the unique advantages of cross-platform marketing in a local economy that is small enough to dominate yet big enough to excite those who appreciate the value that is available to be unlocked here.

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BLOOM: TRITE AND TRUE

Friends, welcome to a fabulously floral edition of Life & Style.



FLORALS? FOR SPRING? GROUNDBREAKING, I KNOW, I KNOW. Miranda Priestly would certainly have a few choice words (or, rather, a devastatingly cutting glare aimed towards me) for my trite and uninspired editorial decisions for this issue. But you know what? I have never once, at the start of Spring, walked down the street from my apartment past the house on the corner painted in the most delightfully pastoral shade of pink with flowers bursting from its hedges and over its walls and through the gaps in its gates and thought to myself, while taking in the first breath of their bloom: “How trite. How uninspired. How unoriginal.” No. I just breathe it all in and try to enjoy it.

The starring role of this house’s ensemble-cast of aromas is performed by the Brunfelsia pauciflora - more commonly known as the “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow” plant. The name comes from how the flowers change colours over the span of three days - a deep, dark purple (Yesterday); a faded, lighter lavender (Today); and an almost pure white (Tomorrow). It’s a sweet-smelling and awfully-existential incarnation of the passage of time if there ever was one - especially given that, on the fourth day, the petals of the flowers typically fall off of the plant as another begins its bloom.

If I really wanted to come across as tritely sentimental, I could go ahead and tell you how the brief lifespan of this flower reminds me of that famous line from Keats:

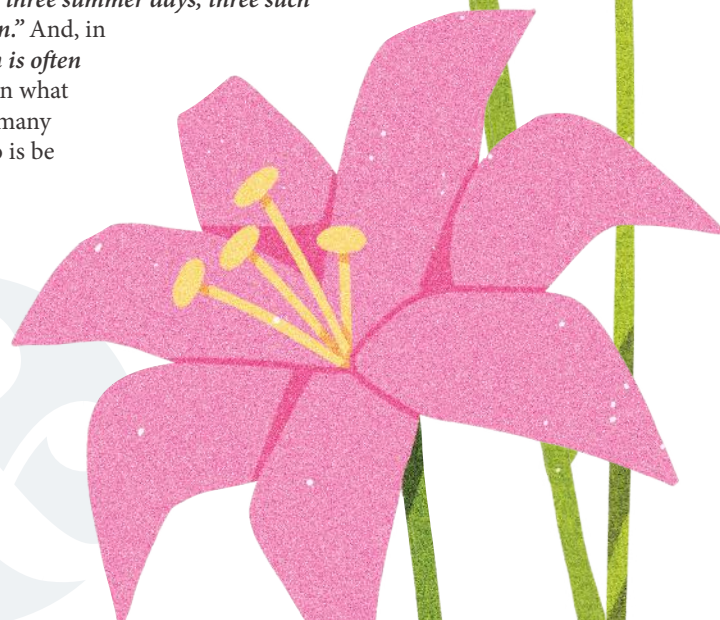
“I almost wish we were butterflies and liv’d but three summer days, three such

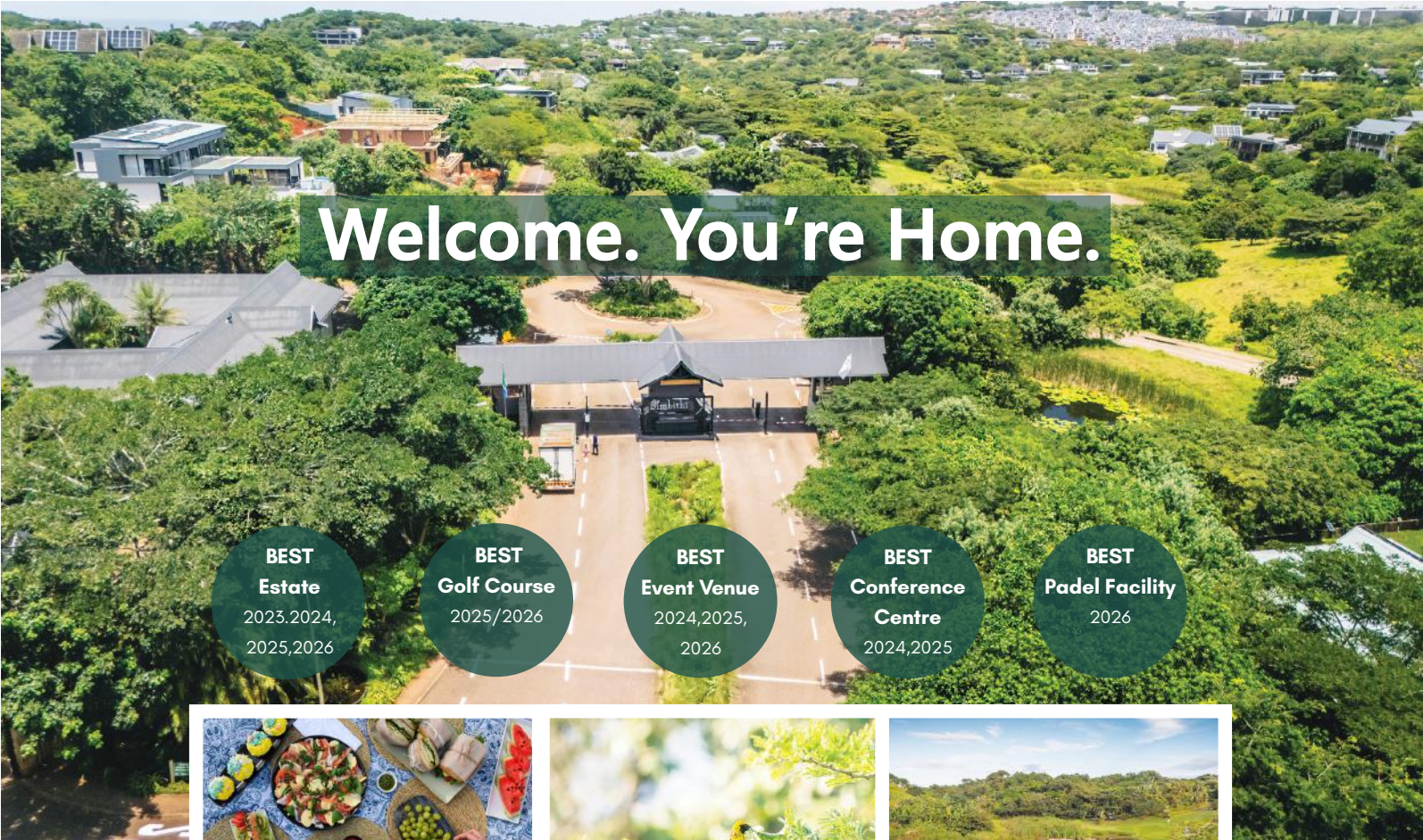
days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain.” And, in all honesty, I do. The NY Times best selling author Ocean Vuong once said, *“Cynicism is often misread as intelligence”* and I agree. Sometimes there is more truth in what is trite than what might be more obscure or cynically cool. And the truth is, we are really not sure how many tomorrows we all have. We don’t know when our petals are going to fall. All we can do is be grateful for yesterday, enjoy today and maybe hope for tomorrow.

So, friends, I invite you to enjoy the Spring time with us as we celebrate flowers and the people who tend to them in this issue of Life & Style.

Yours yesterday-today-and-tomorrow,

Dan





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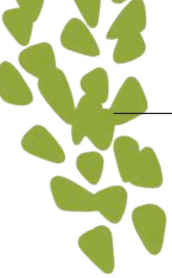


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THE L&S EDIT

EVERY TWO WEEKS, Life & Style writers Mia McCarthy and Shannon Devy come together to collate all the best design, fashion, art, music, décor and books they've come across in recent days. They curate these discoveries in the L&S Edit, a fabulous newsletter for anyone interested in style, craft and creativity.

It comes out every second Friday, and it's 100% free. Why not subscribe? Just scan our QR code, enter your email address, and expect a fabulous morning read to land in your inbox Friday morning.



Subscribe to the L&S Edit at www.lifeandstyle.fm today to never miss another fabulous issue!

Here are some highlights from the recent L&S Edit archives:

Pets

HOMIE

Homie is the home-grown Cape Town brand making brightly-coloured pet beds for stylish homes. By combining the bright pastels, bold stripes, and charming checks that have become the beloved signature of Copenhagen maximalism, Homie turns post-pandemic dopamine dressing into dopamine decor. Each bed comes with a removable, 100% cotton cover that you can chuck into the wash whenever your pet friend takes interior decorating into their own muddy paws. Homie is a one-woman show for the time being, so the best way to buy your homie a Homie bed is by DMing them on their Instagram page.

@homie.cpt



Art



KANISTANAUX CERAMICS

Self-taught San Francisco ceramicist Sierra Kanistanaux makes the kind of art that evokes something ancient: ritual, myth, magic. From the hammered-silver texture of her ammonite vases to the prototypic simplicity of her horse sculptures, every item looks like its first home was a cave.

@kanistanaux_ceramics

MIWA ITO

Miwa Ito is an Osaka-born glass artist whose glassblowing practice is underpinned by a distinctly Japanese perspective: Nothing is empty. Everything is alive.

Raised in an environment where daily prayer intersected with popular manga and anime, her artistic sensibilities were shaped at the crossroads of tradition and pop culture.

At this intersection, It explores themes of life, gratitude, and quiet beauty through playful forms inspired by animals, food, and everyday objects. In her latest collection, Touch of Spring, takes the idea of forbidden candy to the extreme.

@miwaito.official



COURTNEY KINNARE

Courtney Kinnare is Filipino-American artist and designer known for her vibrant mirrored works and functional artistic objects, every one a study in the interactions of colour, texture, and light. Kinnare eludes being constrained to a single medium; her recent forays into glassblowing have produced some of the most beautiful lamps we have ever seen, each pastel orb resembles the sugary orb of a lollipop. We want one in every colour!

www.courtneykinnare.com

@ courtneykinnare



Fashion

VICTORI

Namibian-born designer Victoria Ongansie's daring fashion label, Victori, was recently selected for the 2026 Woolworths Youth Makers Competition, a mentorship program that aims to equip small businesses with funding and retail business experience. Quiet Bloom is a deeply personal ready-to-wear collection inspired by one of the darkest periods of the young designer's life. From darkness blooms a beautiful collection of Basque-waisted dresses and androgynous shirts.

"Every Victori collection begins with an emotion, an experience or a chapter of life that I want to translate into something people can wear," says Ongansie.

"If someone puts on a Victori piece and feels more confident walking into a room, more expressive of who they are, or more connected to the story they're living, then we've created something far more valuable than cloth.

@victori_za



Accessories

THE MOSKO BAG

Gorgeously playful yet minimalist, this MOSKO bag by Krisztina Moskovits in Budapest is handcrafted from the finest leather and rope.

We just love the fun details!

