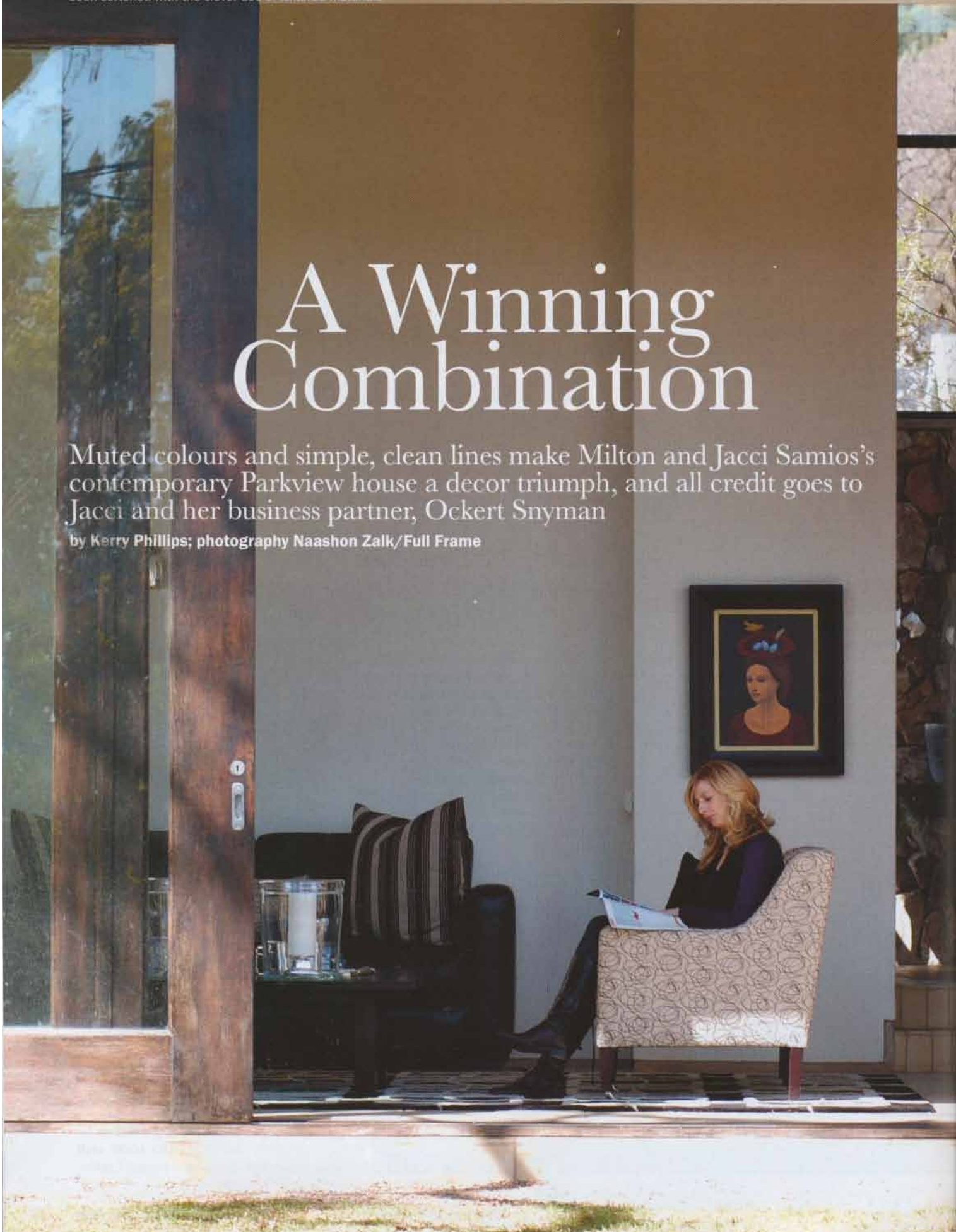


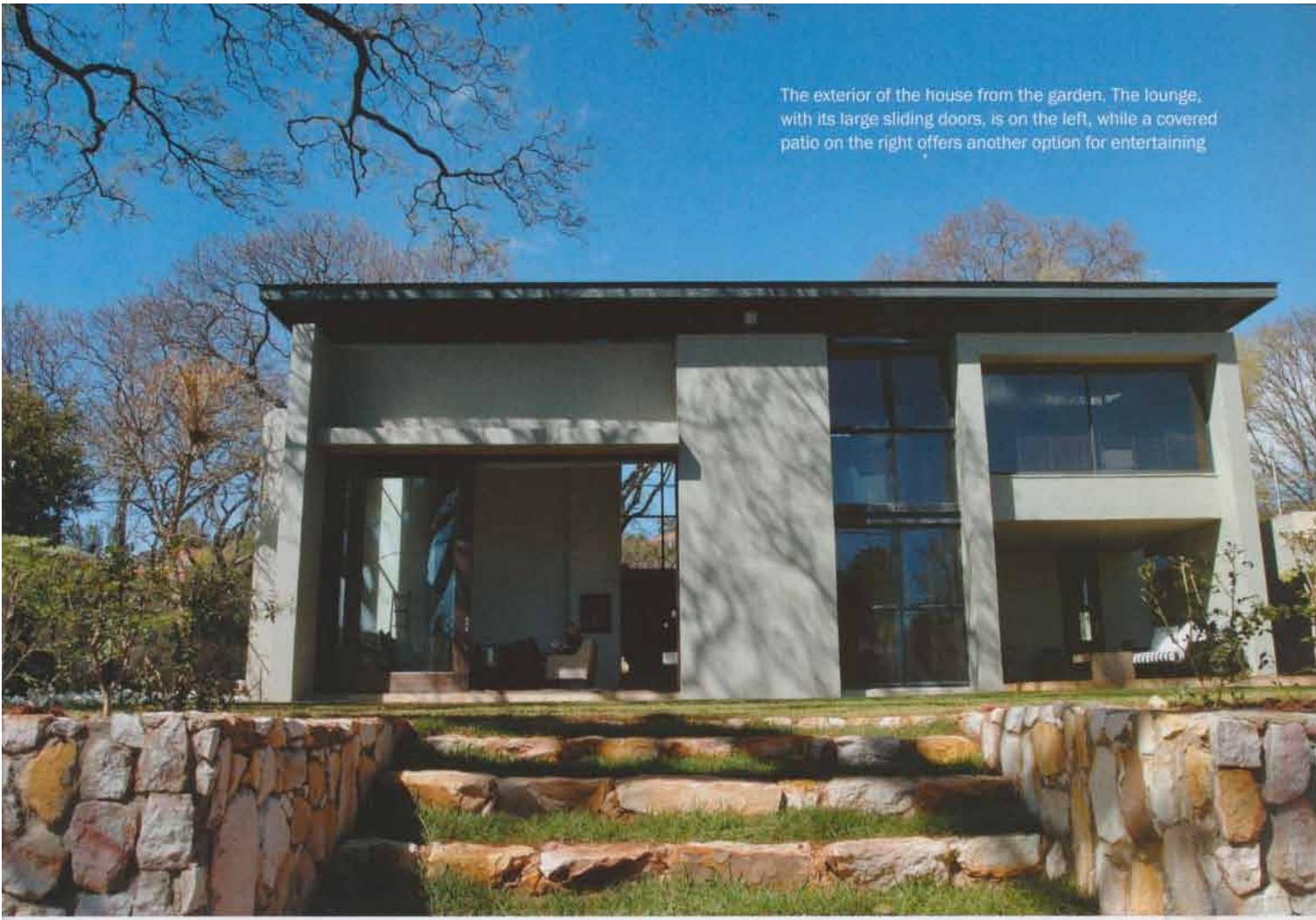
Jacci relaxes in the predominantly black lounge, which has been softened with the clever use of textured materials

A Winning Combination

Muted colours and simple, clean lines make Milton and Jacci Samios's contemporary Parkview house a decor triumph, and all credit goes to Jacci and her business partner, Ockert Snyman

by Kerry Phillips; photography Naashon Zalk/Full Frame





The exterior of the house from the garden. The lounge, with its large sliding doors, is on the left, while a covered patio on the right offers another option for entertaining

When you are a two-man business, to be successful it is essential that you and your partner share the same ideas and common goals, at least most of the time. Still, it is rather unnerving to meet interior design team Jacci Samios and Ockert Snyman, who are so in tune with each other that they are constantly finishing one another's sentences. So when Jacci and her husband, Milton, moved into a stunning Parkview, Johannesburg house a year ago, rather than tackling the project herself, Jacci had no hesitation in asking Ockert to help.

