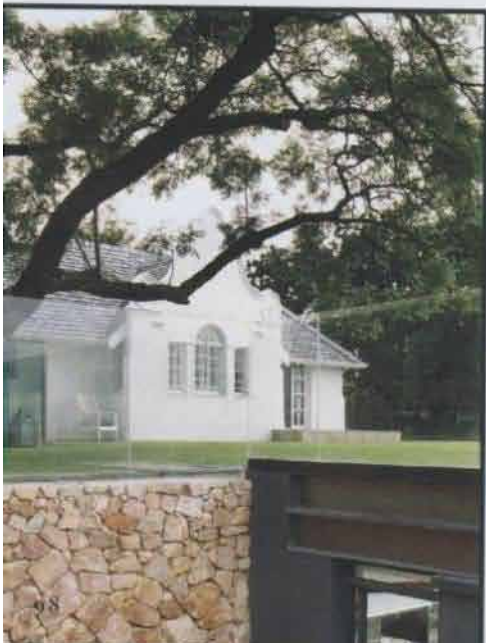
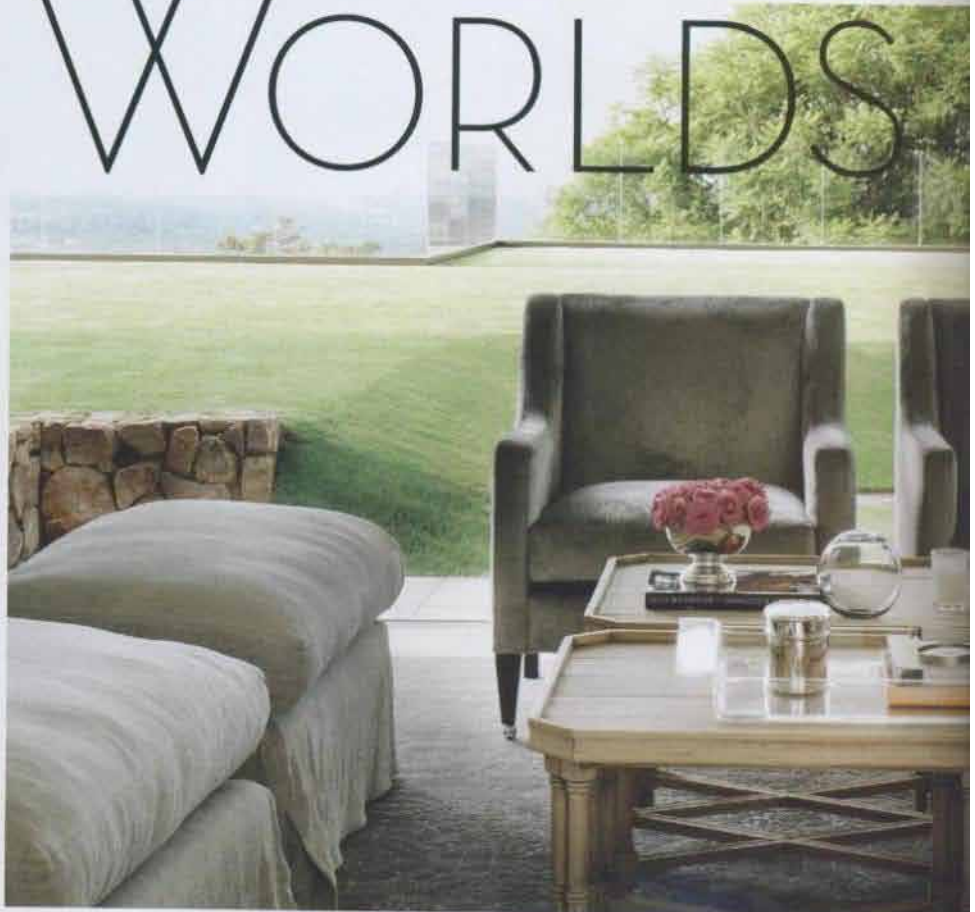