@mosko_bag



CAPE COBRA LEATHERCRAFT

The Cape Cobra brand began halfway through the twentieth century, when maroquinerie master Lothar Schäfer, trained in the leather ateliers of Offenbach, Germany, took a trip to Egypt. There, he met his wife, Denise, before the couple travelled to the opposite end of the continent and settled in Cape Town.

In a humble home workshop, Lothar and Denise crafter their first leather handbags by hand, blending classic European techniques with locally-sourced materials.

Today, Cape Cobra Leathercraft is a third-generation-run family business with an internationally acclaimed reputation.

The brand has produced bags for some of the world's most prestigious luxury fashion houses while boasted a 100% African-based value chain, guaranteeing traceability, supporting local economies, and preserving artisanal skills.

@capecobraleathercraft





THE NINEVITES

The Ninevites is a multidisciplinary design studio and creative agency founded by South African designer Ntuli Mlangeni Berg in 2012. For over a decade, the studio has partnered with craftspeople, designers, and global brands to weave projects that honour traditional techniques while celebrating cultural identities and supporting sustainable creative economies.

The Ninevites has previously produced tactile work for partners like Standard Bank Art Lab, Penguin Random House UK, Fields Menswear, Trenery, and the Nordic Culture Fund.

www.theninevites.com



XEE SUMMER

We know Xee Summer for her vibrant prints and t-shirts, but we didn't know the lady could weave! As an extension of her creative practice, which is known for its retro-modern style, artist and creative director Xia Carstens has made a series of handwoven tapestries. What a spectacular way to add some colour and texture to your home.

You can commission your own Xee Summer tapestry online at xeesummer.co.za

Jewellery



NEO POP

Neo Pop is a South African jewellery brand bringing vivid pops of colour to the wrists and décolletage of their discerning fans. These hand-crafted semi-precious stone pieces are each one of a kind so, if you see something you like, best make like a magpie and snatch it up.

www.neopop.co.za



ODE



Designer Daniel Selvan's creative philosophy is guided by the assertion that designers have a responsibility to use their skills to better peoples' lives. His design career has seen him work with everyone from creative founders to corporate brands, but this week we're really interested in his side hustle: Ode Jewellery.

Simply made with materials that have rich meaning or deep history, Selvan's ring designs are crafted with a sincerity that borders on childlike. They seem to sell out fast so, if you see a one-of-a-kind design that you like, you'd best act quickly.

You can order Ode Jewellery pieces via DM on Instagram [@selvan.design](https://www.instagram.com/selvan.design)



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FYNBOS NEEDS THE FIRE, WE NEED THE REST

"All fynbos wants to burn."

The beauty of these flowers is that they are meant to die.

Words: Rosa-Karoo Loewe

BURSTING ALONG THE ROLLING HILLS of Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, blackened by fire last year, these buds have fought through the soil to expand into a green seascape at the ocean's edge.

The reserve is experiencing a superbloom, more than 20 years in the making. Thousands of species are growing across the reserve, many of them plants that only emerge after fire and some that have not been seen blooming for years.

The days roll through on circadian rhythm. We arrive after dark.

Winding through the coastal towns on a moonless Friday night, we get lost. Even when we reach the gate, we turn left instead of right. The car tailgating us is, in fact, a member of their staff, who politely guides us into the waiting double doors of reception. A hot towel loosens the icy muscles of driving from our hands.

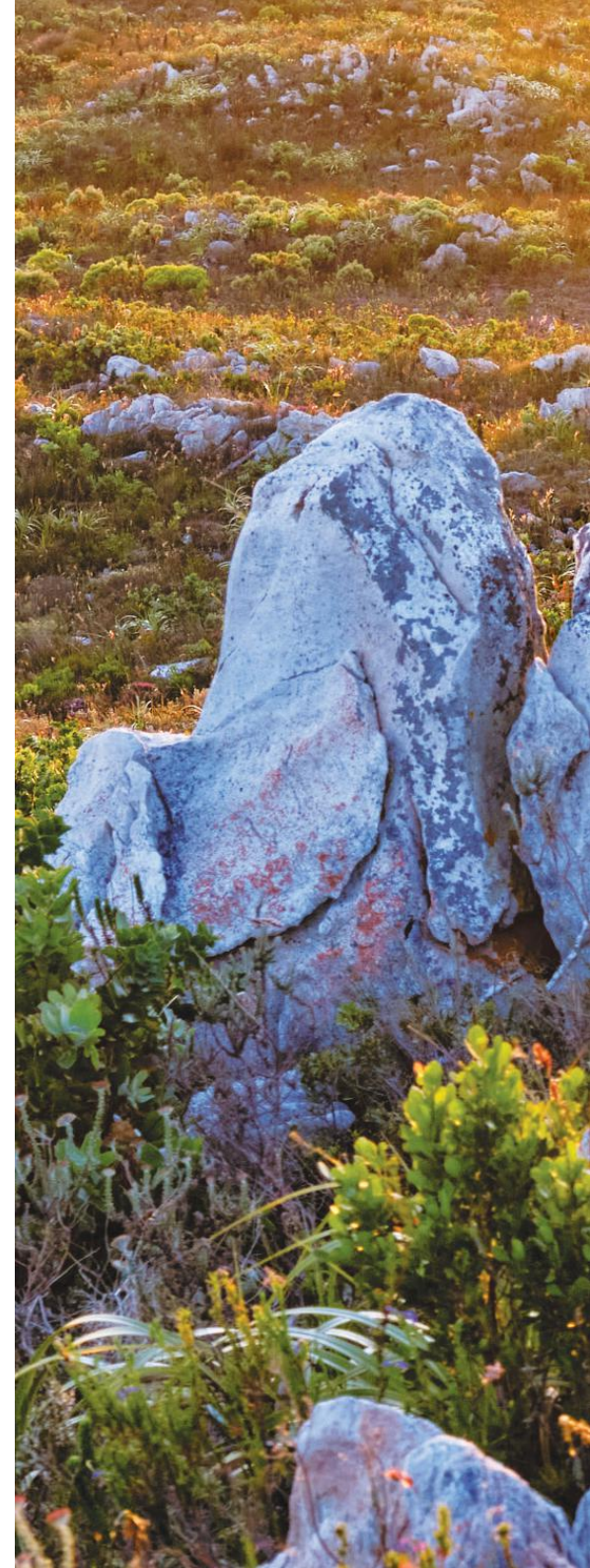
The warm rich tones of the entryway, earthy wood. Bags disappear, carried ahead to our cottage more than 200 metres away, the weight thankfully taken off our shoulders.

These walks through the softly lit milkwood forests become part of the daily routine at Grootbos, moving back and forth between succulent meals and soft beds, planned moments of natural immersion.

Wooden, Crisp, White

Our cottage is modern and private, all wood and crisp white linen. The mountains disappear into darkness around us, making it feel remote and private. Every now and then a car moves along the road below, headlights drawing one blurred line through the valley, but what reaches us through the open sliding doors is the distant hum of Walker Bay.

There are large botanical artworks on the walls. House plants filling corners. A Cape fur seal printed onto the notepad on the desk.









The bath products carry the same herbal scents found outside, and beside the kettle are teas made with indigenous plants from the region. Before sleeping, we drink something that tastes faintly of buchu and honey while the forest recedes into mist beyond the deck.

The Last Table

Over the hills sits the Forest Lodge, with its glass floor to ceiling views, and couches tucked into cozy corners for sipping coffee and reading books. There is another lounge where people migrate before dinner, the restaurant raised above both spaces, opening onto a deck that looks out across the reserve.

It's all there waiting for you, anticipating your needs before you've even realised them.

Dinner is three courses each evening, designed by Executive Chef Ben Conradie around seasonal ingredients, many coming from Grootbos's own organic farm. Vegetables, herbs, eggs, pork and honey all make their way from the reserve into the kitchen.

Our waitress Andiswa grew up here, although her family is from Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. She hands us the wine list. I call it a wine bible. She laughs in agreement. 89 pages long, it's arranged by style, varietal and terroir. I spend most of dinner imagining the expanse of the cellar downstairs. She offers to give us a tour but mentions there's a couple celebrating with an intimate dinner there this evening.

"Nice and quiet," she says.

When we're eventually the last table left in the restaurant, the lights dim. Through the walls comes an enthusiastic chorus of Happy Birthday, followed by chants of "how old are you now?" We slip out into the night, back through the forest.

Roots & Soil

Our guide for the weekend is Grootbos naturalist Jono Durham, who has spent more than a decade walking these mountains. The following morning begins with a 2.6km hike through fynbos before dropping down into the milkwood forest.

"Come to an area like this, that's 100% natural, never been grazed, never been ploughed, this is millions of years of untouched evolution."

These plants were never decimated by drought or ice. "This is one of the only places in the world where during the last ice ages, we haven't been covered in ice, and we haven't been desert, so the plants here have never stopped growing and changing. With that length of time, families have multiplied into a multitude of species."

A hundred metre gap between the large plants is the fire break. Jono calls it the last line of defence.

"Last year was a very hectic fire season. We had two evacuations, luckily virtually nothing was lost."

Standing among waist-high green growth, it's difficult to picture the hills burning.

"It's part of living here," Jono says. "This is extremely flammable vegetation, it's packed full of oils."



Fire strips back old growth, opens the canopy to sunlight and returns nutrients to the notoriously poor fynbos soil. Leave the landscape untouched for too long, and the dense vegetation begins choking out smaller species.

"A superbloom is a time after fire you get an incredible diversity of plants," Jono says. "Plants that only come up after fire, they lay dormant and only flower one season after fire. These unique flowers are only seen once a decade, or two decades, or three decades. Special endemics that only come up after fire."

He bends down beside a September Bush. It's a common enough garden plant, a type of pea, but its flower is built almost exclusively for carpenter bees. He presses gently against the petals, showing us the tiny landing platform. The trap door opens and pollen is released onto the underside of the insect before closing again.

The Forest Remembers

The path descends into the milkwood forest, thousands of years old. Moss hangs off the branches. What you think is another trunk entirely is actually part of the same tree, its branches snaking down into the earth, and back up again.

Researchers wanted to know whether these forests had always looked like this, or whether they had once stretched further across the mountains before fire, people or climate altered their boundaries. So they drilled cores into the soil. By studying pollen preserved in different layers, palaeobotanists could reconstruct the vegetation growing here roughly 5,000 years ago. They sampled the middle of the forest, its edges and areas beyond them.

"In the last 5,000 years, the forest has been exactly the same size," Jono says, "What we think is that underneath these forests, the limestone aquifer, the water table, is higher than the surrounding areas. So the roots are actually in moist soil, whereas you go a few metres either way, suddenly that water level drops."

He shrugs. "That's our theory, but we don't know it for sure."

Learning The Names

The afternoon is spent in an open safari vehicle doing something I didn't know existed until arriving here: a fynbos safari. Instead of lions, we're looking down.

Enormous orange daisies appear beside strings of dolls' roses. Orchids hide among the shrubs. Proteas rise above the vegetation like giant crowns. Every few minutes Jono stops the vehicle, jumps out and disappears into the fynbos. "Many people have said it was the most eye-opening experience they ever had, and enjoyed it more than a big five safari," Jono says. "We as humans, train to go in with what we want to see or get out of it."