The house, which was designed by architect Alfio Torrisi, the previous owner bar one, is in stark contrast to many of the homes in Parkview, which is one of Johannesburg's older areas. A large, contemporary house, it is modern without being too sleek and cold, something that attracted Jacci and Milton instantly. Another advantage was that it didn't need structural changes: just a bit of tweaking here and there, to make it fit the Samioses' taste. "We decided to enhance the house by painting and decorating inside and fixing up the garden, which hadn't been properly landscaped," says Jacci. "The decorating side was easy because I simply enlisted Ockert's help!"

Jacci and Ockert, who used to work for well-known decor company Head Interiors, started their own business, Jacket Interiors, in March 2006. Jacci's house was one of their first projects.

"Jacci and I were in complete agreement as to the house's decor," says Ockert. "Both Jacci and Milton like a contemporary look that is simple and uncluttered – a look that was dictated to us by the style of the house."

The couple also prefer a neutral palette, sticking to shades of black,

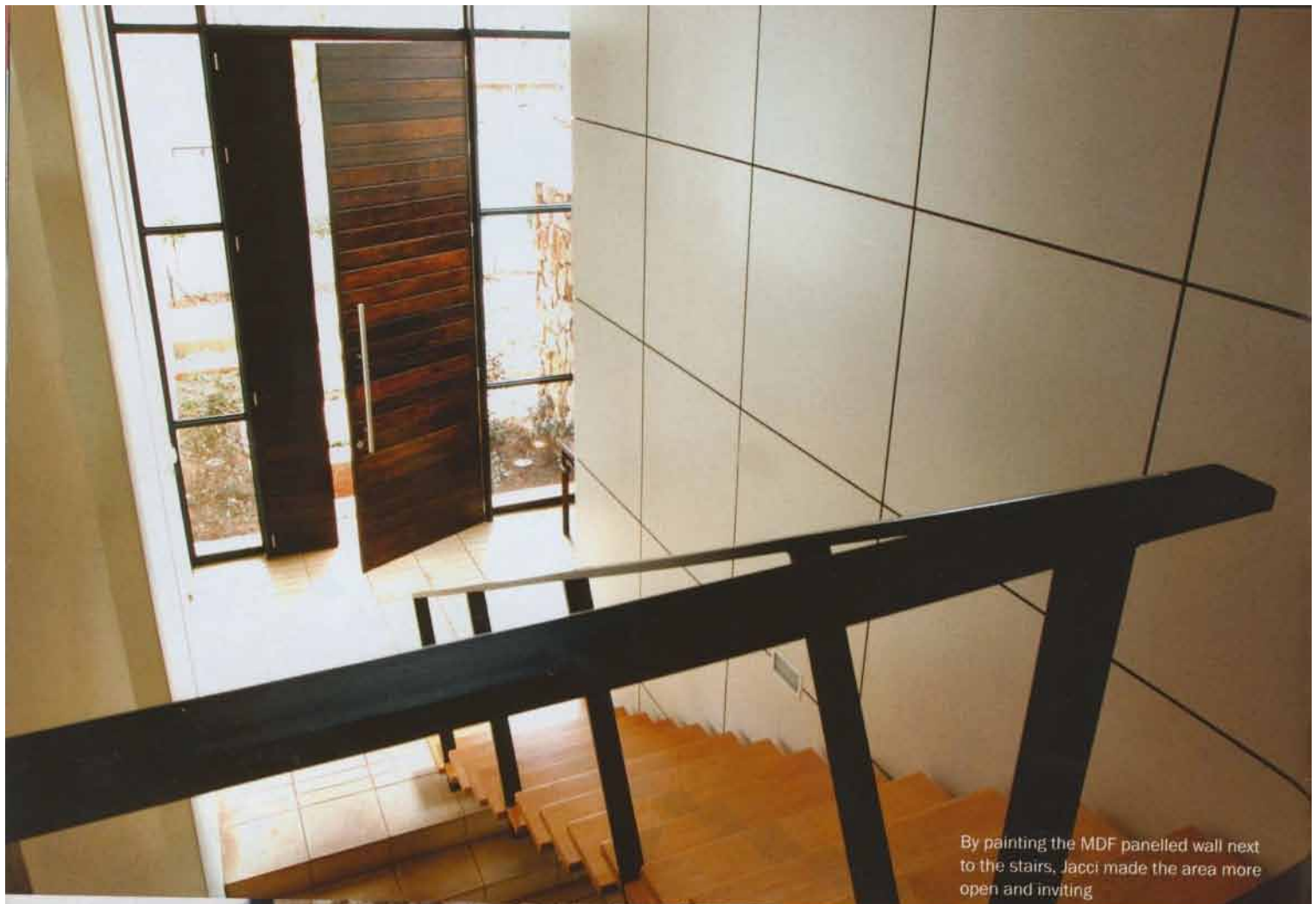
brown, taupe, cream and white. As an interior designer, Jacci has an insider's knowledge of where to source furnishings at the best prices and she was fortunate to be able to collect a number of items during her previous job. She and Ockert bought a few pieces at their favourite homeware stores, La Grange and Gatehouse in Sandton's new design district, Kramerville. Others were collected during Milton and Jacci's three-year stint in London or on their travels.

