



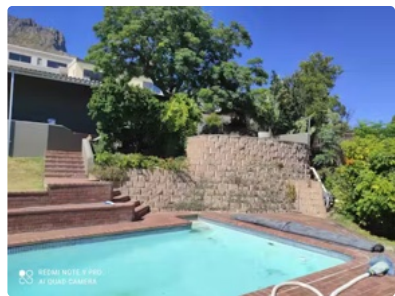
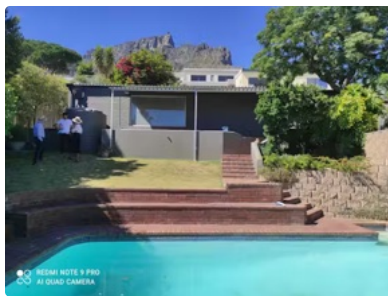
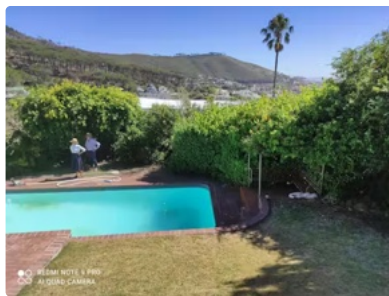
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Before & After: The (Potential) Views Were the Most Promising Part of This Cape Town Home

Architect Werner Lotz and interior designer Jenine Bruce reworked the midcentury's convoluted, split-level plan to connect it with the backyard and the city's stunning scenery.

Text by
Melissa Dalton



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saw this midcentury home in the Higgovale neighborhood of Cape Town, South Africa, and had very different reactions. "I hated it," says Bonnie, an attorney, smiling at the memory of that first viewing. Antonie, a business owner in the restaurant industry and firm believer in buying "the worst house on the best street," saw potential. "I said to my husband, 'You're crazy to want to take this on. It's a lost cause,'" says Bonnie.

Despite a prime location with incredible views across City Bowl and the harbor, including Lion's Head and Signal Hill mountains, the home's existing windows were small and its split-level plan was muddled, with two kitchens, an entry stair made of wakeboards, and small, dark bedrooms. "I wanted a house that's very light—I like sunshine," says Bonnie. "The house, as we saw it for the first time, was the opposite of that."

Before: Rear Exterior



Before: When Bonnie and Antonie Basson bought this midcentury house in the Higgovale neighborhood in Cape Town, South Africa, the only view was by the pool.

Courtesy of Hours Clear Architects



Before: The rear façade had few windows, and didn't take advantage of the site's views.

Courtesy of Hours Clear Architects



The couple worked with Jenine Bruce of interior design firm Lacuna and Werner Lotz of Hours Clear Architects on the remodel. They had met Lotz through Bonnie's sister, and he joined them on their house tours in order to help with the decision. "The house was shocking to say the least," remembers Lotz. "But what I really loved about it was that it followed the topography. Split up in these half levels, the entire house kind of cascades down. I wanted to keep that as much as possible, and then also open it up."

That was important to the Bassons, as they needed their outdoor spaces to connect fluidly with the interior for a flow that facilitated cooking and entertaining. "We are an Afrikaans family, and in our culture, we love *braaiing*," says Bonnie. "It's where we cook and entertain around a fire."

Lotz added large stacking glass doors and windows across the rear facade, connecting interior rooms to new outdoor spaces, designed by Josephine Noyce. Now, a covered terrace with a *braai*—the grill area—is an extension of the living room, while in the primary suite, the shower enjoys incredible views via floor-to-ceiling glass that opens to the garden. "It's like you are on Signal Hill having a shower," says Bruce.

After: Rear Exterior



Before: Patio



Before: A mature tree blocked a view out a window at the rear of the home.

Courtesy of Hours Clear Architects

After: Braai



The *braai* can be used for cooking over an open fire, or lounging in summer or winter. "It's such a beautiful place to sit," says Bonnie. "In the summer when it's warm, I read my book with a glass of wine. We are spending a lot of time now in the winter there, too, because it's just so cozy."

