



fashionably  
**green**

*Named after its eco-friendly features and style, the home aptly called Green Verandah, sticks out like a healthy thumb alongside its neighbours and reflects the true talent of architect and owner Klippie du Toit*

Words Mignon van Zyl Photos Francois van Zyl, Hilton Kotze



**W**hen contemporary design is cleverly merged with energy efficiency and the keen eye of architect Klippie du Toit of EarthSwitch Architects, the result is ingenuity. From the moment you first see Green Verandah from the road leading down towards The Rest Nature Estate's West gate, your interest is immediately piqued.

Rammed earth walls, concrete, wood, glass, steel, facebrick, stone and smooth paint create a rustic but highly stylized exterior that continues indoors. The finish is further enhanced by natural elements incorporated into the build such as spekboom in the roof gardens, aloes in the front garden, a citrus orchard and four indigenous trees that were saved during construction and now form part of the smart structure.

The home consists of three bedrooms, three bathrooms, an open plan

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ART



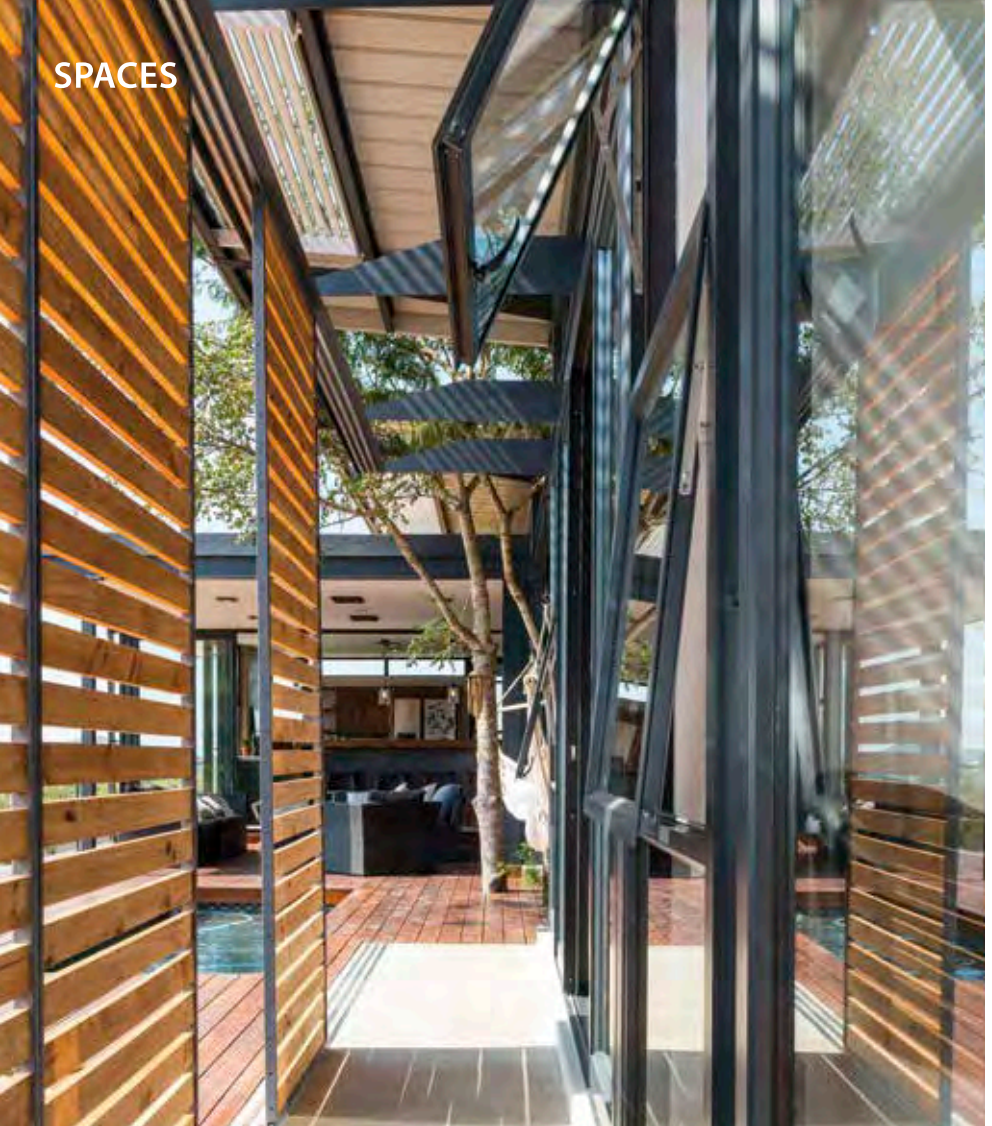
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living area, an outdoor entertainment deck with a small swimming pool, a double garage and a wine cellar. Meranti bifold doors open up to a small foyer at the entrance where three lino prints hang. These pop-art style self-portraits by Benine du Toit, a Dutch artist and Klippie's sister, depict the proverbial principle of 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil' and serve as an apt welcome sign. The foyer leads to the boma and deck area via sliding doors. Here, hammocks swing gently and enjoy the estate's views. Trees create natural shade for a concrete and brick braai pit, enclosed by two concrete benches with the words 'unwind' and 'sit back' cast into them. These unique concrete letter castings are placed throughout the house including on the fireplace – 'fire' – and numbering each of the large steps leading up to the front door from the parking area.

