

nature INSPIRED

Tracy and Russell Boltman's mid-century modern family home nestles beautifully among its natural surroundings

Photography / Elsa Young/Frank Features * Production / Luanne Toms * Words / Kerry Fischer



'T

he real joy of this house is that amidst our busy lives it allows us to reconnect as a family,' says Tracy Boltman, of the sleek home on the slopes of Table Mountain that she shares with her husband Russell and their three children. Set on the last row of residential homes that border the pristine Table Mountain National Park in Cape Town, it's an enviable design in an absolutely stellar location. 'I know this may sound trite as it's just bricks and mortar – or wood and stone for that matter – but building this home forced us to reflect on the contradictory nature of those things we hold most dear to us, namely: being together as a family and entertaining with loved ones versus a real need for solitude and being in nature.'

That they have managed to create both a family home and an urban mountain retreat, is an extraordinary triumph of their will and a savvy sense of design, Russell and Tracy bought the plot four years ago when they were looking for a home that could accommodate their growing brood of children and pets. 'We'd outgrown our previous home nearby and were looking for a property with a garden level with the living areas,' explains Russell. 'We knew it was a nigh impossible task given the steep topography of the area and the demand for city homes with this kind of space, but Tracy and I are nothing if not single-minded so we set ourselves the task of finding something that we could create to suit our needs.' Although they spend their days in corporate environments and courtrooms, Russell and Tracy are both creatives as well, and take pleasure in gardening, cooking, decorating and designing spaces.

And so, when this site in a prime, wind free pocket of land became available they saw the possibility to create something spectacular. 'The original house was situated at the back of the then largely terraced site, so there was little to no garden to speak of,' says Russell. 'Our Eureka moment was when we realised that by building a new house to the front or street side of the plot, we could level the back garden entirely to become an extension of Table Mountain National Park.' They entrusted Adrian Mallitte of architectural firm Salt + Pepper Design who solved the complexities of the site while perfecting the relationship of the house to the mountain.

To this end, the 750m² house is laid out on three levels. You enter via a steep driveway, which leads into a generous entrance hall with access to the garage and Russell's wine cellar. From there you ascend up to the bedroom level comprising five en-suite bedrooms and a playroom. 'The bedroom level is quiet, cosy and sheltered,' says Tracy. 'As we entertain a lot, I like that it feels private and detached from the rest of the house. And

with our three kids plus a constant troupe of their friends here most days, it's important to have a space in which they or we can escape.' In contrast, the top floor is where all life happens, with the living, dining and kitchen areas, family TV room and Russell and Tracy's study all looking out onto views of the garden, mountain and city by way of large, black framed, floor-to-ceiling doors and windows.

'A sense of space was really important in the living areas, and wherever possible we did away with walls to open things up,' says Russell. This was as much a nod to their love for the luxury of space, as to the needs of the children. It had to be hard-working, able to accommodate the varying needs of their family, from a soundproof study where Tracy and Russell can work to room for the kids to ride their scooters and skateboards inside if they need to. 'We're not precious about walls and floors,' says Tracy. 'The house is not a showroom but instead a canvas for our life.'

With both Russell and Tracy passionate entertainers, the design and layout of the kitchen space was a sacrosanct process, too. 'We're both territorial cooks, so the design needed to accommodate the different ways in which we like to occupy the space,' says Russell with a grin. 'While some couples negotiate around separate beds and duvets, ours was around separate ovens,' quips Tracy, in reference to Russell's penchant for roasting meat in the oven for up to eight hours. Both voracious cookbook readers, too, the couple admit to most weekends feeling like the set of *MasterChef* as they cook up a variety of dishes. Other considerations were a large scullery (Russell's use of beer and wine glasses for a normal Sunday lunch could put a wedding to shame), three fridges (two for wine and beer and one for fresh produce) and an extra large pantry to accommodate their store cupboard staples.