Jacci and Milton love art but don't believe in buying paintings simply to fill a space. "A piece must 'speak' to us," says Jacci, explaining that the couple share a love for local artists Kevin Roberts and Paul Cross.

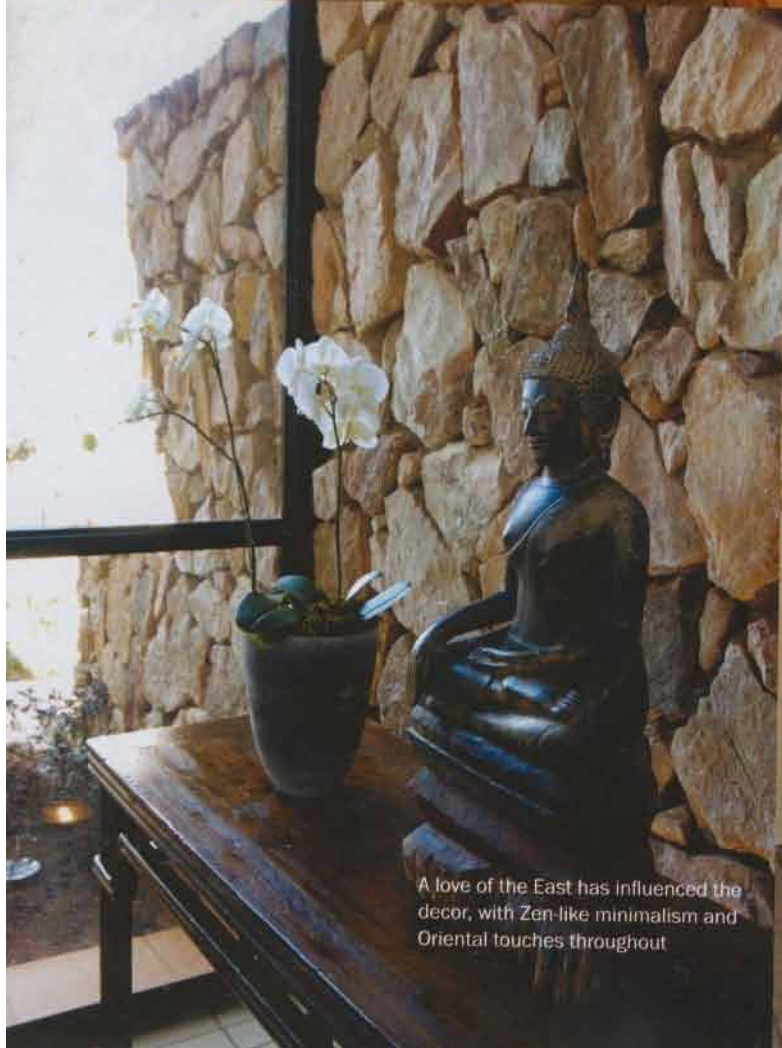
"It's better to live with bare walls until you find something you love," says Ockert

Ockert is in complete agreement. "It's better to live with bare walls until you find something you love," he says.

