



# BACK TO NATURE

NESTLED IN A CRAGGY BAY ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN COAST, THIS ELEGANT, ECO-FRIENDLY BEACH HOUSE BLENDS SEAMLESSLY WITH ITS WILDLY RUGGED SURROUNDINGS

Words **KERRY FISHER** Pictures **ELSA YOUNG**



**Living room** 'Texture is more important to me than colour,' says the homeowner. 'I chose my coffee table for its really shiny surface.' The artwork above the bench is by British artist Jessica Langton, while the 1950 floor light by Gino Sarfatti for Arteluce was picked up in Palm Springs ▶

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IF YOU'RE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE A JOB THAT TAKES YOU TO COUNTRIES AS DIVERSE AS AFGHANISTAN AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA, WHERE WOULD YOU GO TO RELAX AND GET AWAY FROM IT ALL? FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER BELINDA BOWLING, HER SOUTH AFRICAN BEACH RETREAT IN BETTY'S BAY, ABOUT 100KM OUTSIDE CAPE TOWN, IS THE PERFECT ANTIDOTE TO HER GLOBETROTTING LIFE.

'I love the moodiness of the bay,' says Belinda, in reference to the wild and locale.

She has been coming here for years to visit her parents, whose house is 150m from hers. 'I'd never set out to own a beach house,' she recalls. 'But when this plot became available, I figured there wouldn't be many more opportunities to have my own space and share three meals a day with my parents. It's the best of both worlds!'

The initial inspiration for the design was a corrugated iron and clapboard beach house that Belinda fell in love with while on holiday in Uruguay. 'It had me totally mesmerised; I literally spent an entire week staring at it,' she says. She came up with the idea of a 'chic shack' aesthetic, utilising corrugated iron and wood. 'It worked out well as the house is incredibly well designed yet still manages to feel laid back,' she says.

Belinda was also keen for the house to blend into the landscape. 'I wanted to replicate the colours outside, so I used the acid chartreuse of spring fynbos [the indigenous scrub bushes that surround the property] in bold blocks as an accent. I also used a dark seaweed shade for the walls upstairs, where there is a lot of glass and light,' she says. As a result, nature's drama is never far from sight and provides the perfect backdrop for the contemporary yet warm interiors of the house.

With her professional interest in the environment, it seems obvious that Belinda would want her home to be ecologically sound, so she enlisted the help of her architect friends Matthew Beatty and Saskia Vermeiren. 'It wasn't an easy brief. I wanted a small footprint but with four bedrooms, outside nooks for shade, shelter from the wind and privacy and a whole host of green, energy-efficient elements,' she laughs. 'But Matthew and Saskia are a formidable duo. They made the entire process a pleasure and left me to do what I love best - the creative side.'





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