"The best way into nature is being open minded and not go looking. With fynbos, it's the tiny things, there is a sense of wonder because there is no preconceived notion of what to expect."

We offroad, and stop for tea. The brew includes buchu leaves Jono picked at the start of the safari. We taste three honeys harvested from the reserve: mountain honey, coastal honey and the rare *Erica irregularis* honey produced from bees working among one of Grootbos's endemic plants.

Jono picks a brown sage blossom and asks to pretend my finger is a sunbird's beak. Two small petals seal the nectar chamber shut. Push into the flower and the mechanism springs forward, dusting pollen exactly where the bird's forehead would be. It's an extraordinary little machine.

This stays with you at lunch and breakfast the next day. When the sunbirds sip nectar from brown sage as you sip your coffee, you know what they're tasting, and try to find the specks of golden pollen on their heads.

Salt and Stone

It's afternoon and we have moved to the ocean. De Kelders still feels like a small town, even with the mass surge of industrialisation happening along this stretch of coastline.

We are on the road right by the sea, looking for whales, a sneak peek before the Klipgat caves. We spot one almost immediately. And then another. And another.

A southern right surfaces just beyond the rocks, its long black back rolling through the water before disappearing again. A mother and her calf. Then more, further down the bay.

The main attraction, though, is the Klipgat Caves, one of the most significant archaeological sites on the southern Cape coast. Beneath the limestone overhang, people sheltered here thousands upon thousands of years ago. The tide comes in faster than we expect. The rocks turn slick without warning and for a moment the water is close enough to startle us, but the sun catches the mouth of the cave at exactly that moment, cutting gold clean across the water, and it's worth the fright.

There is a freshwater stream that pours right into the sand. It's high tide. No stranger to the ocean, I vehemently dive into the water, only managing to ride a few massive waves before returning to shore.

We head back to the whales. There are more. I ask Jono if this is common. He says no.

We are truly blessed.







The Florilegium

Dawn arrives through glass doors. We visit the Hannarie Wenhold Botanical Art Gallery, better known as the Grootbos Florilegium.

More than fifty botanical artists have been invited from around the world to paint the plants of Grootbos, each choosing species currently flowering on the reserve before spending months completing painstakingly accurate scientific illustrations. The project has become one of the most important contemporary collections of botanical art in Africa, documenting plants, their habitats and, unusually, the pollinators that depend on them.

The paintings are astonishingly detailed. Cross-sections reveal reproductive structures invisible to the naked eye. Tiny insects, some only millimetres long, sit beside the flowers they pollinate. Every petal is measured. Every leaf is proportionally accurate.

One artist who's taken this further than most is Nic Bladen. Between August 2024 and July 2025, the sculptor made almost weekly pilgrimages to Grootbos, given permission to move freely across the reserve, to study the plants he would ultimately cast, from the ones easily overlooked like the vingertjies, to the monumental candelabra lily and blouvuurpyl. He waited more than twenty years to successfully cast a spider orchid. He worked alongside the reserve's resident herpetologist, whose recordings of frogs and birds run through the exhibition as a low sound-loop, so the work carries the sound of the land as well as its shape. A portion of every sale goes back to the Grootbos Foundation.

Fynbos on Horseback

By now, we feel like part of the landscape. The perfect time to experience it on horseback.

There are 18 horses at Grootbos. Our guides, sisters Nicci and Samantha Vourie, grew up nearby in Baardskeerdersbos.

"A happy horse is a happy guest," they tell us. "You can't be a pushover," Nicci says, "it's an animal." We have to be firm when walking past the large orange daisies, because they love to snack on them.

They have noticed the landscape changing every single day from atop their horses, and now we do the same. New insects, leaves, creatures crawling through bright flowers. This is a landscape in constant flux. The ride is the perfect epilogue to our stay here, giving us pause to reflect on the time we've spent being a part of that constant, organic motion at a lodge that finds its place in this rhythm naturally, without ever compromising on luxury.

"The best part of fynbos is it needs to die to live," Nicci tells us.

"We can learn something from that."

I realised just how full of people and places our days here had been, yet somehow, it always felt like we had the whole place to ourselves.



@grootbos

Facebook.com/Grootbos Private Nature Reserve

www.grootbos.com

OPEN PLAN, OPEN MIND

The way we want to live has changed.
On the KZN North Coast, the architecture is finally catching up.

SOMETHING SHIFTED IN THE WAY WE THINK about home, and it happened faster than anyone expected. For a generation, the house was where you slept, ate, and stored your things between the parts of life that actually mattered. Then, quite suddenly, the house became the office, the gym, the restaurant, the classroom, and the only view we had of the world. We looked at our walls with new eyes. And a great many of us visioned how it would feel to look past those walls.

What followed has been one of the most significant cultural shifts in residential design in decades. We stopped wanting more rooms and started wanting more air. We stopped valuing square metres and started valuing light, flow, and the ability to step outside without ceremony. The old aspiration was a bigger house; the new one is a house that breathes.

The term we reach for is "open plan", but that phrase is already dated. Open plan, as most of us understood it, meant removing the internal walls: knocking the kitchen through to the lounge, letting the family occupy one generous shared space instead of three cramped ones. Useful, certainly. But it only ever solved half the problem. The house was still a sealed box; it just had fewer partitions inside it.

The real revolution is happening at the perimeter. Because the wall that matters most is not the one between your kitchen and your lounge: it is the one between your living room and the outside world. Remove that, and you have not simply reorganised your floor plan. You have fundamentally changed your relationship with the place you live.



Nowhere does this make more sense than on the KZN North Coast, where the climate is generous for ten months of the year and the landscape is doing something spectacular in every direction. Here, a home that holds the outside at arm's length is not just architecturally timid; it is a waste of the single greatest asset the property has. And yet, for years, the technology and expertise required to do it properly were the limiting factor. Big glass was expensive, heavy, and often poorly executed; sliding systems jammed, sealed badly, and failed under coastal conditions within a few seasons.

This is precisely the gap that NSG (North Shore Group) has spent years closing. Their work in architectural glass and precision-engineered aluminium exists to answer a question the market has only recently learned to ask: how do you dissolve the boundary between inside and out, completely and permanently, without sacrificing security, thermal comfort, or structural integrity? Frameless glass systems that open a room to the horizon; sliding and stacking panels that retract into pockets and vanish; aluminium engineered to slim proportions that carry serious loads while barely registering to the eye. The result is

a house that can be entirely open on a Sunday afternoon and entirely sealed against a summer storm by evening, with no compromise at either end.

What makes this possible is not simply good product; it is control. NSG designs, manufactures, and installs in-house from their facility outside Ballito, soon to be complemented by a Cape Town branch. When the team receives drawings of the vision in mind, tolerances, systems performances & practicality reviewed, and the ambitious thing the architect drew is actually what gets built. It is why NSG has become the name that South Africa's most demanding designers and developers reach for when the brief calls for something genuinely open.

The homes being built on this coastline now are not just prettier than the ones that came before. They are the physical expression of a changed mind, a collective decision that life is better lived in the light, in the air, and in full view of the sea. Open plan was always a good idea. It simply took us this long to work out where the walls really were.



Discover NSG's architectural glass and aluminium solutions at www.nsgroup.co.za

FLOWER PUNK

The ephemeral art of Azuma Makoto

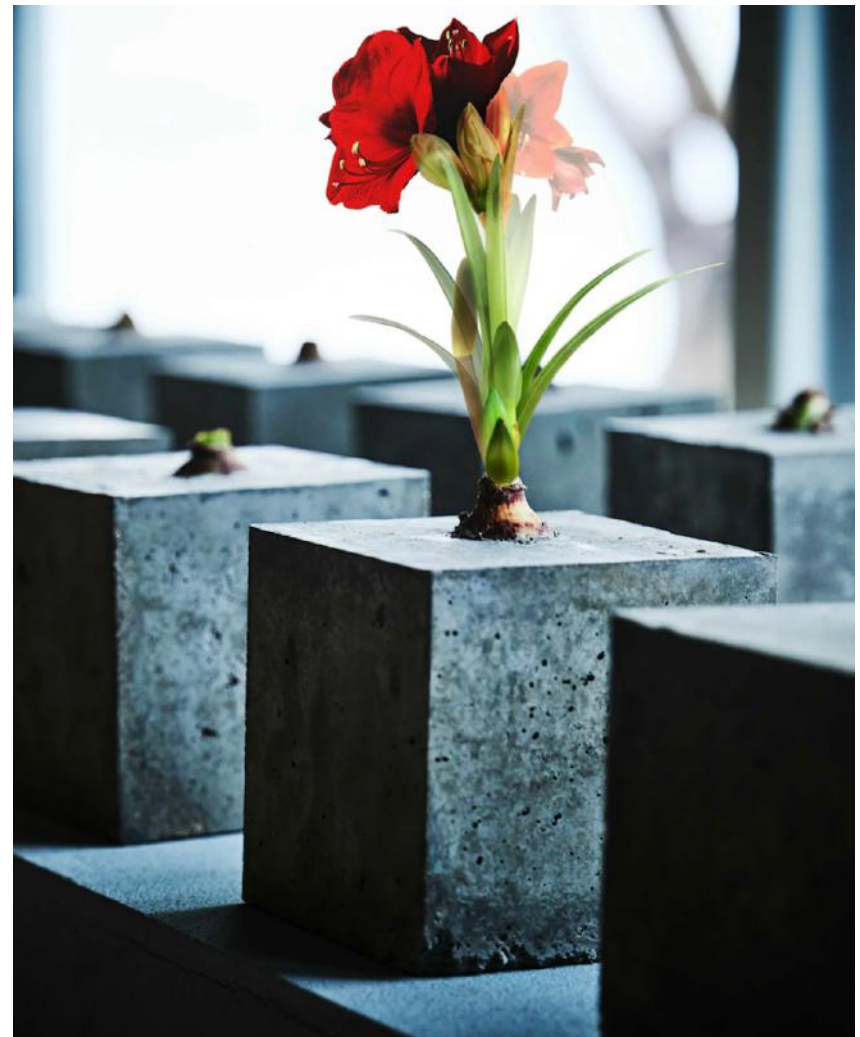
Words: Shannon Devy

THE JAPANESE SYSTEM OF FLORAL SYMBOLISM is called hanakotoba. Thought to have emerged in the late 19th Century, directly translated, hanakotoba means “flower words”, and the practice intertwines with traditions of ikebana – Japanese flower arrangement. Iris (shobu) for strength, courage and protection. Chrysanthemum (kiku) for longevity and rejuvenation. Cherry blossoms (sakura) for the transience of life.

Fittingly, it's via cherry blossoms that I first encounter the floral artist Azuma Makoto. The installation is called Sakura X envy. An explosion of pink cherry blossoms hangs suspended in a run-down, rusted-out industrial barn. Below it, the legendary Japanese post-hardcore band, Envy, screams and thrashes. It's a striking, surreal juxtaposition of the type characteristic of Azuma's work. It's also a perfect reflection of Azuma's origin story.

