



In Full Bloom

Nestled hillside in the Cape Winelands, a historic homestead celebrates the beauty of nature both indoors and out, its gardens and interiors inspired by a history of art.

WORDS MARTIN JACOBS
PHOTOGRAPHS KARL ROGERS AND HENRIQUE WILDING



This page: At the bottom of the hillside property, a dam with a zip line across it couldn't be more suited to indulging childhood fantasies.

Opposite page: A glasshouse, built around a decades-old tree, boasts impressive metalwork that's reminiscent of Arts and Crafts structures.



Life begins the day you start a garden. So states a famous Chinese proverb. It's a sentiment shared by gardeners the world over, and one that's cherished by the homeowners of Le Grand Jardin, a stately homestead set within a five-acre property in Stellenbosch's Devon Valley. Theirs is a sprawling and imaginative garden that is a constant work in progress – as so many of the best gardens are – and one that begs to be explored by both adults and children alike. It's a joyous celebration of nature and an evolving homage to the power of escapism. Its many enchanting outdoor "rooms" appeal to the child within us, offering moments for play, introspection, nostalgia, and for summer's festive indulgences. "I consider the garden to be the property's calling card," says the homeowner. "It certainly is an artistic canvas of sorts." Its many spaces form a palette of painterly moments that serve as inspiration for the home's interiors. But what inspired the homeowners to be so bold?

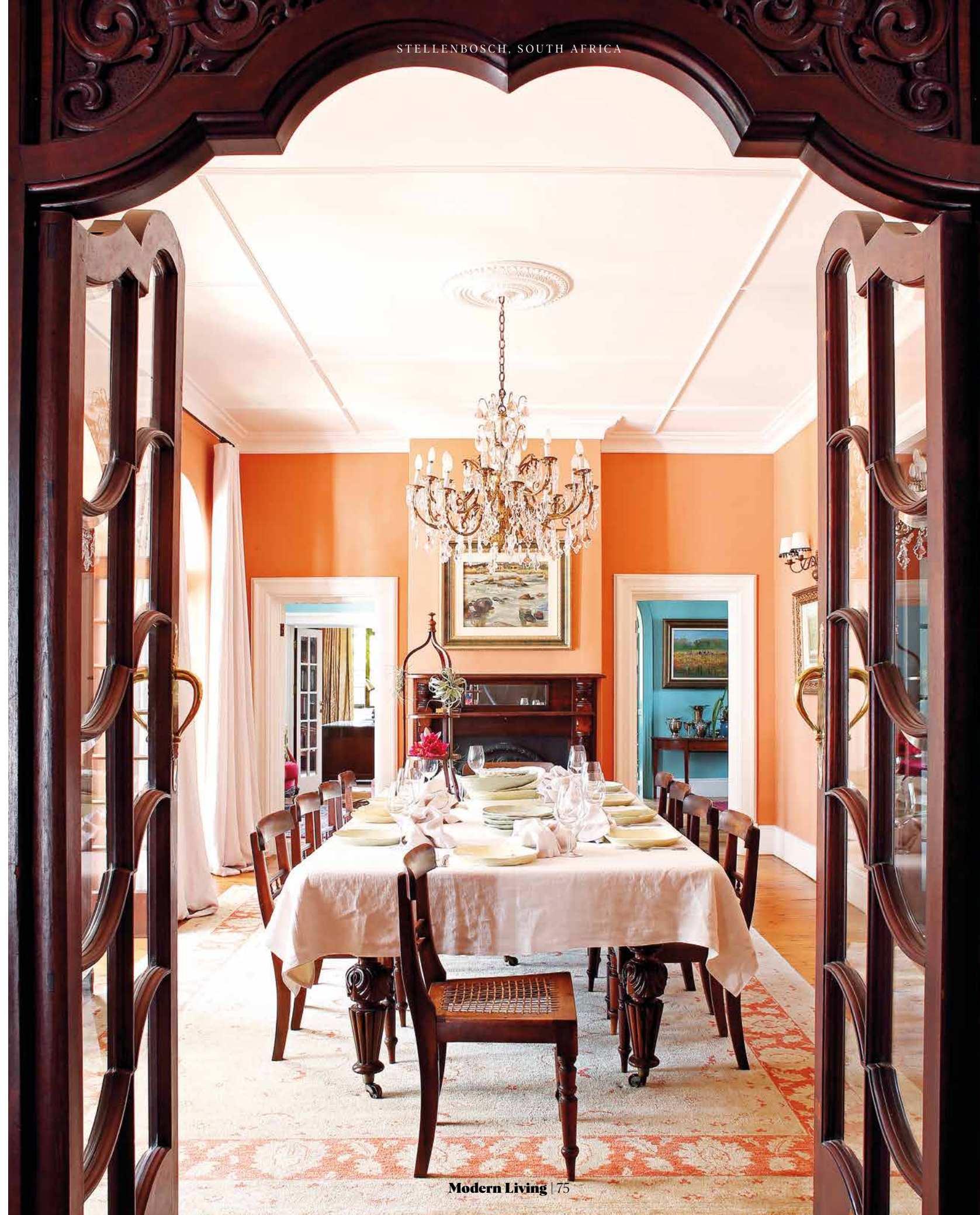
The answer is simple: some of history's most noteworthy art and design.