The way they like to live is what gives their home gravitas, not to mention their incredible collection of art, objects, furniture and personal treasures that succeed in complementing rather than competing with the monumental spaces of the architecture and the magnificent natural setting. Tracy credits her friend and interior designer Lynne Whitfield as the alchemist who brought their disparate tastes and personalities together. 'Lynne's a master of relaxed living,' says Tracy. 'Everything she does is about making the moment more enjoyable and, so in terms of planning the decor, we worked together to pre-empt the ways in which we wanted to inhabit our home.' With this kind of scrutiny, it's no wonder the house is the relaxed, organised and creative haven they craved.

Check out the couple's architect at saltandpepper.co.za. Find their interior designer at lynne@fielddesign.studio. For more info about the builder, call Arnold Meiring Projects on 021 422 1118.

LIVING ROOM

The living room is Tracy's favourite part of the house as it has views of Lion's Head, the city, the garden and Table Mountain.

Get the look The Under The Bell pendant lamp is by Muuto. The sofas and armchairs are from Tonic. The coffee table is from Pezula. The coco de mer on the coffee table was given to Tracy's parents when they lived in the Seychelles. The rug is from Herringbone Rugs.



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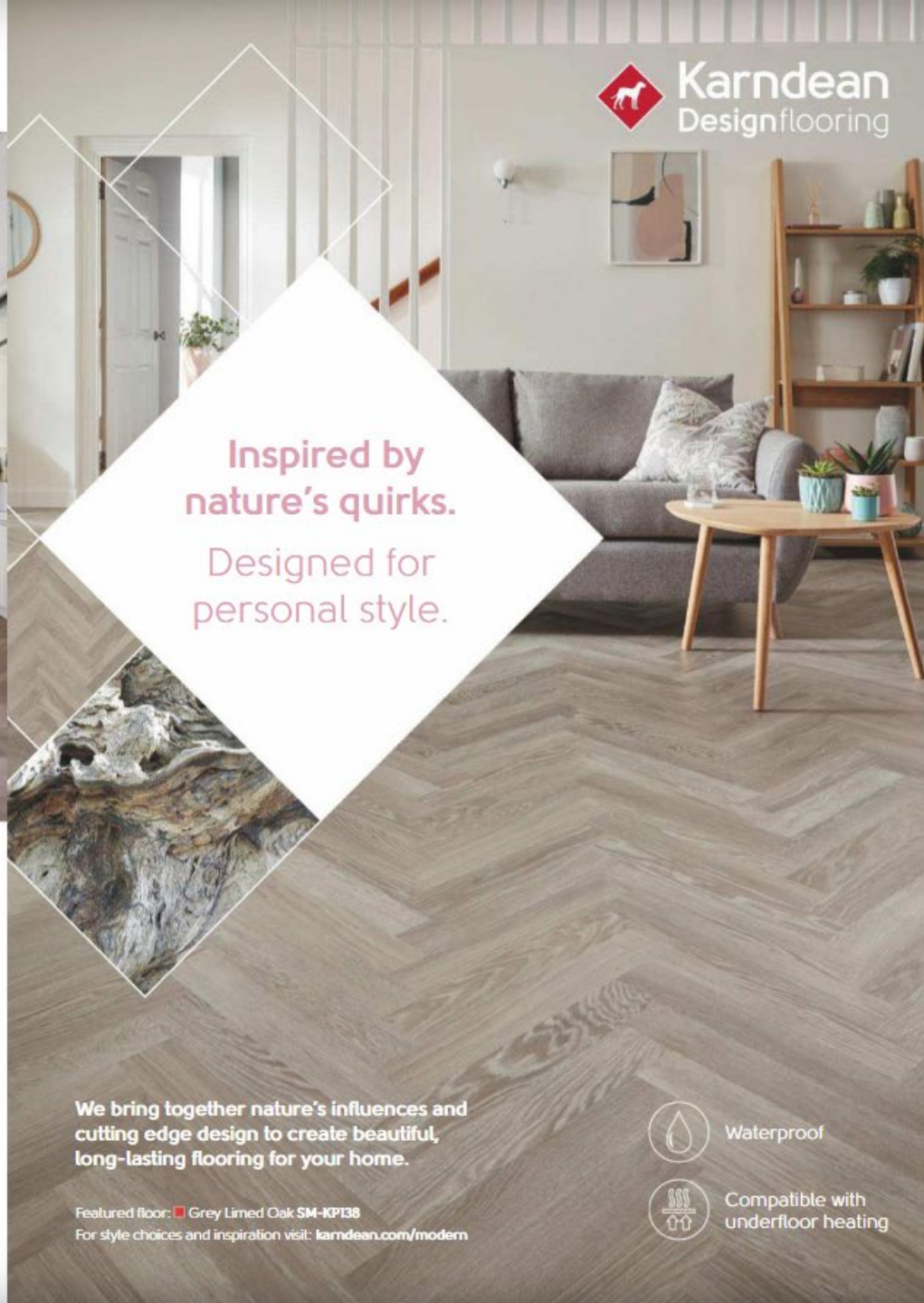
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KITCHEN