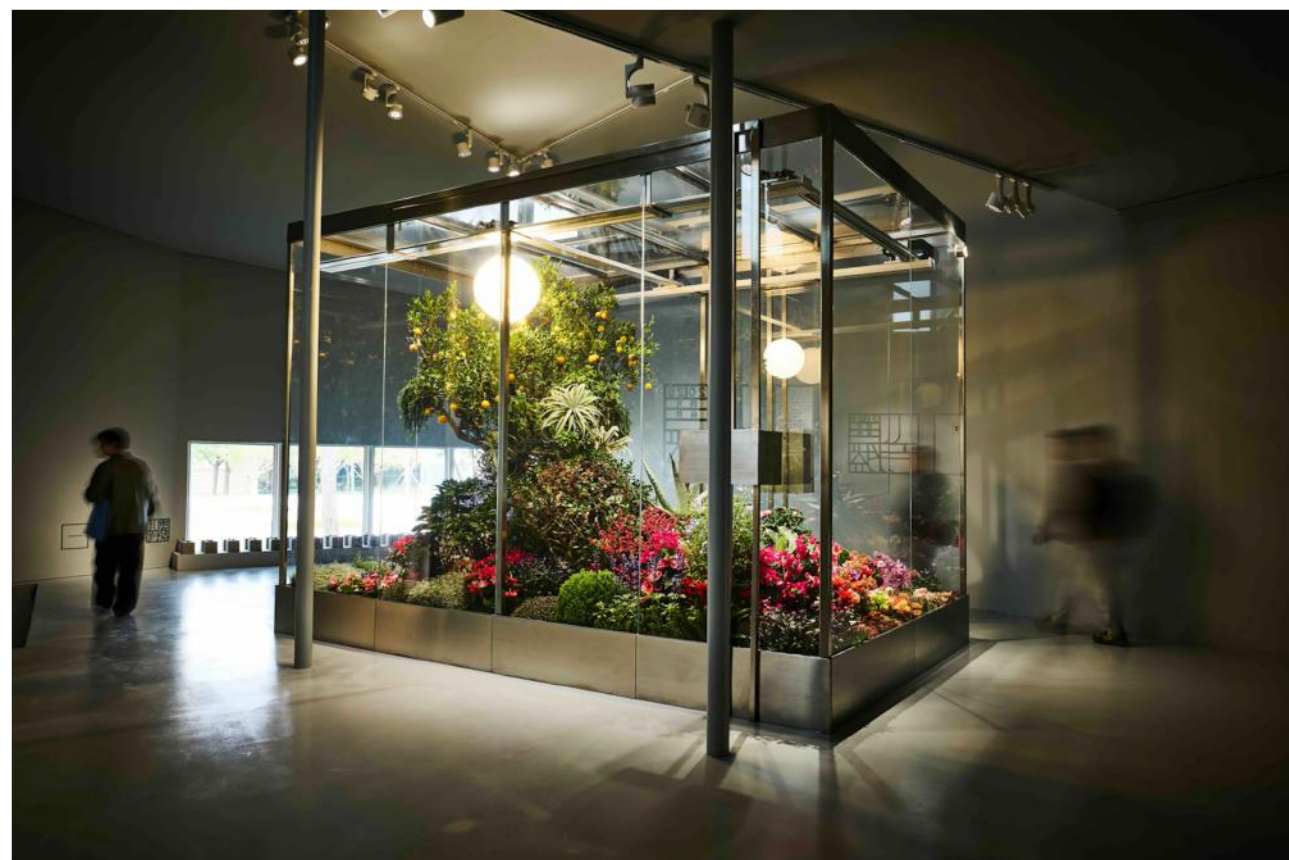
Born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1976, Azuma moved to the Tokyo metropolis in 1997 with his high school punk rock band to pursue a music career. It was a formative time. “I learned that a career is not something that is handed to you, but something you have to go after,” Azuma says. To support himself while he waited for the band to “make it”, he took a job at the flower shop behind his house, then another at the famous Ota flower market. It's the second-largest flower market in the world and the biggest in Japan, with over 5 million flowers traded there daily. It was an happenstance that would change his life. He landed bandmate and photographer Shiinoki Shunsuketo, his childhood friend, a job at the flower shop, too. Together, they'd sit around with their long punk hair and leather jackets, drinking beer, smoking cigarettes and talking about...flowers.

In 2002, the pair founded floral atelier JARDINS des FLEURS, specialising in made-to-order haute-couture floral arrangements and installations. In 2009, they opened AMKK, an experimental botanical lab where Azuma would go on to create many of the pieces for which he would become









known, including 2014's Exobiotanica, in which they collaborated with JP Aerospace to send bonsai and floral arrangements into space. "We wanted to find out what kind of phenomenon occurs if we put plants where they normally don't exist," says Azuma. This idea expanded to Deep Sea, where they sank huge bouquets of flowers to depths of over 1000m underwater. It took three years to figure out how to manage the technical challenges presented by darkness, pressure and currents at that depth, but the resulting photographs are astonishing.

Azuma's work is distinctive – hyper-structural, with colour and texture working together to deliver something both beautiful and strange. As important as its physical construction are the contexts in which he presents his transient work – huge glass terrariums, a legion of rectangular ice blocks, an abandoned school in Fukushima, outer space. Often, he juxtaposes his lush, bright living medium with cold, lifeless engineering: bulbs sprouting out of concrete blocks, bouquets set in perspex slabs, or bonsai kept alive in elaborate cyber-punkesque life support machines. Speaking to Allison Klaymon, Azuma says, "People call me a punk florist,





and of course now I am not actually a musician anymore, but I really value the punk spirit. I don't play an instrument, but I am able to express myself, my ideas with flowers." It's this punk ethos that sees Azuma pushing boundaries in increasingly surprising ways.

Take Metaflorist, for example. An offshoot of the Azuma Makoto Flower Center, Metaflorist allows you to purchase one-of-a-kind "digital bouquets" – NFTs depicting "combinations of plant forms and flowers that cannot be found in reality". The digital bouquets are fascinating – roses with bulb-like roots, hybrid lily-orchid-roses, bulbs culminating in pumpkins where blossoms should be. Metaflorist releases new limited edition digital bouquets about once a year, and there's a new drop coming in October.

Sakura for transience and change. It is the transience of the medium of flowers and organic matter – arrested in time through Shunsuketo's photography – that defines Azuma's creative approach. Speaking to the New Yorker, he says, "You can see flowers burn through their life at such a fast pace, I want to keep up with it. But as I make an arrangement, it keeps changing and deforming. It's like chasing the game of life." Growth, bloom, decline, death, renewal. Azuma sculpts in the fundamental materials of Spring.



@azumamakoto



LIVING SPACES *REIMAGINED*

An interior that flows, functions & inspires

As the new owners of a five-bedroom family residence on KwaZulu-Natal's North Coast, the homeowners sought to transform the interior into a modern contemporary sanctuary that suited their personal taste and lifestyle.

Loving what they do best as international award-winning luxury interior designers, OLALA Interiors proudly present a home that balances modern contemporary elegance with effortless luxury. Through luxury design expertise, artistic flair and creative styling, each space was transformed through considered spatial planning and thoughtful design to inspire connection, enhance comfort, and elevate everyday living.



Words: LISA SMITH



Bespoke finishes, layered textures and premium finishes reflect a personal expression of understated luxury

The entrance foyer is warm and welcoming - a bespoke marble server, styled with a striking faux floral arrangement in a sculptural black vase, creates an elegant focal point. A softly curved wood frame mirror against a textured green backdrop subtly reflects the refined contemporary interior within.

The formal lounge embodies a refined modern contemporary design in a blend of classic black, white and warm neutrals. Ceiling height soft sheer curtains soften the space, creating a light, airy atmosphere. A large, fluted sofa upholstered in a plush tactile neutral, is complemented by two bespoke armchairs, their striking black and neutral geometric design creates a sophisticated interplay of texture and contrast against a warm wood frame. A mix of striped and plain surface scatters adds a tailored finish to the space. A canto wall-art gas fireplace in white and soft grey vein stone forms a striking focal point - integrated into the black mantelpiece's modern minimalist design adds a sculptural elegance and warmth.

The dining space offers refined sophistication. High-back dining chairs in a monochromatic herringbone and soft neutral inner with black piping detail offer tailored dining. A horizontal gold-stemmed bubble glass pendant offers soft diffused lighting, elevating the space with a warm luminous ambience and sculptural elegance. Abstract floral artwork enriches the space with colour, adding a botanical presence.



A full-height Kiaat timber feature wall and matching counter top introduce rich texture and organic warmth to the bar area. A sculptural glass bubble pendant and curated liquor display offer eye-catching focal points that captivate and converse. Bar chairs upholstered in a soft neutral fabric against a slender wooden frame offer contemporary elegance.

The entertainment lounge is warm and inviting, balancing comfort and connection with refined elegance. An elegant curved sofa introduces a sense of fluidity, while a pinstriped curved chair and matching footstool create an inviting retreat of leisurely comfort. A sculptural black coffee table and ottoman serve as stylish functional accents, complementing the thoughtfully curated layout. A full-scale TV / media unit in a blend of slatted and smooth oak veneer adds depth, texture, and rhythm to the space. Floating storage in oak veneer and matte black seamlessly blends form and function, reinforcing the room's refined contemporary aesthetic.

***Glass, metal,
wood and textiles
define the bar
area, bringing
warmth, texture,
and timeless
sophistication.***



Each bedroom expresses a signature style of tailored sophistication and refined comfort.



The children's room is thoughtful, considered design in a palette of soothing blue hues, natural materials and tactile textures layered against a neutral base to create a timeless, calming, and adaptable space. A bespoke headboard featuring geometric shaped panels is a playful element that adds softness, scale and visual depth to the space.



Each bedroom features an integrated lounge setting creating inviting retreats of relaxation and connection that enhance the sense of comfort and contemporary elegance.



A soft palette of winter whites, warm neutrals, muted earthy and anthracite tones forms the foundation for rich textures and refined finishes.

The Master Suite - A Refined 'Sanctuary of Rest'

Defined by warmth, texture and timeless elegance, the master suite balances comfort with understated luxury. Thoughtfully curated to promote rest and relaxation, rich textures and soft finishes in a blend of warm earthy tones, neutrals, and a touch of gold, creates an environment of timeless sophistication that is both inviting and effortlessly luxurious. A large rug forms a foundational layer of warmth and comfort, introducing depth, texture, and visual rhythm. Elegant, minimal gold and crystal water droplet pendants introduce a sense of fluidity and warming elegance.

Softly sculpted and effortlessly elegant, the bed is defined by a bespoke fluted panel headboard, its rounded curves soften the space whilst adding depth and rhythm. Upholstered in a soft, warm neutral fabric that seamlessly flows to the bed base, it offers a sense of quiet luxury.

