

The shiny glass and cement structure gleams in the late afternoon sun as we meet Michael and wife Cheryl at their 'weekend house'.

"We live and work in Johannesburg, but we try to come here at least one weekend a month. We love it and can't wait to spend our first December holidays here," says Cheryl. "It is difficult to believe that, when we're here, we don't really want to leave the house. It's not that there aren't lots of things to do at Oubaai or on the Garden Route. We enjoy the house so much that we prefer to just stay in and soak up everything it has to offer."

When the Josephs decided to invest in a second property, they wanted to live

on an exclusive golf estate with a sea view. "There were a few estates in South Africa to choose from, but Oubaai's proximity to the airport was a big draw card. The exclusivity, superb location and good security also impressed. And when we saw this plot and its potential for all-round views, we were sold," says Michael.

Partial to clean lines and minimalist design, the Josephs instructed Johannesburg architect Nico van der Meulen to create an ultra modern house. Michael in particular wanted as much glass



Clean AND serene

By Athane Scholtz

PHOTOGRAPHS: DESMOND SCHOLTZ

MICHAEL JOSEPH IS NOT A BIG TALKER. HE LIKES things done, quickly and efficiently. Clean and serene. Just like his house at Oubaaï, a gigantic, ultra modern art piece in every sense of the word.

as was structurally possible. "We have the only sea facing plot with a 180 degree view and it was important to us that the house design enables maximum views too. One of its best features is the fact that you can look straight through the house from front to back. Almost every room has a

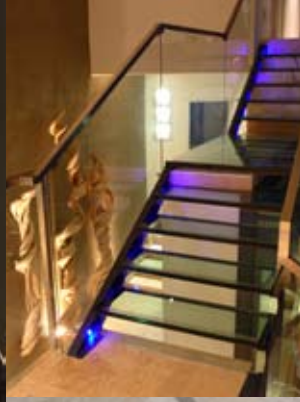
view, either of mountains or sea."

The house has a spacious open-plan design with large glass windows and panels, glistening surfaces and hi-tech finishes. While outside walls are earthy to comply with Oubaaï building guidelines, inside walls are mainly white while the

stairs and platforms are made of glass.

Calculated lighting positioning emphasises stairs, structures and water features.

There are five bedrooms en suite, all sea-facing. Spacious living areas include the open plan lounge and dining room space that opens up onto an elegant deck,



rim flow swimming pool and jacuzzi. The imported Italian kitchen features a pantry, walk-in fridge-freezer and a scullery. There's also a cinema room, guest toilet, double garage and golf cart garage.

A glass palace needs a completely different approach to interior design. Enter veteran Johannesburg interior designer George van der Haas, who may not be known for modern design, but is sought after for his efficiency and reliability, qualities the Josephs particularly appreciate.

“George promised we would have the exact feel we had in mind – and he delivered. Since the house was so ultra modern, we wanted the interior design to

also be minimalist, clean and simple.”

Combining textures on almost every surface, the interior design is unexpectedly warm. Marble tiles have sandy tones to combine well with light wood pieces of bedroom furniture. Large pieces of bleached twirled driftwood, imported from Thailand, mark an impressive entrance and are echoed by smaller decorative pieces throughout the house. Except for a few large succulent leaves, decorations and furnishings are black, white and chrome.

“Although our other home in Sandton has modern touches, this is an all-out exercise that we really enjoy. It also has modern fittings and state-of-the-art

technology for radios, televisions and other equipment – even the blinds are remote controlled. We love the outcome and plan to spend as much time as possible enjoying this investment and the Oubaai lifestyle,” says Michael.

While the Josephs both agree that their house's best features are the views and open space feeling, they differ on what their favourite room is. Like any man, Michael considers the cinema room with its big screen and comfy chairs an irresistible and relaxing treat. Cheryl likes her bedroom, which is pretty impressive with its glamorous bath overlooking the Mossel Bay promontory. ■

>> Nico van der Meulen, 011 789 5242

Inside view

By Trevyn McGowan
of Source: 082 825 6697



THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT MOST EVERYONE'S dream is to live by the sea – whether to retire, own a holiday house or go for broke and move permanently within reach of a magnificent, ever changing vista. For the homeowners lucky enough to live in Oubaai, the views often also include the stretching horizon of majestic mountains.

My reason for beginning with this reference to the outdoors is that for me interiors are inextricably linked to the surrounding environment. When there is such beauty all around you, I believe it is important to harmonize with what you can see. Of course, it is the architect's job to open up to the views, but the soft furnishings, colour palette, accessories and art will feel so much more comfortable and restful if they relate to what is outside of your window.

Trends come and go and it is exciting to see new products and direction in the marketplace. This year's hottest new directions at the international trade shows were: Folk: embroidery and patchwork; Country Simplicity: honest, farm furniture; and '80s Style: fashion retro, neon brights and perspex.

But an enduring trend, and one that is so much easier for any of us to achieve, is the natural, organic spectrum that works so well at Oubaai. This need not be bland or uniform and it is worth being brave in your attempts to make your home reflect your family's personality.

One of the greatest pleasures of a good walk is the small treasures you pick up on your way – beautiful shells, interesting seedpods, a gnarled walking stick. I think there is nothing less interesting than a 'done interior' that looks like it was completed all in one go from one particular shop.

The most interesting homes are filled with pieces that have been collected over time, have meaning and history and a particular relevance to the owner. When starting an interior it is really worth the extra effort of re-covering old furniture and bleaching or staining timber to give it a new life.

Bring unusual items in to your home and play with scale through large oversized items and small groupings of display. Natural colours need not only mean creams and browns, but



many others, including the azure of the sea and the acid yellow or red of fynbos flowers – especially if you can actually see these colours outside. Patterns like pebbles, branches and foliage give texture and interest. As you become more exercised in reacting to items that speak to you and more confident in taking risks, you will feel so much more connected with your home. ■