TEXT JESSICA KIDDLE  
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FACED WITH THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNISING AN OLD HERITAGE BUILDING, THE OWNERS OF THIS HOUSE HIT UPON AN UNUSUAL SOLUTION. EXCAVATING UNDERNEATH THE SITE, THEY BUILT A STOREY BELOW GROUND THAT NOT ONLY DRAMATICALLY CHANGED THE STYLE AND SIZE OF THE PROPERTY BUT MAXIMISED ITS EXPANSIVE VIEWS



# THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

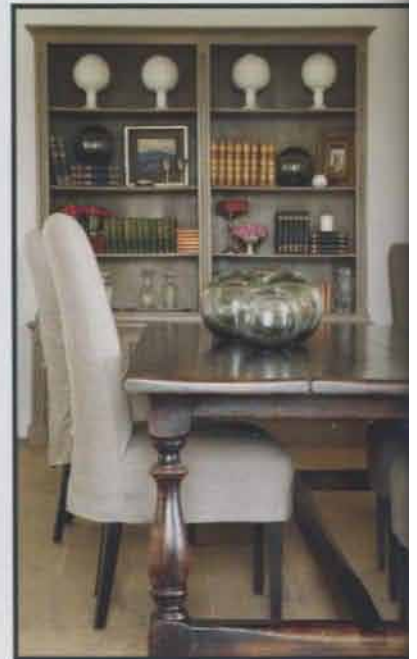


glass balustrades form a border around the garden without obstructing the views OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The angular lines of the rim-flow pool mirrors the shape of the extension, which juts out over the ridge; in the upstairs living room, a pewter-coloured velvet from St Leger & Viney was chosen to add luxurious tactility to two wingback chairs; the graceful gable of the original building remains intact; steel supports compensate for the steep topography of the site





A rich-brown sofa takes centre stage in the otherwise white upstairs family room  
**TOP RIGHT** In the dining room, modern art in the form of a William Kentridge sculpture and a contemporary painting is juxtaposed with the classical proportions of a circular wine table from La Grange Interiors  
**BOTTOM RIGHT** The dining chairs have been upholstered in a modish grey Belgian linen from Mavromae



Supporting the curvaceous gable of a typical Cape-Dutch building, from the outside, this house looks like an attractive but unassuming property. Located in Johannesburg's suburb of Westcliff, one might hazard a guess at its tardis-like qualities and make an assumption as to its geographic predisposition for impressive vistas. What no-one could expect, however, is the sprawling extension that has been built underground, which leads out to spectacular drop-off views over Westcliff ridge.

For the owner Jacci Samios (one half of Jacket Interiors) and her husband this architectural challenge, however, was not undertaken simply to surprise or impress. Given the building's heritage status, it was, in fact, their architect Enrico Daffonchio's clever solution to the stipulation that neither the gables nor the chimney could be altered during renovations.

