

Maureen Nel has a passion for all things bright and beautiful and her home is as dynamic as she is – it's also rich in French flair!

# A riot of colour

By Marian van Wyk • Photographs Greg Cox



Maureen was determined to have French doors in all the living rooms. Roses are one of her favourite flowers, so they're a feature on almost every carpet in the house.

Furniture and silk cushions from Interior Concepts; carpet from Pak Persian Carpets; Roman motif scatters from Mitat; pink glass jar, vase and French boxes from Plan B Vintage





Maureen chuckles when asked about the striking double-volume curtains with their pink rose motif behind the stove (they were an impulse buy at the Babylonstoren deli). She admits that she doesn't really cook. "I sent my housekeeper, Jo Ann Nero, on a cooking course. That's her department." Chair and wallpaper with French street scene from Interior Concepts; carpet from Pak Persian Carpets; kettle from Le Creuset; Paris poster (on the shelf), rose motif vintage mug and rose tea towel from Plan B Vintage; pink tea glasses from Woolworths

In winter, the fireplace is kept on the go from morning till night. Easy chair from Interior Concepts





The bed is positioned in such a way that Maureen has a fantastic view of the Simonsberg Mountains.

Bed from Interior Concepts; carpet from Pak Persian Carpets; Designers Guild wallpaper from Home Fabrics; throw from @home; rose tin from Plan B Vintage; scatters from Hertex's Sentiment range



The open-plan bathroom boasts an old-world elegance, thanks to the copper bath and silk curtain (it pulls back completely from the shower). Bath from Victorian Bathrooms; wall painted in the colour Char Plum from Plascon.



*"I love the challenge of creating something from nothing."*

So says Maureen Nel of her dream home built from scratch between Paarl and Franschhoek – an area reminiscent of the French countryside that fits her like a glove.

And this philosophy is wholly appropriate for a real estate specialist focusing on the Val de Vie Estate, where she lives.

When Maureen decided to leave Gauteng for the Boland 11 years ago, she left behind all her furniture and décor accessories.

"I wanted to start again: a brand new career, a new life, fresh colour. I only brought my absolute favourite décor pieces," she explains.

In December 2013, she settled into a new house in the Val de Vie Estate that was designed for her by her long-time architect friend, Charl Groenewald. Her brief to him was to create a home with a holiday vibe and barn-like elements.

A double-volume living space and plenty of French doors were non-negotiable, as was an open-plan bedroom with a view of



the estate's horse paddock and the Boland mountains. "Oh, and there had to be a fountain at my front door because I love the sound of water," she adds.

When Maureen isn't busy in her home office, she likes to relax in front of the TV with Stoffel the Jack Russell and Gabby



The elegant guest room with its soft duck egg palette.

Furniture from Farriers; mirror and scatters from Interior Concepts

the dachshund. "Stoffel favours cowboy movies, Gabby will watch anything and I adore old romantic movies," she laughs.

"I'm truly blessed to live here with my animals among the vineyards, olive trees and mountains. I love just chilling at home." >>



**ABOVE** Turquoise and lime-green are two of Maureen's favourite colours, as is evident in the dining room. The sideboard, which was previously a dark colour, was treated to a paint makeover from Interior Concepts.

Chairs from Interior Concepts; porcelain vase from Plan B Vintage

**ABOVE RIGHT** The stoep is one of Maureen's (and Stoffel's!) favourite spots because she can see her horses from there.