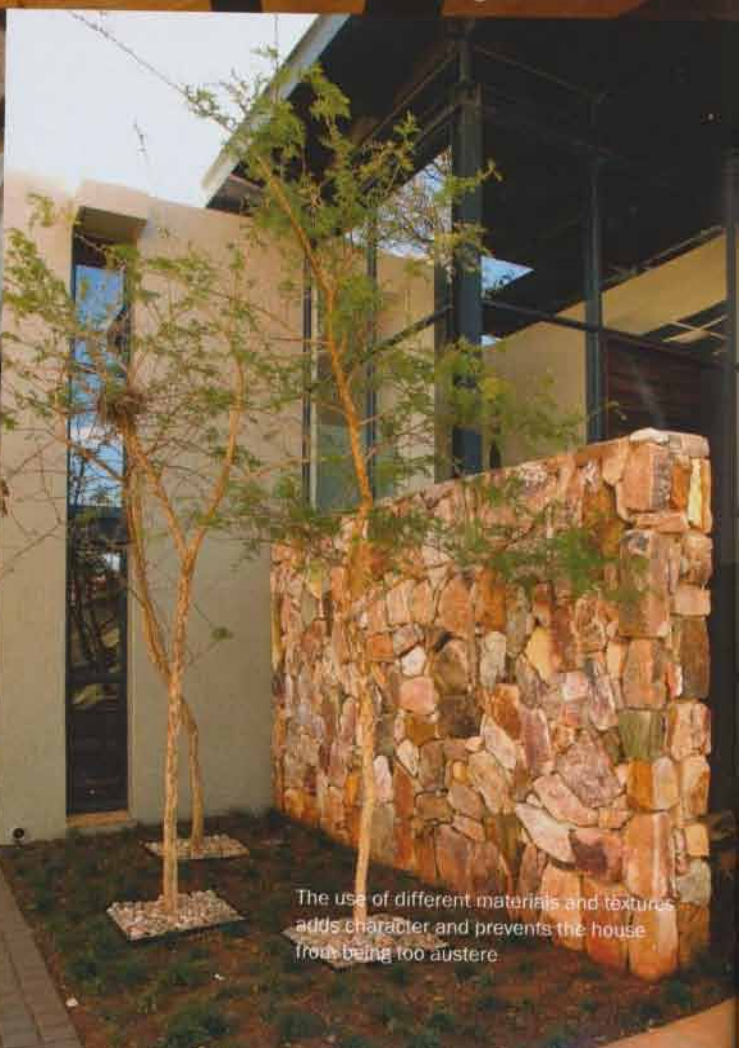
A large Nuno da Cruz painting dominates the TV room, the heart of the house where Milton and Jacci spend a lot of time. "This room is very small and there wasn't a lot we could do with it," explains Jacci. "We decided to use a few bigger pieces as opposed to a lot of smaller items, which would have made it look too busy." It was an idea that worked well, as instead of dwarfing the room, the furnishings balance the proportions and make the room appear more spacious. A large L-shaped brown leather sofa with textured cushions solves the problem of trying to fit in too many chairs, and a plasma screen attached to the wall removes the need for a conventional television and stand. A stack of small leather trunks "adds a bit of soul", says Ockert.



By painting the MDF panelled wall next to the stairs, Jacqi made the area more open and inviting



A love of the East has influenced the decor, with Zen-like minimalism and Oriental touches throughout



The use of different materials and textures adds character and prevents the house from being too austere



Jacsi Samios and Ockert Snyman, the duo behind Jacket Interiors



The main bedroom has a left-like feel, while a padded headboard acts as a screen.



The light and airy bathroom boasts large windows that slide open, which makes bathing in summertime a treat for Jacsi

The double-volume lounge is light and airy, thanks to the large glass sliding doors that open onto the garden. To ensure the predominantly black colour scheme is not too stark and unwelcoming, Jacci and Ockert have used different textures to soften the edginess and add interest. The black linen sofa has striped cushions, covered in Boussac's Secret flocking from Home Fabrics. The black coffee table from Head Interiors, with its rippled surface that reflects the light, is one of Jacci's favourite pieces, while a boldly patterned rug from Paco in Greenside adds a fun element. Two armchairs covered in a cream linen with black swirls – Sahara from Boussac at Home Fabrics – break the linear pattern that dominates the room. "Because the room is double volume, with a lot of wall space and light, it can take the dramatic colour scheme," says Ockert. "It would have been overpowering in a smaller room."

A fireplace separates the lounge and dining room but while Jacci loves fireplaces, she admits to never lighting it, despite the harsh winter the Highveld suffered this year. Fortunately, underfloor heating and the oversized doors and windows that allow the rooms to be flooded with sunlight mean that she has not had to get out the matches.

A large painting by Johan Louw, bought at the Everard Read gallery in Cape Town, was acquired because Jacci and Milton fell in love with the muted colours rather than the subject matter, which Jacci admits she initially found depressing. "I love the painting now and it forms an interesting focal point in our dining room."