An intimate lounge setting balances comfort with refined elegance. A statement coffee table with a sculptural gold metal base and neutral marble top is softened by a faux floral centrepiece creates a refined balance of sculptural form and organic softness.



A floating double stone vanity, grooved cabinetry, and warm Kiaat timber backsplash balances functionality with timeless elegance.

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LEON KLUGE

THE PRIDE OF FRANSCHHOEK

Words: Mia McCarthy

This story begins with a blushing bride and her bodyguard.

IN 1914, PROFESSOR HAROLD PEARSON attended a local flower show in Franschhoek. Under these unassuming circumstances, he stumbled upon a flower that contemporary botanists thought to be extinct, *Serurria florida*, the blushing bride.

The scientific record shows that *Serruria florida* was officially catalogued by Carl Peter Thunberg, a Swedish mentee of Carl Linnaeus, in the Franschhoek Mountains in 1773. The delicate protea promptly disappeared from scientific annals for over a century before its (disputed) rediscovery by Pearson.

Though Pearson may not have been the first to observe the skaambloom since its purported extinction, he was the first to collect the handful of seeds that would go on to germinate thousands of plants grown at the Kirstenbosch Gardens, not to mention the millions of blushing brides that have since circulated in the commercial cut-flower industry. Dedicated security guards were posted outside the Kirstenbosch glasshouse where these precious seeds ripened and bloomed into the source of almost every cultivated specimen available in the world.

Ironically, even though the blushing bride, also known as the pride of Franschhoek, is a regular fixture in bridal bouquets and grocery-store-variety floral arrangements, only about thirty *Serurria* flora plants remain in their natural habitat. This, maintains award-winning landscaper and Franschhoek local Leon Kluge, is why botanical gardens are so important: they are the living libraries of our national botanical identity.

“It’s very Dr. Seuss-y blomme that we have over here,” remarks Kluge with a chuckle, describing the distinctly zany shapes and textures unique to proteas



Leon Kluge



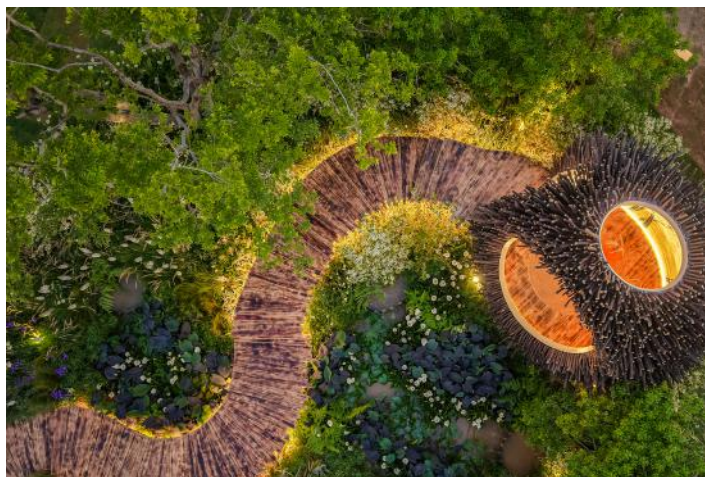
"Living Contours"

South Africa's Winning Exhibit at the prestigious Shenzhen International Flower Show in China.

A striking fusion of traditional Asian aesthetics and indigenous African flora. Natural textures featuring "burnt branch" pods, a flora-inspired mural, and a dynamic water feature flowing beneath timber decking against the backdrop of Shenzhen's modern skyline.



Award-winning gardener Leon Kluge took top honours, winning both “Best on Show” and a “Grand Gold” award at the prestigious Shenzhen International Flower Show in China. The Shenzhen International Flower Show is one of Asia’s largest garden showcases, drawing around a million visitors. This year’s 10-day event features more than 30 large-scale garden installations. The event features over 30 garden installations, focusing on sustainable innovation and themed around the iris flower.



and increasingly sought after in the global horticultural market. South Africa is one of the few countries in the world represented by a floral emblem that is endemic to the region, he points out. England has the rose, but the rose is native to China. Holland has the tulip, but the tulip is native to Turkey.

Rather sadly, our national botanical signature is under threat of being erased and appropriated by countries like Australia. Although Australia is home to distant Proteaceae cousins like banksias and waratahs, the local cut flower market is ravenous for true proteas, which belong wholly to South Africa.

“It’s our fynbos, and they’re producing so much more of it in their countries for the cut flower industry and the pot plant industry than us here, which is, for me, very painful to see,” mourns Kluge. “That’s also a big reason why we take it to the world stage,” he says, referring to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show where his team has won top awards for three years running. “We introduce new proteas every year on stage for people to come and see, and hopefully buy from the farmers that we have.”

To be clear, Kluge has nothing against appreciating exogenous plants. “I’m not against exotics at all,” he assures me. “I love all plants, to be fair, and my garden has something of everything.” Still, South African farmers deserve the proper credit and market share for their hard-earned blooms. Plus, from a conservation perspective, it’s concerning that there are sometimes more indigenous plants to be found in international cut flower markets than in their natural habitat, or even in local botanical gardens.

“Botanical gardens, for me, are not just a place to go and have a wonderful time,” says Kluge, whose father and grandfather both served as curators of the Lowveld National Botanical Garden and the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden, respectively. “A botanical garden is like the library of botanical knowledge, not just botanical knowledge in books or on paper, but also as live specimens.”

Though South African botanical gardens are often the beloved scene of family picnics and nuptial photographs, they are also rich with rare treasures. The Durban Botanic Gardens house the loneliest plant in the world, Wood’s Cycad, the only known male specimen of its kind since its discovery in 1908. The Arderne Gardens in Cape Town boast a Moreton Bay Fig and an Aleppo Pine of Champion Tree status. Until recently, the glasshouses at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens were the hallowed sanctuaries of the world’s most extensive Erica and Protea collections; now, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (Sanbi) is under intense public scrutiny after local naturalist James Deacon raised the alarm about chronic mismanagement that, if left unaddressed, could lead to the preventable extinction of multiple species.

Kirstenbosch remains a significant attraction for locals and tourists alike, but the beguiling face of the garden masks a confluence of internal failures and external pressures that threaten its conservational duties. Rare plants lie unlabelled and rotting in unattended trays, the public seed room is closed, and Kirstenbosch no longer produces

its Index Seminum, the catalogue used to exchange seeds with other botanical gardens across the world, a far cry from the presidential treatment once awarded to the *Serruria florida* seeds all the way back in 1914.

These developments, while tragic, highlight the significant role of the public in the preservation of our botanical heritage. Specialised expertise is essential, but conservation is practised by everyone from amateur gardeners to seasoned botanists. This is partly why Kluge creates accessible, short-form educational videos on local flower species on social media: he aims to encourage South Africans to notice the precious world around us.

“We have so many incredible plants in SA, so many, but there’s something called green blindness — it’s where you drive and see all the green and it looks really pretty, and you take little photos and say, ‘Oh wow, don’t we live in a nice place?’. But it could be canola, it could be grapes, or it could just be grasses. There’s no deep-rooted interest in what is underneath, and what real special things we have here,” says Kluge, describing how agricultural diversity can be mistaken for biodiversity by casual drivers-by. His solution? Shine a spotlight on individual plants.

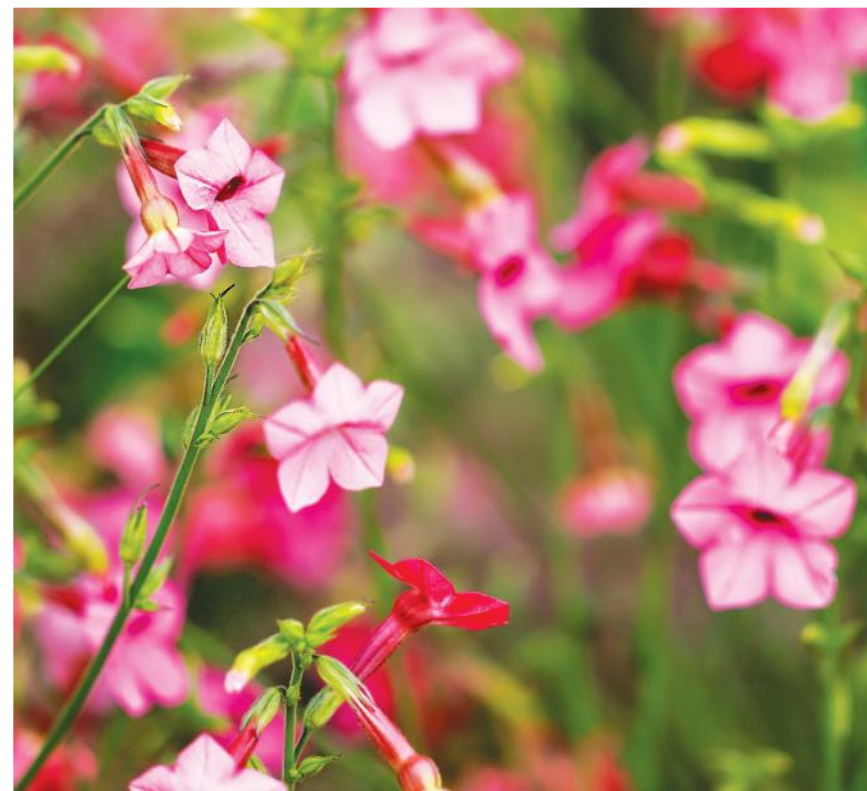
“Give it a bit of personality,” he says. “Give the plant its own little diva-ness. And also talk about the plant and its relationship with other plants, animals, or humans for that matter. And suddenly, people look closer at that plant and say, ‘Oh, that’s very interesting. I never thought about that.’”

By describing the individual profile of local plants and demonstrating how precarious our world-renowned biodiversity really is, Kluge hopes to encourage locals to defend our unique habitats. If SANBI is no longer in a position to appoint bodyguards to its seeds, then the public must rise as determined guardians of our local flora.

Kluge’s hikes to meadows and marshes are not just for educational purposes. This is also where he finds creative inspiration for the public and private gardens he has designed across the world. “I look at how flowers work together texturally,” he says. “Some plants hug each other; they’re nice, peaceful friends or neighbours in the landscape.”

Taking his cues from the symbiosis he observes in nature, Kluge designs layered gardens and floral displays that appeal to a growing international appreciation for harmony between people and plants. Gardens once represented control over wilderness; now, demand is soaring for gardens that attract pollinators, shelter local fauna, and even help “rewild” sections of public parks and farms.





If you'd like to see Leon Kluge's award-winning RHS Chelsea Flower Show display, you're in luck — "Life After Fire" will be rebuilt at the Chelsea Flowers in Stanford event from 12–27 September 2026.

You can also visit some of the gardens he has had a hand in designing at Hazendal Wine Estate, Klein Constantia Manor House, Angala Boutique Hotel, and all Singita Lodges.

@leonkluge



SOUTH AFRICA WINS GOLD AT CHELSEA 2026

"Life After Fire"

Leon Kluge and the South African team won Gold at the 2026 RHS Chelsea Flower Show in London.