Tray cloth from Plan B Vintage; scatters from Hertex; vase from Mr Price Home

*Everyone gets dressed up around here, even the horses and dogs.*  
- Maureen

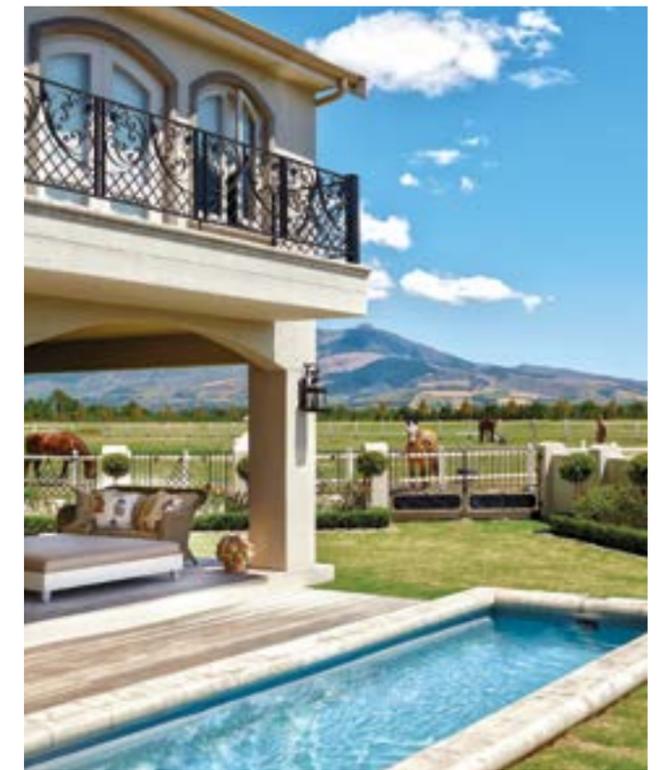
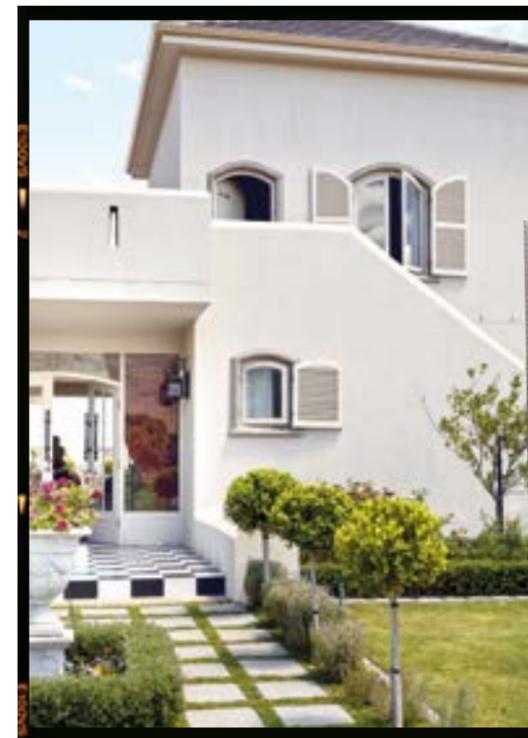


## Décor in full colour

Maureen's passion for beautiful fabrics and bright colours comes from her grandmother on her mother's side, Gertie Myburgh, as well as holidays spent in Paris where she admired the stylish French women. "Other people might think my combinations are weird but I would simply fade away if I didn't have colour in my life! Even my horse's bridles are brightly coloured. Colour lifts my spirits; it's my energy boost!"

And, after buying her pink Smeg fridge on the spur of the moment a couple of years ago (it lives in the scullery), there was no stopping her. Bright pink, turquoise and lime-green are boldly used in the living area.

Her decorator friend, Nicolette Jonas, helped with the décor, making sure Maureen's French furniture looked right at home with the bright palette and among the rose motifs seen throughout the house – from the carpets to the unusually long curtains in the kitchen.



**LEFT AND ABOVE** Architect Charl Groenewald maximised the views when he designed the house.



*Maureen on her Arabian horse, El Sahara Cruiser.*



## Horses, hounds and Japie the sheep

Despite her busy lifestyle, Maureen rides her horses five mornings a week before starting her work day. "My horses are my sanity. It's an incredibly rewarding experience to have a bond with a horse." And don't think she relaxes on the other two mornings – that's when she jogs for several kilometres!

And then there's Japie, her sheep. "A few years ago I was en route from Bloemfontein to Colesberg when I came across a newborn lamb standing on the yellow line, trucks roaring past. I stopped and did not

hesitate before loading him into my car. His umbilical cord was still attached and he was extremely dehydrated," she explains.

Japie grew up with her dogs but once he'd started devouring her garden plants, she was forever rushing him to the vet. "And then they phoned me to say that Japie was bleating all the time..." In the end, she had a shelter built for him on a farm nearby, where she visits him every day. Japie even has a raincoat. "A blue one, so that people know he's a male." 🐏

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