Inside the open plan area comprising the kitchen, dining room and living room is simultaneously masculine, cozy, spacious and very comfortable. The corner kitchen features a sleek wooden bar counter accessorised with saddle bar stools from Coricraft. The stylish teal coloured cabinetry is custom-made and lit up by lighting fixtures made from glass and rope. A framed work of propagand art from Hanoi in Vietnam personalises this immaculate space.

Plascon's Aluminium Silk, a deep grey, painted on the building's steel trusses, contrasts with the neutral tones of the living room and the built-in concrete features like the fireplace. A distinctive wall of polished concrete sits above the fireplace and is mirrored in the kitchen. An ottoman upholstered in hessian sacks and a designer lamp from Amsterdam add a touch of quirkiness to the space. Sharing the room is a long wooden table with matching benches. The living room leads down to a seemingly hidden wine cellar. With facebrick walls, a parquet floor and dim lighting thanks to converted desk lamps, a dark but cozy space has been created. Everything is connected, so one can move easily between the different spaces.

Each end of the house has a bedroom and en-suite bathroom. Identical in size and shape, a third room in the middle of the house serves as a study. The rooms are compact but clever storage systems ensure that everything is hidden, leaving no room for clutter. A strip of windows runs across the top



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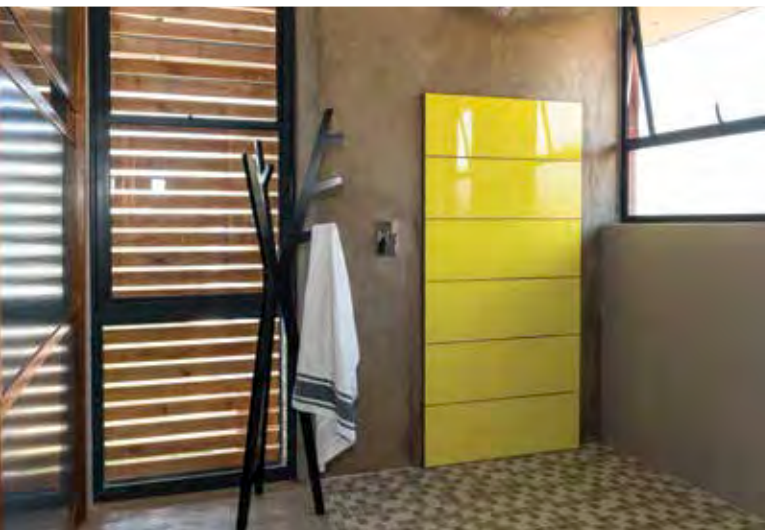
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**Klippie's Little Black Book**

Design and drawings by EarthSwitch Architecture, Mbombela, 071 359 3425, [www.earthswitch.co.za](http://www.earthswitch.co.za)

Construction by Vantee Construction, Andries van Biljon, 072 470 5928

Solid timber floors and outside deck by Lowveld Hardwood Flooring & Decking, 072 492 3737, [www.lowveldhardwood.com](http://www.lowveldhardwood.com)

Kitchen and custom light fittings by Ebeniste, 082 745 1758, [www.ebeniste.co.za](http://www.ebeniste.co.za)

Balustrades by Duratrend, 082 494 9499, [www.duratrend.co.za](http://www.duratrend.co.za)

Artwork by Benine du Toit (situated in the Netherlands), [www.beninedutoit.com](http://www.beninedutoit.com)

Sliding Timber Shutters, J.A Le Roux, 082 877 7112

Solar Power System & Heatpump, Power & Energy Solutions (White River), Tanya Gravelle, (013) 750 2676, [www.powerenergy.co.za](http://www.powerenergy.co.za)

of the bedroom walls and sliding doors open onto the deck, creating light infused rooms. Wooden louvered windows provide the necessary shade, as well as privacy and natural airflow. The bathrooms are characterised by concrete too and feature bright yellow tiles in the shower, a refreshing contrast to the otherwise muted tones.

Style aside, this home is impressively eco-friendly and reflects the green philosophy of Klippie's firm, EarthSwitch Architecture. Bioclimatic design principles such as the particular placement of the windows and their orientation, the shape of the building's structure, the insulation of the floors and certain walls, as well as the roof gardens, all aid in insulation, cross ventilation, and to maximise the light, and were utilised specifically for the climatic zone in which the home sits.

Two roof gardens, planted with spekboom, reduce heat gain from the roof and also help to reduce the property's carbon footprint (spekboom has an exceptional ability to remove large amounts of carbon dioxide from the air and convert it into oxygen). Corrugated steel water tanks capture rainwater from the roof and feed it to the toilets and swimming pool, while four solar panels and batteries supply electricity to the majority of the home. All water heating is done by means of a 190l integrated heat pump. Furthermore, the rammed earth walls made from the earth excavated from the site, the indigenous garden, the use of LED lights and the extended life cycles of the materials used in the build, all contribute to a sustainable home.

"The main idea for the design of the house was to show my clients that going green is a viable and responsible choice," says Klippie. "Concrete is my favourite material, not only for its long life cycle but also for its character. I like to show materials for what they are, instead of hiding them. So with Green Verandah I've tried to stick to the honesty of the materials and show what I've used."



*Street art by TV BOY in Barcelona, Spain. Klippie transferred the painting, titled 'Mickey Mao' onto a piece of paper after spotting it in a street alley in Barcelona.*