This year's display "**Life After Fire**" showcased the diversity of South African flowers that appear after wildfires in the Cape region.

Up to 20 000 stems of Protea cut flowers as well as thousands of burnt Protea branches were arranged to create a post fire landscape where bulbs and orchids from all regions of South Africa were on display.

Artist **Tristan Woudberg** led a team to assemble a sculptural vortex of Burnt material, including charred wood and burnt branches sourced from the remnants of the devastating fires which tore through the mountainous areas of the Western Cape last year.

"Life After Fire" is one of South Africa's biggest displays at the RHS Chelsea flower and features a babbling "fonteyntjie" or natural stream complete with Disa orchids and carnivorous sundew plants. Other unique plants on display included the miniature star like flowers of Rhodohypoxis which hails from the high elevations of the Drakensberg.

The sponsors for this year's display include: **The Rupert Nature Foundation, Hazendal Wine Estate, The Grootbos Foundation and Southern Sun.**

Cape Flora SA, a non-profit established in 2005, offers their support this year and remains steadfast in its commitment to the sustainable harvesting and growth of the fynbos industry.

The display promotes the demand for high-quality fynbos cut flowers in international markets, providing livelihoods for communities within the South African fynbos industry.



Tristan Woudberg & Leon Kluge

@leonkluge
@tristanwoudberg





SISTERS ON ADDERLEY

Alison Snyders & Karin Lipari



Words: Dan Charles

Pics: Lauren Thomas

KAREN'S FACE LIGHTS UP WHEN I ASK HER what her favourite flower is. "Stargazers," she tells me with eyes that soften and sparkle, almost as if there were actual stars gazing out of them. "The reason why I love them is because, when they're closed, you watch them open up. You can literally see it every day. It's like a process of opening and that's what I love about it."

The Stargazer Lily is one of the most recognisable flowers that you might find in a cut flower bouquet or a garden. The flower was born from the desire of a plant breeder in the 1970s named Leslie Woodriff to bring to life a type of lily that was bolder and far less demure than the typical Oriental lilies of that era that hung their heads toward the ground. She felt as if those lilies were hiding their beauty from those who would wish to admire them and so she bred a lily that bloomed upwards to bask in the light above it and for others to bask in its beauty. Karen is a lot like that as well. When you ask her about flowers or the history of the Trafalgar Place Flower Market that has been operating on Adderley Street in Cape Town for over 150 years – the place where her and her sister Alison have been trading as the famous Sisters on Adderley for over 35 years – she opens up and speaks animatedly and with a fiery passion that cuts through the cacophony of cars and people bustling past their stall in the frantic Cape Town CBD. Her voice is as coarse as the petals of

a King Protea, warm and weathered from a great love of talking to people. It's the kind of voice that I love listening to. Her laugh is as rough and as rich as the sound of a sieve shaking away dust and earth to reveal a precious stone.

Alison's favourite flower is also a lily – Arum Lilies. Despite what Leslie Woodriff thought about lilies in the 1970s, the more modest beauty of the Arum Lily is something that has been greatly admired all throughout history. There is a story in Greek mythology that tells of how Hera, Queen of the gods and protector of women during childbirth and marriage, spilled some of her breast milk after nursing baby Hercules and how that milk spilled into the sky and became the Milky Way, while the drops that landed on Earth bloomed into Arum Lilies. There is a purity and holiness to these flowers and perhaps an air of that god-given energy of protection and nurturing. There is certainly that within Allison and I can see it whenever she gets up from our conversation to tend to the steady stream of customers looking to purchase a bundle of something beautiful, assembling the bouquets with care and grace. When she returns, she is much more softly spoken than her sister but just as delightful to talk to. Her laugh is like the clinking of two glasses – a modest celebration. Laughing with them feels like a party. We laugh when Karen tells





Karin Lipari & Alison Snymers



me that Allison is lying about the Arum Lilies and that she actually prefers the “dry and dead stuff” that they use when making floral arrangements for film shoots. “It’s nature,” Alison tells me in defence of both Arum Lillies and the dry florals. “It’s all so natural and so beautiful.”

The two sisters balance each other perfectly and I can see how they’ve been able to work together so well and for so many years. I can picture them as young children when they tell me about how, at the age of 8 and 9 years old, they would board a train after school on Friday afternoons, arriving at the market to help their grandmother sell flowers well into the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings.

"We basically just helped our grandmother selling the flowers," one sister recalls warmly. "She was in front by the flowers and I was on the pavement. My job was to catch the customers from the cars."

Their grandmother sourced flowers from local farms, and the children worked tirelessly through the night, driven by youthful energy and the lure of a modest reward – R4 for the entire weekend's work. The money, however, came with responsibilities. One weekend, it was handed over to their mother. The next, it was used to buy their own necessities.

But it wasn't all hard labour. The market was, as one sister describes it, "really the best times ever." Parliament Street, then still an open road at the bottom of the market, buzzed with life well past midnight. Customers from as far as Malmesbury would make the long journey into town on Saturday nights, arriving around midnight to buy flowers for graves — a ritual that was as much a social outing as it was an errand.

"From 12 o'clock, they had the cruise to town," she recalls with a smile. "It was the outing to town. And they would come buy their flowers for the graves."

The Golden Acre shopping center nearby housed a theater, and when the late-night movies let out, the sisters knew exactly what to do.

"We put the carnation flowers in front of Golden Acre. It will sell out — one rand a bunch. When those movies came out, everybody buys flowers."

The roots of this story stretch back even further than childhood memories. The sisters are proud to call themselves part of the fourth generation of flower sellers connected to Adderley Street, a lineage that traces its origins to around 1906, when women of colour began selling flowers on what was then a gravel road. According to oral history passed down through the family, a man named Thomas Lightfoot — reportedly an archbishop — looked after the flower sellers of the era and eventually entrusted the market space to them.

"From the start, the ladies started in 1906 on Adderley Street," one sister explains. "That was the whole point — Adderley Street flower sellers."

Their grandmother held eight stands at the market, a testament to her prominence in the community. When she passed away 37 years ago, those stands were claimed by her children, leaving the sisters without an immediate foothold. It was another elderly flower seller — recognising their passion and skill — who eventually offered them a stand of their own.

"Otherwise, you can't get in," one sister explains. "All the stands are passed down through generations." It is a system built on trust, legacy, and love for the trade, one that cannot be replicated by outsiders who simply wish to sell flowers.

By the age of 21, both sisters had established their own flower business, driven not by formal training but by something far more powerful: natural talent, generational knowledge, and an unshakeable work ethic. "We never went to school to learn how to make a bunch," one sister laughs. "But we still got the eye. Natural talent. Our bloodline is in the flowers."

Yet for all its beauty and history, the Adderley Street flower market faces an uncertain future — one shaped by government regulation, urban redevelopment, and economic pressures that threaten the very existence of this living heritage.

The permit controversy is at the forefront of the sisters' concerns. For the first time in the market's long history, sellers are being asked to obtain permits to continue operating — a requirement they find deeply unjust.





Karin Lipari

"We never had permits," one sister says with barely concealed frustration. "We are the face of Cape Town. Why must we pay for permits and renew them every time? They must look after us. We are entertaining the tourists. If there's no flower sellers, where are they going to showcase it?"

Beyond the permits, a proposed urban upgrade threatens to fundamentally alter the character of the market. Developers, who are already transforming the surrounding area, converting a bank into a hotel with 300 apartments and upgrading Cape Lane — want to relocate the flower sellers into a structured indoor space, away from the open street.

"They want us to be in a down lane, in little boxes," one sister says, her voice heavy with concern. "That is taking away what the ladies in the 1900s started — selling flowers on Adderley Street."

The economic landscape has also shifted dramatically. Where once the flower market enjoyed a monopoly — since there were no shops selling flowers — today competitors like major supermarket chains offer ready-made bouquets at the click of a button. More pressing, however, is the issue of farmers selling directly to the public at prices only marginally higher than what they charge the market sellers.

"They sell a bunch to us for 20 rand," one sister explains, "and then sell it to customers directly for 25 rand. They're adding their own markups. Where must we buy it for 20 and still make something of it?"

The sisters attribute the sharp rise in flower prices to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which farmers suffered significant losses and subsequently raised prices to recover. Global instability and fuel costs have only compounded the problem.

"I didn't know flowers were going to become so expensive in such a short time," one sister muses. "Everything just went crazy."



Alison Snyders

The sisters are not taking these challenges lying down. With the help of a cousin working in the heritage field, papers have been submitted to have the Adderley Street flower market officially declared a heritage site — a process that could be finalised by December of this year, potentially making the recognition official by 2027.

"The market is almost 160 years old," one sister notes. "We, the people here, are the people that kept it alive — and the people before us, their family members, kept it alive all those years."

However, even heritage status comes with limitations. While the ground itself may be protected, the sellers as individuals remain vulnerable. City authorities could theoretically still require permits of individual vendors, regardless of heritage protections.

"If I act in a way they don't like, the City can come and say I'm not in union with the permit — because they want Tom and Dick to come in," one sister explains candidly. "So we are not really protected."

Meanwhile, a fundraising initiative is underway, organised by a local university, to support the flower sellers directly. A group of around 15 people is expected to visit the market on a coming Saturday to hear first-hand accounts of the sellers' history and challenges, before proceeding to nearby Bree Street. Bunches of flowers will be sold as part of the fundraising effort.

The sisters' most pressing practical need? A permanent shade structure over the market's rotation of stalls. Currently, sellers must bring their own canopies, which are frequently damaged by wind and storms. A single permanent structure costs approximately R55,000, and the market would need six to provide adequate coverage — a total investment that, the sisters argue, the City of Cape Town should fund, but consistently declines to do citing budget constraints.

Basic infrastructure also remains a persistent problem. The market's single water tap is frequently vandalised by vagrants who remove it, leaving sellers without access to water.



"We used to buy taps and fix them ourselves," one sister sighs. "But we're tired of doing that. So we just leave it."

As the interview draws to a close, what becomes unmistakably clear is that the Adderley Street flower market is about far more than commerce. It is a living museum, a community gathering point, a tourist landmark, and a testament to the tenacity of women who refused to let adversity, apartheid, poverty, or progress silence their calling.

"We grew up here," one sister says simply. "This is our livelihood. This is what we wanted to do."

They carry with them the lessons of a grandmother who paid them four rand for a full weekend's work, who taught them how to pack a bunch, and who fed one child chicken while giving the other a pie — a detail that, even now, draws a burst of indignant laughter from the sister who received the lesser meal.

They carry the history of 1906, of gravel streets, of women who dared to build a business with nothing but their hands and their knowledge of the land's flowers. And they carry the hope that one day, they too will pass this legacy on to someone who understands that selling flowers on Adderley Street is not just a job. It is a birthright.

"So one day, we would also want to give it to somebody that wants to continue the legacy," one sister says, gazing out at the vibrant rows of blooms surrounding her. "The legacy of the women who started this business."

Cape Town, it would seem, owes them at least that much.