Vignette Agency

Photo Categories: outdoor, large pools, tubs, showers, hardscapes, back yard, planters patio, porch, deck, walkways, shrubs, large patio, porch, deck, grass, trees, stone patio, porch, deck



Large windows in the kitchen overlook the outdoor dining area, which has a built-in bench, a James Mudge Harvest table, and chairs from Weylandts.

Vignette Agency

Photo Categories: outdoor, walkways, large pools, tubs, showers, back yard, shrubs, wood patio, porch, deck, trees, grass, raised planters,

Before: Rear Walkway



Before: A walkway in brick wasn't very functional.

Courtesy of Hours Clear Architects



Lotz specified a twenty-foot-long sliding door that connects the primary suite to the redesigned garden.

The pool was reoriented to align with the interiors, creating a sight line indoors to out. "Previously, the pool was very much disconnected from the house, and having kids, you want to keep an eye on them, especially when they're swimming," says Lotz. "Now, there's an axis that goes straight through the house all the way into the backyard. It's like a spine that connects all the social spaces together."

After: Backyard



The new backyard, designed by Josephine Noyce Landscape Design and installed by Julip Landscaping, "clearly illustrates the connection between inside and outside," says Lotz. "As South Africans, we do tend to live outside a lot."

Whether inside or out, Antonie wanted a plethora of "informal seating," says Bonnie. "He likes that. When we have people over, they can just sit wherever, even if it's outside on some terracing or steps." The design team created a series of built-ins and nooks, from the extra-long bench in the dining room that occupies one wall, to the living room's cozy sectional, and a bay window that has proved a popular spot with the couple's three children.

Before: Kitchen



Before: The kitchen wasted a lot of space and didn't take advantage of the views.

Courtesy of Hours Clear Architects

After: Kitchen



Walnut cabinets are paired with Pietra Grey marble on the counters and backsplash. The island stools are by Andrew Dominic, James Mudge fashioned the dining table and chairs, and the light is from Arkivio. The display cabinet's fluted glass nods to the home's midcentury provenance.

Vignette Agency

Photo Categories: kitchen, pendant lighting, ceiling lighting, wood cabinets, dishwasher, stone slab backsplashes, undermount sinks, wall oven, cooktops, marble counters, refrigerator



The walnut-framed bay window is a favorite spot for the children. "The moment my eldest son arrives at home

Vignette Agency

Photo Categories: windows, picture window type, wood



Speckled white flooring was used inside and out.

Vignette Agency

Photo Categories: hallway

from the kitchen cabinetry, to the coat and shoe niche in the hall, and primary suite closet. Bruce also populated every room with custom pieces, like the powder room wallpaper by the couple's favorite artist, James Sutherland. "Nothing was just bought off the shelf," says Bruce. "It's all extremely considered and a beautiful celebration of South African designers and artists."

In deference to Bonnie's love for natural light, Lotz added two skylights to she and Antonie's primary suite. Now, not only do they get the sun that Bonnie wanted from the beginning, but the moon as well. "The most beautiful natural light comes through there," says Bonnie. "Sometimes in the evenings, when it's a full moon, it will shine through. I said to my husband the other day, 'This is such a happy space for me now.'"

After: Living Room



The built-in seating with leather cushions surrounds a Lemon coffee table.

Vignette Agency

Photo Categories: living room, coffee tables, sectional, standard layout fireplace



A James Sutherland piece hangs beside the fireplace.

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Photo Categories: living room, coffee tables, pendant lighting, ceiling lighting, sectional, standard layout fireplace



An entry nook is framed in walnut and functions as a spot to drop bags, shoes, and coats. The fluted detail in the woodwork mimics the glass cabinet in the kitchen.

After: Snug



Up a partial flight of stairs from the hall, a built-in desk overlooks the living room and provides an at-home work space.

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Photo Categories: living room, chair, bookcase, desk



In the snug, Bruce had the couple's existing couch recovered in boucle by Hertex and combined it with a rug from Lorena Canals and a side table from Lemon.

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Photo Categories: living room, end tables, sectional, accent lighting, lamps, wall lighting



Before: Lotz relocated the primary suite to the living room.

Courtesy of Hours Clear Architects

After: Primary Suite



Marble counters atop the walnut vanity complements the granite floor.