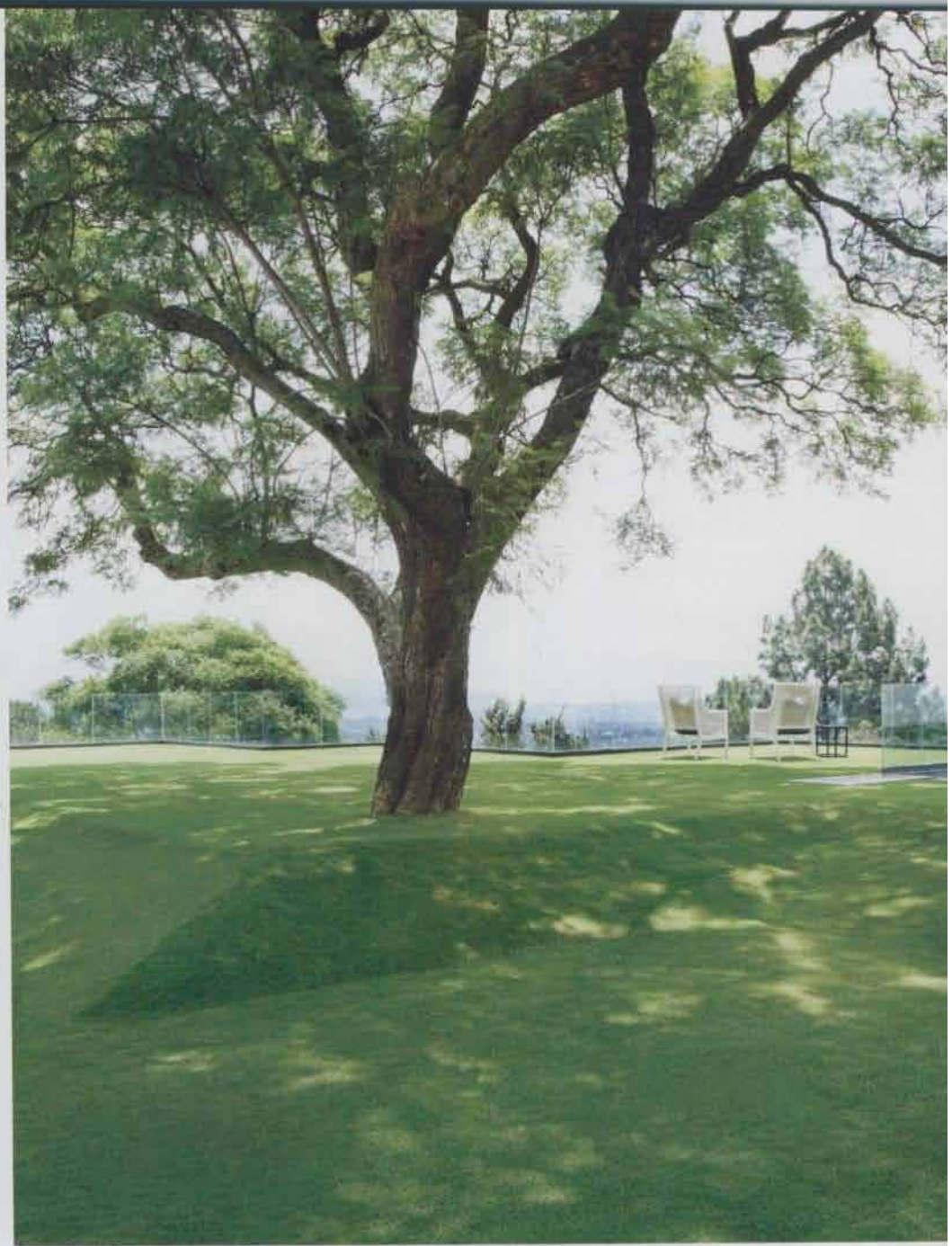
'The brief was to upgrade and add about 300 square metres,' explains Daffonchio. 'The problem was that such a large extension was not really possible without completely changing the property's character, which

given its heritage status, we weren't allowed to do. The house is also situated on a very steep site and had almost no external space in front of the existing living areas.'

Thus the decision was taken not only to build in the limited space available at the front of the house but to excavate and build an entirely new level underground, which added onto the lower-ground level of the house. On top of this, a roof garden was created that not only hides this addition from view at ground level but fuses it with the green panorama beyond.

Inside, joins between the old and the new have been just as deftly smoothed. 'We completely gutted the original house and started from scratch as it was a bit of a rabbit warren of rooms,' says Samios. 'We wanted an open-plan design with a good flow of space but we also wanted privacy.'

The entrance remains on the ground floor where there's now a study, guest bedroom, open-plan lounge, dining and kitchen area as well as a split-level family room. The effect is light and airy but it's downstairs



ars into brown,' explains Oekert Snyman, Samios's design partner worked on the project. Thus textured fabrics with subtle colour tints make up the restrained palette: grey Belgian linen has been used to create upholstered skirts on the dining chairs; an Elitis pewter velvet from St Leger & Viney adds a luxurious quality to a pair of wingback chairs in the living room; and a rich mink Lizzo floral, also from St Leger & Viney, adds decadence to the entrance lounge.

The only departure is on the verandah. Accessed through the kitchen, it is left open to the elements on the remaining three sides, it has a refreshingly airy holiday feel befitting of its location. Paying homage to the late architect John Lautner, it's decked out in his signature blue and white. It's a refreshing change and is designed to play on the shade of the jacaranda trees – the only interruption in a well-kept bowling green lawn – and, of course, the green and leafy scene beyond.