@sistersonadderleyflowers

THE GALLERY

AT THE STUDIOS

WHERE ART MEETS COMMUNITY

Discover a creative space where
every exhibition tells a new story.

TUCKED WITHIN THE STUDIOS at Ballito Lifestyle Centre, The Gallery is more than simply a space to display artwork, it provides a platform for local artists to share their work, engage with the community and inspire meaningful conversations through carefully curated exhibitions that evolve throughout the year.

Led by Curator Sarah O'Reilly, The Gallery is shaped by a vision to make art feel accessible, engaging and relevant. Each exhibition introduces a new theme and a fresh perspective, bringing together works across painting, sculpture, ceramics, woven works, mixed media and contemporary design. The result is an ever-changing space that encourages visitors to not only look at art, but to connect with the ideas, stories and artists behind it.

Alongside monthly First Thursdays, artist walkabouts, figure drawing workshops and other community events, The Gallery continues to nurture an environment where creativity is accessible, welcoming and



Petra Gevers - The Dance



deeply connected to Life the Ballito way.
That story continues with The Gallery's latest exhibition,
WABI-SABI

Inspired by the centuries-old Japanese philosophy, WABI-SABI encourages us to embrace authenticity over perfection and to recognise beauty in impermanence, simplicity and the passage of time. Through weathered textures, organic forms, handmade objects and materials rich with history, the exhibition explores themes of resilience, transformation and our relationship with the natural world.

As Sarah explains, "WABI-SABI asks us to pause. It reminds us that cracks tell stories, weathering creates character and beauty often lives in the things we overlook."

Participating artists interpret these ideas in their own distinctive ways, exploring natural decay, erosion, simplicity, quietness and the marks left over time. Together, the works create an exhibition that celebrates not what is flawless, but what is honest, evolving and beautifully imperfect.

At its heart, WABI-SABI is an invitation to slow down. In a world that so often celebrates the polished and perfected, it encourages us to look a little closer at the worn, weathered and unfinished and perhaps reconsider where beauty can be found.

WABI-SABI
NOW SHOWING UNTIL 1 NOVEMBER 2026

Featuring Artists: Kerry Michau ; Robbie Lagesse ; Petra Gevers ;
Nina Kruger ; Paula Breetzke ; Lara Mellon ; Kim Pereira ;
Brian Eriksson ; Debbie Morgan ; Jocelyn Reitz ; Candice Philip ;
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Open daily, 9am – 5pm
www.thegalleryballito.co.za



Scan for details.



Lara Mellon - Sheltered Noble



Jocelyn Reitz - Fire Escape



Brian Eriksson - The Herd



Sam Pitout - Corroded Coral Vase

Life'style
THE BALLITO WAY

HOW TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS IN AN ESTATE

Words: Judd Campbell

WHY WOULD YOU WANT/NEED MORE FRIENDS? You can't have enough! If I walk around a mall or my new estate I want to bump into people I know. I love small talk and random conversations. I'm a bit like a hairdresser in this regard. As for the how...it's simple really: Join every WhatsApp group on the estate.

We moved into a new estate last year and I did just that. Admittedly, the Whiskey Group was a little too hardcore for me. Naively I thought it would be sipping fine whiskey on someone's concrete and glass veranda watching whales breach. However, having missed the first event due to a previous engagement, I woke up to the videos and pics of the previous night's shenanigans. They are an elite group of connoisseurs and I'm scared of them.

The Bird Watching Group seems to be a lot tamer (but still involves a few Field Bars). Alas, a decision needed to be made between a new pair of binoculars or a padel racket for the newly formed Padel Group, not forgetting I'd forked out the week before for a new potjie pot. The comp was cancelled due to rain (size 5 pot if anyone's interested. I skipped the Photography Group when my first selfie was rejected. But I'd like to talk a moment, if I may, to share with you the pitfalls of joining a Come Dine With Me Group.

With over 30 years in hospitality, I felt it was a group I could not only join but dominate, win and use the significant prize money to pay off the padel racket.

How's this for a diverse group of wanna be culinary masters? I'm not sure if I would've met these people without the Come Dine With Me competition. It's a motley crew and we all have very little in common. But going into random strangers' houses gives a very unique insight into who they are before you become friends. Just imagine only weeks into a budding friendship that they have twelve cats and now it's too late to walk away! Luckily the 6 we met were "normalish" even though the one couple has a dog cam for when they leave

the house. It's best I leave their names and faces out for the sake of the POPI act.

We had a mixed race gay couple, mixed race straight couple, an Afrikaans couple and a boring straight couple. I'm in the latter. My partner is a marketing guru but if the kitchen wasn't at the entrance to our apartment she would never see it. I was alone in this challenge.

Everyone had to choose a theme. Couple A went with a "Fire". I could beat that. Couple B, "French". No one can cook French food well except the French. Couple C "White Lotus". Pfft. And I went with "rival Mexican drug cartels" – the obvious winner...you'd think! I felt the shock factor as well as taking a theme we've all tried our hand at before would allow me to create something unique and blow the competition away.

First to host was The Afrikaans. I knew we had lost the second we arrived. This wasn't some half-hearted attempt at Tom Yum paste and mung beans with some over-boiled chicken in a lame broth after a trip to SunSun in Durban North. It was three courses of high restaurant-quality cuisine. I was in real trouble. Between starters and mains we even changed locations and moved to the estate's pool club which they had also decorated. The Temple of Dawn Khao Soi Noodles were served on a themed table cloth with matching napkins the wife had hand sewn. Never underestimate the Afrikaans, they don't just braai.

Second up was the gay couple, and the theme was fire – everything cooked on an open flame. Don't get me wrong, that beautiful Indian man cooks a tomahawk steak better than Heston Blumenthal, but their welcome entree of braibroodjies stuffed with figs and prosciutto and painted with a homemade mayo before being subjected to an open flame was a bloody triumph. A show stealer that wasn't even their starters. Can you feel my anxiety? What really

hurt was the hosting – everyone's drinks filled, prep done to allow for interaction, fine wines – the list goes on.

Third up, the French Resistance. A bold menu, I thought, with so many complex flavours and room for error. The French have done for cooking what Rassie has done for this country – made it infinitely better for all. The champagne served that night alone must've cost more than my padel racket, potjie pot and rent! They paired it perfectly with a Bone Marrow Butter on Steak Tartare (who makes this at home? I ask myself) without going into detail about their second starter, mains or desert but the champagne was endless and the meal was a clear winner for me. Rumour has it that they were practicing their courses for weeks before, and it showed.

Then it was my turn, along with a chalk outline on the floor of a dead Mexican Cartel member and small clear packets of “fake” contraband on the tables. I made a desperate attempt at some deconstructed chipotle pulled pork nachos and substandard tacos. By the standards set before me, I ended with chilli and chocolate churros that paled in comparison to the gay guys' pumpkin pie. Luckily Mexicans drink tequila and I found solace at the bottom of an ice cold bottle of El Jimador. The gang responded well to my theme, enjoyed the food and took turns laying in the chalk outline for photos. All four nights were a blast, we talk about them often, but I'll never do that again.

If you're thinking of arranging a Come Dine With Me, don't. But if you find yourself compelled to then follow my 3 commandments. DON'T go last, NEVER go last. DON'T think cause your mates say you're a good cook that you are. DON'T skimp on the booze – an average meal can be hidden under a layer of mixed drinks.

In closing: My plan worked a treat. I play padel tournaments on biweekly thanks to the Afrikaans, we dine out weekly with the gays, wave at the French resistance when I see them walking their dogs but alas that scar hasn't healed yet. They wave and smile and I'm immediately triggered.

This was not AI Generated, that's exactly how it happened.



@doughpamine_rsa

@juddy.poo





MORE THAN A SHOPPING CENTRE

At Zimbali Oasis, the ambition has never been to simply create another shopping centre.

EVERY destination has a story. Zimbali Oasis is where it begins.

There are places you visit, and then there are places that become part of your everyday story.

Set within one of the North Coast's most desirable lifestyle destinations, **Zimbali Oasis** is creating something distinctly its own, a carefully curated environment where retail, dining, health, wellness, beauty, recreation and design come together in a way that feels effortless.

It is not simply about what you can buy or where you can eat. It is about how a place makes you feel.

From an early morning coffee to a workout, a leisurely lunch with friends, an afternoon spent discovering beautiful interiors or an evening gathering around the table, **Zimbali Oasis** is designed around the way people actually live.

A destination shaped around people, experience and connection.

The centre's growing collection of premium offerings reflects the evolving lifestyle of the North Coast's sophisticated, active, design-conscious and increasingly discerning residents.

WELLNESS, FITNESS & FEELING GOOD

Wellness has become an essential part of modern living, and **Zimbali Oasis** is embracing that shift with an expanding health and fitness offering.

BODYTEC Ballito has introduced EMS (Electrical Muscle Stimulation) technology, offering an innovative approach to fitness for those looking to

make the most of their time while achieving results.

Complementing this is the **BODYHOT** and **BODYCOLD** offering, bringing heat, cold and recovery together through sauna and ice-plunge experiences designed to support recovery, energy and overall wellbeing.

It is a natural fit for a community where an active, healthy lifestyle is very much part of the culture.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Good food has always been at the heart of great destinations, and **Zimbali Oasis** continues to add to its culinary offering with names that bring both heritage and contemporary appeal to the North Coast.

From the Mother City comes **Prima Burger**, the much-loved South African smash burger brand founded by the Bredell brothers. Known for its 100% veld-reared, grass-fed beef, handmade brioche buns and house-crafted sauces, Prima brings a distinctly premium take on a familiar favourite.

Then there is **Barcelos**, a brand built on generations of authentic Afro-Portuguese heritage and its legendary flame-grilled chicken. Its new upmarket restaurant adds another dimension to the centre's increasingly sophisticated dining mix.





Together, these offerings reflect what **Zimbali Oasis** is about: familiar experiences, elevated.

DESIGNING THE WAY YOU LIVE

For those who believe that the spaces we inhabit should reflect who we are, the arrival of **U&G Fabrics & Lifestyle** adds another layer to the **Zimbali Oasis** experience.

Known for bringing international trends together with carefully curated local collections, **U&G** offers an inspiring destination for homeowners, decorators and interior design enthusiasts.

From luxurious fabrics and bespoke home décor to timeless soft furnishings, each collection has been thoughtfully selected to transform spaces into exceptional living environments.

It is more than shopping for a beautiful home. It is discovering the details that make a house feel like your own.

AUTOMOTIVE EXCELLENCE, REDEFINED

Luxury is not simply about what you drive. It is about how you are welcomed, how you are served and the experience that surrounds every journey. That philosophy is brought to life at **ADW's** spectacular new flagship showroom at **Zimbali Oasis**.

Created for discerning clients who expect the very best, the showroom presents an exceptional collection of luxury, collector and performance vehicles within a sophisticated environment designed to celebrate automotive excellence.

From bespoke consultation spaces and contemporary design studios to premium detailing and vehicle protection services, every element has been considered with the customer experience in mind.