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Photo Categories: bath room, vessel sinks, marble counters, open showers, ceiling lighting, full showers, freestanding tubs



A custom headboard has textured fabric from Hertex and custom storage in walnut.

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Photo Categories: bedroom, accent lighting, bed, lamps, wall lighting, night stands



Before: The former staircase leading up to the front door and garage was made out of wakeboards.

Courtesy of Hours Clear Architects

After: Entry Stair



Lotz reoriented the staircase and created a wall of walnut slats.

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Photo Categories: staircase, stone tread



A half-moon window trimmed in walnut at the top of the stairs provides visual interest and natural light.

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Photo Categories: windows, wood



The wallpaper in the powder room was created from an artwork by Andrew Sutherland.

After: Firepit



In the backyard, a deck in garapa wood surrounds a firepit, creating another nook for the Basson family.

Vignette Agency

Photo Categories: outdoor, raised planters, trees, grass, large patio, porch, deck, wood patio, porch, deck, large pools, tubs, showers, back yard, hardscapes, shrubs, gardens, walkways, stone patio, porch, deck

LOCATION Cape Town, South Africa

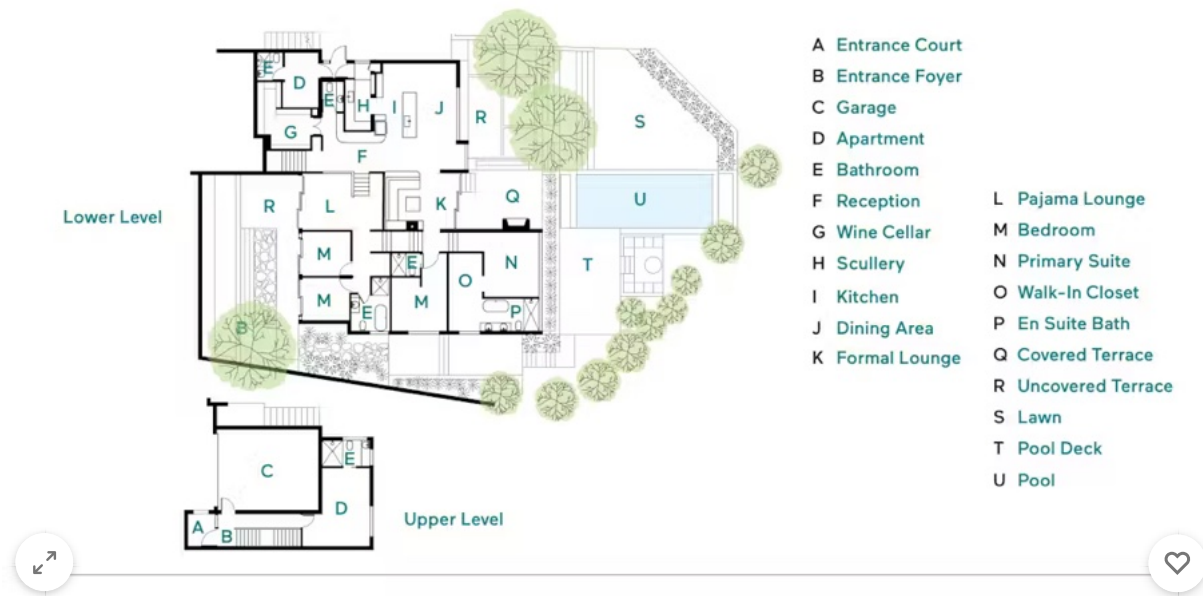


Illustration by Tim Lohnes

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Builder: [*Charles Robson*](#)

Structural and Civil Engineer: [*STRUXIT PROJECTS*](#)

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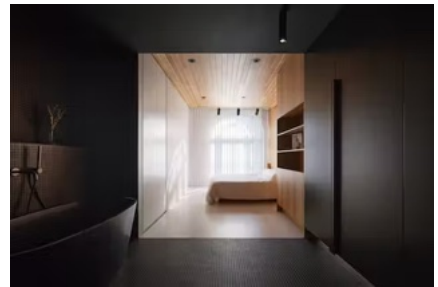
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