Overall, the look stays true to Jacket Interiors's aesthetic by combining traditional furniture finds with modish pieces and a smattering of

Eastern references and contemporary art. Timeless lines, which make an impression in dark wood, come in the form of a round wine table from La Grange Interiors. A G2 table with the most classic of proportions grounds the scheme in the dining room where a Tibetan chest makes a nod to the East. A Buddha sculpture in the entrance hall lounge adds another international reference. Everything else, meanwhile, retains a modern edge that lends the house its visual sharpness. The kitchen is slick and makes an understated statement of taste and a love for clean design, whilst floor-to-ceiling windows maximise the abundance of natural light flooding in from the largely undressed windows.

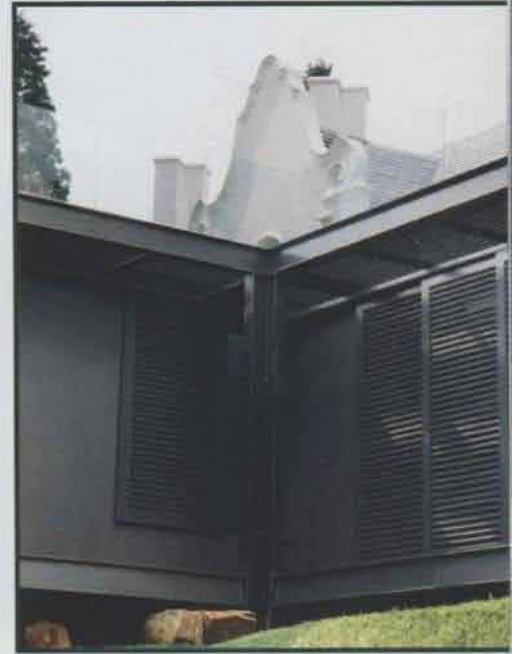
'It's an old home but once you get inside everything is surprisingly bright and modern, it's a juxtaposition that works terribly well because everything has been done in a simple but contemporary way,' says Samios.

Both inside and out, however, it's the mixing of the old and new that makes this such an exciting and timeless space.

For more information, contact Jacket Interiors on 011 646 3505



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A Buddha sculpture injects Eastern mysticism into a corner of the entrance hall lounge; the patio is decked out in blue-and-white paisleys and stripes from Ralph Lauren, which provide a refreshing break from the neutrals indoors; viewed from the garden, old and new architectural styles sit together in harmony; in the kitchen dining area, a table from La Grange Interiors was treated to a high-gloss finish and paired with Philippe Starck's 'Ghost' chairs. Floor-to-ceiling windows invite the light in



where the biggest transformation has taken place. Where three single bedrooms used to exist, four double en-suite bedrooms can now be found. Not only working with but also maximising the topography of the site, the steel-and-glass extension follows the contours of the cliff – jutting out as far as possible and resting on industrial-sized supports that compensate for the terraced slope below. A decked walkway with glass balustrade wraps around this lower level – creating a barrier between inside and out without interrupting the indoor-outdoor flow, particularly in the glass-walled bathroom, which feels like it's almost in the treetops.

Another unifying factor is the choice of a classical but modern decor scheme and the contemporary neutral colours throughout. Mirroring the white on the outside of the house, a blanket of white was chosen for the walls inside. This, as well as oak floorboards, marble and cream carpets in some areas, are relied on to create a stylish but simplistic foundation on which to add personality. 'We're not very big on colour so we chose white as a clean canvas on which we could introduce warmer ▶

‘WE WANTED AN OPEN-PLAN DESIGN WITH A GOOD FLOW OF SPACE BUT WE ALSO WANTED PRIVACY’ JACCI SAMIOS



The glass-encased master bathroom has a decked walkway, which further integrates the inside with the outside OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT As this view from the upstairs dining room through to the family area shows, the flow of space was improved by opening up rooms to one another; the lone jacaranda tree is offset by the contemporary landscaping of Patrick Watson; in the marble-clad master bathroom, the bath has been placed centrally to make the most of the floor-to-ceiling views