As one of the centre's landmark additions, **ADW** represents another step

forward in **Zimbali Oasis'** evolution as a premium lifestyle destination for the North Coast.

A PLACE FOR CURIOUS MINDS

And because exceptional destinations should be enjoyed by every generation, **Zimbali Oasis'** award-winning play area brings imagination, creativity and discovery into the experience.

The specialised construction and play installation recently received a Gold Award from the South African Landscapers Institute (SALI), recognising its unique blend of creativity, technical skill and craftsmanship. Interactive murals transform the space into a world of colour and curiosity, inviting little ones to explore, discover and create their own stories.

Because sometimes the smallest visitors have the biggest imaginations.

Where the North Coast Lifestyle Begins

Zimbali Oasis

@zimbalioasis



CAPTURING THE COAST

How One Photographer Put Ballito On The Map

FOR PHOTOGRAPHER KARL LIEBENBERG, Instagram was never going to be enough. After years of photographing along the beaches of Ballito, he knew the images he was capturing deserved something more permanent. Something you could hold in your hands.

The result is Ballito: Ocean Arena, a visual love letter to Ballito and the remarkable relationship its people have with the sea.

What started out as a surfing book soon became something much bigger. Karl had spent years photographing surfers along the North Coast, but the more time he spent on the beaches, the more he realised that surfing was only part of the story.

He discovered the surf ski community, open-water swimmers, fishermen and a whole range of people who spend their lives in and around the ocean.

“I was like, wow, these people are so much more open about what they do and so helpful,” he says. “There’s so much more going on besides surfing.”

And so Ocean Arena was born – a reflection of Ballito’s coastline as a place where an entire community comes together around the ocean.

Capturing The Moment

Karl’s photography is about authenticity. Almost every image in the book is unposed, capturing people in the middle of doing what they love.

One of his biggest influences is legendary water photographer Chris Van Lennep, whose distinctive fisheye images appeared on surf magazine covers throughout the 1990s.

“He was pretty innovative back in the 90s,” says Karl. “All my credit goes to him.”

There is also a nice twist to the story. Karl himself once appeared in bodyboard magazines after being photographed by Van Lennep. Being on the other side of the camera helped shape his own approach – allowing his subjects to get on with what they do rather than directing them.





Salomon Bay Ski Boat



Morning sunrise at Tiffanys Beach with Barry Lewin



World class waves in Ballito

Sunrise Selfie - Karl



Sophie Bell pull into a winters morning tube



Bodysurfing is the purest form of wave riding



Mark De Le Hay hooks a Dorado



Charles at Salmon Bay – freshly caught Dorado



Thompson Bay pool



Joshua catching crayfish in his backyard

A town hiding in plain sight

Perhaps the strongest message behind the book is that Ballito and the broader North Coast have been largely overlooked.

“You can get like 20 or 30 books on Cape Town, but there’s no book on Ballito,” Karl points out.

Making the book opened his eyes to just how much is happening right here. There are world-class athletes who could live anywhere but have chosen Ballito, as well as people who have spent decades making the ocean part of their lives.

One of them is 80-year-old Mark Pingelli, who is credited with helping establish the Ballito Mile open-water swim and who still gets into the water every day.

“I’ve travelled the world. I’ve surfed everywhere,” Karl says. “But I’m like, hang on, there’s so much more going on here.”

That sense of discovery runs through the book. Its simple slogan, This is what we do, says a lot about the pride Karl feels for the place and its people.

A community story

Putting the book together was a learning curve. Selecting the photographs was probably the easy part. Organising them around Ballito’s various beaches and surf spots, working with a designer, self-publishing and then finding a way to get the book into people’s hands all became part of the process.

Rather than relying heavily on traditional retail, Karl is hoping the community itself will spread the word.

His hope is to see Ballito: Ocean Arena sitting on coffee tables in homes around the North Coast, ready to be shown to visiting friends and family.

Look. This is where we live. This is what we do.

And that is perhaps what makes the book more than just a collection of beautiful photographs. It is a record of a place and its people, from young children discovering the ocean to those who have spent most of their lives in it.

“I’m visually telling a story,” Karl says, “but people can tell their own stories.”

In a world of fleeting social media images, there is something rather special about a beautiful, printed book that allows you to stop, look and remember.

Ballito: Ocean Arena does exactly that.



@ Karl_liebenberg

Facebook – karl liebenberg

Ballito: Ocean Arena is available directly from Karl and selected stores in Ballito.

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THE PROPERTY POWERHOUSES

Meet 3 Top Performing Property Professionals on the KZN North Coast

Buying, selling or renting property in the Ballito KZN region can be really challenging, but a good estate agent gives you the upper hand and is the key to opening up a world of opportunity. In a world that is overcrowded with unfamiliar names and faces all claiming to be the best, how do you know who you can trust to give you the kind of service that you are looking for?

Well, we've made it a little easier for you.

While there are some exceptional agents in our region, we believe that these are three of the best.



We asked them:

What is your favourite spot in Ballito and what it means to you ?

DAVID CAMERON

Director and principal of Pam Golding Ballito

Over R200m in sales over the past 12 months

We're spoilt for choice in Ballito, but with two young boys, for us it's really about family, lifestyle and having choices. We love spending time at Mimosa, grabbing a relaxed lunch while the kids play. Christmas Bay Beach is another favourite, there's something about being on that coastline that reminds you why we chose to live here.

For me, Ballito is about the people, the community and the lifestyle. It has a great mix of balance, beauty, outdoor living and a quality of life that's hard to find elsewhere.

083 456 1897
Office: 032 946 3430
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CHERYL SOUTHGATE

Remax Dolphin Realtors

TOP 10 AGENT at RE/MAX DOLPHIN.



I moved to the North Coast 15 years ago and have never regretted it. I absolutely love living in Ballito, and my favourite spot has to be the promenade. I love taking a walk along the coastline, especially in the early morning, watching the sunrise and simply taking in the beauty of the ocean and everything Ballito has to offer.

For me, it is those simple moments of walking along the promenade, enjoying the sea, the fresh air and the beautiful amenities around us that remind me why I chose to call Ballito home.

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Watching my children enjoy those same moments takes me back to my own childhood and reminds me just how fortunate we are to raise our family here, and to call the North Coast home.

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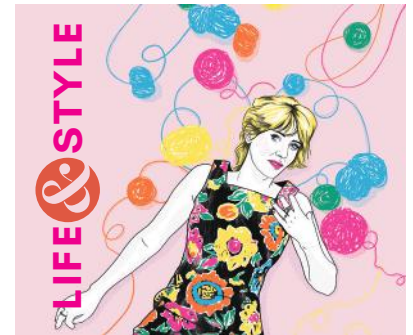
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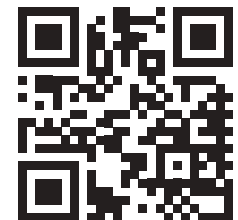
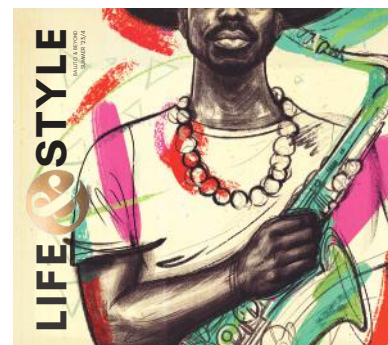
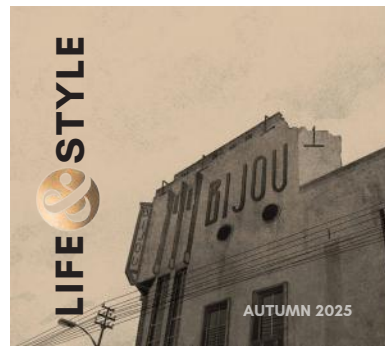
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POLISH

Words: Dave Charles

I HAVE ALWAYS MARVELLED at how a little attention to detail can bring a tired, shabby object back to life. I like nothing more than restoring the shine to a piece that has taken on the patina of age and become dull and tarnished. I feel a thrill of accomplishment when I return the freshly polished gleam to a piece of chrome or brassware, particularly if it has been long neglected, and lately I have been kept particularly busy doing just that.

Our son, Dan, moved into a lovely old apartment in Tamboerskloof, Cape Town, last year, and I had great fun stripping and polishing the original brass fittings on the doors and windows to bring them back to life. Some were covered in decades of old paint, while others were almost black with tarnish. It took many hours of labour with a Dremel and a host of accessories to strip the fittings down to the base metal and then polish them to a high-gloss finish. When the job was done, those brass fittings would have passed muster with the Royal Horse Guards, and I felt a real sense of satisfaction knowing that they were once again as beautiful as they had been when first installed more than eighty years ago.

Of late, my beloved Sue has been going through our collective inherited family keepsakes, looking for things that Dan might appreciate in his new home, and she has come up trumps with some interesting pieces. Some of these might best be described as trench art, made from brass cartridge cases and recycled metal by her late grandfather when he served with the Royal Flying Corps in the Great War. These took ages to buff and polish, but eventually the gleaming brass began to appear, and I could almost feel Great-Grandfather Harold's presence as we worked together to bring them back to life.

This odd assortment of knick-knacks was duly parcelled up, along with a few more substantial pieces, and couriered off to Cape Town, where they took pride of place in Dan's apartment.

Harold would be pleased, I think.

My polishing spree has also rekindled personal memories that had long been lost in the mists of time but have now returned, fragmented and filtered and, if the truth be told, a little sinister.

I had long forgotten the mystery of the fireplace in my first home in Benoni. As a small boy, I loved the crackle and roar of the coal fire that kept our little house warm on those bitter Highveld winter nights that froze the taps and

transformed our garden into a ghostly wonderland. The frosted grass crunched underfoot, and the birdbath was always a solid block of ice in those bleak midwinters, long ago.

Inside the house, it was always warm and cosy when the fire was burning, and because we had regular coal deliveries, this was generally the case. But there was something terrifying about the coal. It arrived in sacks carried to the coal bunker by wild-looking men covered in coal dust, which seemed to accentuate the whites of their eyes and teeth. They draped the sacks over their heads and shoulders, making them look like apparitions from the underworld in my childish imagination, and I generally hid when I heard them coming.

But even when they had gone, there was still a sinister presence at the fireplace that I found unsettling.

It was an old brass plate on a stand next to the fire. But this was no ordinary ornament.

It was magical.

The plate was engraved with the image of an owl with enormous eyes beneath a sickle moon. It was really rather frightening. In my childish imagination, it merged with the dark nursery rhymes and fairy tales of my youth to conjure up images of cackling witches, giants and demonic children running through the town, upstairs and downstairs in their nightgowns, rapping at the windows and crying at the locks...

No doubt Freud would have had a field day with me.

And now, here I was, many towns and a lifetime later, polishing away the tarnish until the owl and the moon emerged from the shadows once again. And with them came long-forgotten memories of my childhood. For a moment, I was back at the fireplace, and they were all there with me — my dad and my mom, my sisters and our little dog, Cindy.

And we were all safe.

And happy.





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