One of the first changes Jacci and Ockert made when the Samioses moved into the house was to paint the MDF panelled wall that lined the staircase. Originally dark brown, they painted it off-white to lighten the area. "It was too dark and besides, it clashed with the blonde wood on the stairs," says Jacci.



Frosted glass and sleek mahogany cabinets make for a stylish kitchen



Always a talking point at dinner parties, the strong Johan Louw painting was initially chosen for its subdued colours

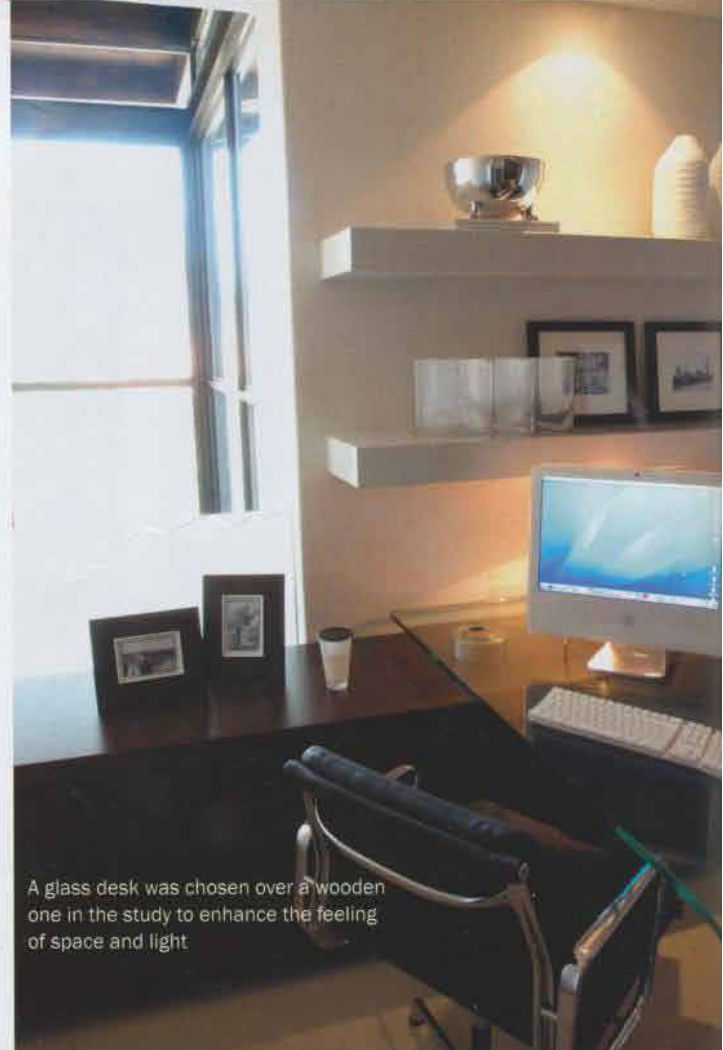
Upstairs, the spare room and bathroom are the only rooms to have walls that meet the ceiling – the rest have interior walls that are waist high, creating a loft-like feel. “The house is unusual in that it has an open-plan feel upstairs without being open plan,” says Jacci.

Like the rest of the house, the study is uncluttered. A glass-top desk was chosen above a wooden one to enhance the feeling of space. When you are as concerned about clutter as Jacci and Milton are, a lot of cupboard space is necessary to contain the goods invariably collected in day-to-day living. Stand-alone units ensure everything is kept out of sight.

In the bedroom, different textures are again used to add interest to what could easily be a monotonous room. A padded glazed linen headboard the size of the wall forms a dominant feature and acts as a screen, making the room appear cosier, while a Belgian linen bedcover from Head Interiors lends a luxurious touch. Glass bedside lamps from Gatehouse are striking and in keeping with the modern decor. Sliding windows extend the length of the bathroom, dressing area and bedroom, and wooden Venetian blinds are used to keep out the sunlight and prevent the room from becoming too hot.

The neutral colour scheme extends to the garden – no riot of colour in the flowerbeds for Milton and Jacci, who have opted for a structured all-white garden. “With a slight touch of purple; we have a large jacaranda tree at the back and lavender in the front garden,” laughs Jacci.

“It’s not a child-friendly house and Milton and I will consider moving when we reach that stage of our lives,” she concludes. “But we’re happy where we are now and we are delighted with the way the house has turned out.” □



A glass desk was chosen over a wooden one in the study to enhance the feeling of space and light