Tracy wanted to avoid large expanses of white walls in the kitchen, so she cleverly concealed the coffee and pantry area behind slatted wooden doors in a chevron design.

Get the look The kitchen was designed and fitted by Assirelli. The Chouchin 2 pendant lights by Foscarini are from Crisma. The small round table is from Pierre Crenig, while the high-backed chairs by Ercol are from Tonic. The double oven is by Smeg. The large custom-made windows throughout the house were made by Dix Aluminium and Glass.

HOME TRUTHS

What defines a good night out?

Russell: Beer, wine and good food with friends – and lots of laughter.

Tracy: A night at home with friends.

And your idea of comfort food?

Russell: Stews.

Tracy: Curry.

How about essential pantry staples that you never ever run out of?

Russell: Firefighters

Tracy: Maldon salt, red wine, vinegar, oregano and almonds.

What is the best podcast/audio book you've listened to?

Russell: Eckhart Tolle's *Findhorn Retreat: Stillness Amidst the World*.

Tracy: Eckhart Tolle – I listen to it over and over.

And your favourite read of the year so far?

Russell: *Noble Rot* magazine issue 16.


Tracy: *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle.

Current favourite music?

Russell: Fela Kuti's album *Expensive S**t*.

Tracy: Khalid's *American Teen*.

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STUDY

A cluster of artwork on the walnut walls adds interest to the space. ‘While we both do the buying of art, Russell is responsible for where all the art in the house is placed,’ says Tracy.

Get the look The burnt Sierra sofa and ribbed metallic stool are from Tonic. Russell and Tracy’s metal top desks are by local designer James Mudge. The Aluminium Group Management chairs are by Charles and Ray Earnes. The walnut panelled walls and built-in bookshelves are by Assirelli.



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MAIN BEDROOM

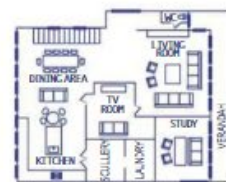
Tracy loved this wallpaper as soon as she saw it on Instagram, but couldn't find a supplier for it anywhere. Luckily, Lynne managed to track it down in Liverpool. **Get the look** The wall mural is from Murals Wallpaper. The Chouchin 2 pendant lights by Foscarini are from Créma. The bedside tables and bed are from Tonic, while the rug is from Tirmah. The art work over the bedside table and on the left is by Sarah Biggs.



THE BLUEPRINT



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

RIVER'S BATHROOM

Natural wood ties River's bathroom to the house's natural surroundings, while Crittall-style glazing adds a modern touch. **Get the look** The glazing was by Dix Aluminium and Glass. Drench supplies similar showerheads.

TRACY'S BATHROOM

'I love a calm bathroom space with plenty of natural light,' says Tracy, who kept it simple by using just a few materials - Carrara marble walls, a simple oval bath and a black-framed shower to match the windows throughout. **Get the look** The wicker and metal chair is from Weylandts.