Wander the garden and there's much to take in. A wild meadow reminiscent of Impressionist paintings, complete with a working Coulson fairground carousel. A glasshouse with its metalwork that nods to the Arts and Crafts movement. A glinting turquoise pool, circled by striped loungers, that calls to mind a Hockney painting. A showman's caravan, evocative of Pre-Raphaelite times. And on the outskirts of the property, a secret pathway dotted with characters from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. The frivolity of such diverse spaces is underpinned by considered sustainability measures. Until recently the meadow was a thirsty, maintenance-heavy lawn, replaced with drought-tolerant plants in order to save water. The glasshouse boasts facilities reliant on borehole water. The pool is heated by solar panels, and Alice and squad surround a dam with bragging rights to its own eco-pool.



From top: The garden's many "rooms" include a children's play park with swings and other playground structures; in the primary living room, traditional furniture and artworks are offset against brightly coloured walls. Doors lead to the formal dining room.

Opposite page: Ornate wooden doors welcome one into the formal dining room where, again, bold colour on the walls adds a contemporary edge to an otherwise traditional space.





For the homeowner, a property of this scale needs to be sustainable. "The sustainability projects closest to my heart, though, are those that allow me to support craft art in South Africa, for they support communities and celebrate local design." This philanthropic thinking manifests both outdoors and in. Populating the gardens are oversized wirework figures sculpted and beaded by the Streetwires craftspeople, and clay chandeliers crafted by Mudd Studios that hang suspended above alfresco dining areas. But it is most evident within the home itself, most notably in the master suite.

Here, bespoke embroidered curtains and hand-painted wallpaper by Cape Town's African Sketchbook studio beckon the gardens in. Crafted by the studio's self-taught artists, the master suite's made-to-measure tableau was inspired by French Post-Impressionist Henri Rousseau's naive jungle scenes. Cheeky monkeys grab fruit off the branches of tropical trees that shade a riot of blooms below, while other wildlife adorn the walls of the adjacent dressing and bathroom.



Top: Bespoke wallpaper and hand-embroidered curtains, both inspired by artist Henri Rousseau and artfully made by African Sketchbook, decorate the master suite.

Above and right: A working vintage carousel and the colourful pool area respectively call to mind Impressionist paintings and David Hockney's Californian poolside scenes.



"The sustainability projects closest to my heart, though, are those that allow me to support craft art in South Africa, for they support communities and celebrate local design."



Elsewhere in the grand home, completed in 1934 by a disciple of architect Sir Herbert Baker, the walls are equally in bloom. De Gournay's Amazonia wall covering graces the entrance hall, while walls in the home's other bedrooms are artfully decorated with floral patterns. Like local designer Cara Saven's She's No Wallflower design, or Christopher Farr's Portofino, or Ardmore's Savuti design for Cole & Son. In a building where heritage demands the preservation rather than the alteration of its façade, covering walls in flowery, foliage-heavy designs is a clever solution to inviting the outdoors in.

Left: Set within the dam is an eco pool perfect for summer's day dips.

Below: Indoor plants in the entrance hall repeat motifs within the room's De Gournay Amazonia wall covering.





Above: The historic home was completed in 1934 by a disciple of architect Sir Herbert Baker. Gables define all four of the building's façades.

Nature indoors and out at Le Grand Jardin is nurturing and restorative for the soul. This the homeowners know well. "I've come to understand that a sense of lightness and play revives our spirits after challenging times," says the homeowner, who - along with her husband - divides her time between living on the property and a residence abroad, and who rents out this home in their absence. "The expansive garden with its old trees, its herb and remembrance gardens, its places to run and hide, swim and play, and zip line into the dam - these are the spaces that revive the spirits of even the most jaded of souls."

lejardin.co.za



Bold colour and floral motifs are a constant in the home's interiors, treated differently from room to room, but always creatively welcoming the outdoors in.

ADDITIONAL IMAGES COURTESY OF LE GRAND JARDIN



The pool house is home to three en-suite bedrooms, including a secluded suite with its own terrace and views across the dam.

Modern Living

Summer Edition 2023

153
Great
Local
Buys!

THE BEST OF
**SUMMER
LIVIN'**
DECOR FROM
COASTAL TO COUNTRY

Ultimate
summer
lounging
right here.

SHOP YOUR INSTA FEED

• Kids • Lighting • Wallpaper • Accessories • Influencers • Outdoors – We've Got It All Covered

What's Trending In Modern Living

ALL
THINGS
PALE PINK

MOODY
BOTANICAL
PRINTS

LUXE
OUTDOOR
LIVING

FARM
HOUSE
GLAMOUR

CHIC
DESIGNER
BAR CARTS

R90

Namibia N\$90 | Other Countries R90



6 009880 525928

23005