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6
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+

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OUTDOOR
PARTY IDEAS

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interiors

Welcome to the most inspiring spaces at home and away



This Eastern-inspired villa's layered cream palette and exotic details create a cool and relaxing holiday atmosphere appropriate to its perch overlooking the Atlantic. *Full story, overleaf.*



Paradise Found

PANORAMIC VIEWS AND A PARED-DOWN PALETTE
PARTNER WITH INSPIRATION FROM THE EAST TO CREATE
A PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE IN A CLIFTON VILLA

TEXT KELLY ADAMI PRODUCTION TRACY LYNCH
PHOTOGRAPHS MICKY HOYLE

Eastern motifs are a thread designer Geordi De Sousa Costa from Cécile & Boyd took through the entire house – based on the owners' desire for a calming and spiritual space. To enhance this effect, she kept the palette neutral





Uninterrupted panoramic views of the ocean, enjoyed from luxe sink-into-me sofas and loads of light-filled, but private spaces. This was the kind of experience that owners Robert and Lee O'Brien dreamt about having while planning the design of their eclectic Atlantic Seaboard villa. 'Our aim was to create an inspiring space that was warm and welcoming with a relaxing and peaceful energy,' explains Lee.

Guided by this vision, architect Jane Visser designed the home's seafront façade to open up fully, welcoming in light and air and blurring the divide between inside and out. When the weather is less than perfect, glass screens can be closed against the elements without obstructing the sweeping seascape. 'The verandah also has adjustable shutters,' explains Jane, 'they act as a buffer against the afternoon sun which can be harsh.'

When it came to carrying this energy through to the interior design, the O'Briens called on design firm Cécile & Boyd. 'We wanted designers who could work with our existing antiques and collectables to create a modern, yet spiritual space,' says Lee. 'We have worked with them in the past on two other projects and we loved the results.'

Large marble Indian screens, wooden trellises and old salvaged timber doors were among the exotic pieces that acted as a starting point for head designer on the project, Geordi De Sousa Costa, whose approach was all about contrasts. 'We enhanced the Eastern theme by mixing these pieces with modern and clean-lined furnishings,' she says of the combinations. ▶

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The dramatic scale of the spaces sets off owners Robert and Lee O'Brien's statement pieces to perfection, while floating stairs offer a Zen feel; slipcovers and silver accents balance the use of rich rugs and wood; a luxe bathroom in weathered wood and patinated tiles **OPPOSITE PAGE** Timber screens in the pool house create soft, filtered light, connecting the indoors with the outdoors





“We have a no-shoe policy in the house – you automatically feel relaxed when your shoes are off” Lee O’Brien





Extra-deep sofas and shiny white-screed floors feel cool, while the collectables offer warmth and richness – another decision that was entirely premeditated. ‘Mixing opposites creates balance,’ explains Geordi, ‘and we used a variety of textures to achieve this – rough versus smooth, polished versus matte, cool linens against luxe weaves and old, worn timbers alongside clean, new surfaces.’

The colour scheme, however, was limited to neutral tones in order to allow these textural relationships to work. A white-on-white colour palette in the main living area acts as a fresh backdrop for the couples’ key pieces, while metallic accents – such as a stainless-steel kitchen island or the antiqued-mirror wall in a guest bathroom – add glamour without detracting from (instead they add to) the atmosphere of relaxation.

Built on a steep and narrow site on the upper edges of Cape Town’s mountainous and much-sought-after Clifton area, the home presented some architectural challenges. ‘We needed to create a space that flowed easily over many levels without making each level feel too separate from the rest. So, we divided them up and created spaces to pause so that you never feel you’re facing a lot of steps – these open spaces also allow for visual contact between the sections so that the house works as a whole,’ Jane says.

For the O’Briens, they couldn’t have asked for a better solution to these stumbling blocks. ‘The end result is a house that is perfectly suited to us as a couple – it doesn’t feel too big when it’s only the two of us – but it can also just as easily expand to accommodate a lot of people,’ says Lee, who’d like her guests to feel as at home as she does. ‘We have a no-shoe policy in the house – you automatically feel relaxed when your shoes are off.’

■ *Cécile & Boyd* ☎ 021 424 8890; 🌐 www.cecileandboyds.com;
Jane Visser Architects ☎ 021 423 3241; 🌐 visser.archi

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Here in this predominantly classic bedroom, the Asian influence is subtle; a stunning view can be enjoyed from the ‘sunken’ bath. Oriental accents in the bathroom offer casual seating and storage surfaces; the layering of natural textures on the walls and floors, in a palette of cream and cinnamon, offers both a sense of luxury and one of ease **OPPOSITE PAGE** A magnificent four-poster draped in sheer, white fabric demands holiday repose

