

this page A slice of Jo'burg's skyline to the north features Ponte Tower **opposite** Interior designer Aimee Henning makes her way down a staircase of black glass and steel. The pair of armchairs was an auction find



DOWNTOWN AERIE

This swish inner-city penthouse brings luxury and considered design to one of Joburg's most-of-the-moment urban locales

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On this page The library on the south side of the apartment is a locus of calm. It features a set of Cane loungers the owners bought at Worn Store in Australia. Each chair is draped with an Icelandic sheep skin from Weylandts **opposite from left** The cityscape stretches towards the CBD in the west. Aimee Henning sits in front of a poster print of Banksy's *Exit Through the Gift Shop*



Rising 17 floors above the frenzied streets of New Doornfontein in the east of Johannesburg, Hallmark House is the much anticipated newcomer to the Maboneng portfolio of trailblazing developer Propertuity. With the eminent London-based architect Sir David Adjaye onboard, the former diamond polishing factory turned CMT base, built in the early 1970s, is Maboneng's bright new luxury offering.

Situated high above the building's boutique hotel, restaurant, underground jazz club and coffee shop, a double-storey penthouse surveys downtown Joburg's famous and infamous landmarks from almost 70 metres up. 'As a committed urbanist, I would find it difficult to live in Johannesburg's gated suburbs,' says the homeowner. He and his wife travel often and the lock-up-and-go aspect of apartment living, as well as the building's vibrant mixed-use lifestyle, appeals to them. Having bought a capacious white box within which to conjure a family home, the owners turned to interior designer Aimee Henning, whose string of sophisticated interiors and 'rare ability to design in line with the broader context' were a pull factor.

Aimee was tasked with designing a space that was comfortable, well-planned and answers to the demands of family living. Since the unit was created from two neighbouring double-storey apartments, steel staircases fitted with black glass link its levels. Upstairs is dedicated to public life, with a light, bright open-plan space, which includes a dining room, living room and streamlined kitchen with views to kill. Downstairs, however, the pace is decidedly slower, with heavy piled carpeting, upholstery in velvet and silk and an almost reclusive cosiness to rooms like the library and cinema room, to which one can retreat.

To celebrate its unique context within an urban jungle that refuses to rest, the apartment is open on the southern, western and northern facades, by way of expansive glazed windows and



doors and a number of balconies, cleverly designed by Adjaye to be set back, affording shelter from harsh sunlight.

The interior manages a balancing act that's sophisticated, and yet also bold and unrefined thanks to the building's palpable industrial past. Raw concrete columns and ceilings and original screed floors keep company with marble counters, sheer linen drapes and noteworthy designer pieces. An inventory of prominent artists' works lines the walls, including the likes of Marcus Neustetter, Enricho Daffonchio and Rodan Kane Hart.

Aimee sourced and custom designed a number of pieces for the clients including all the joinery. Perhaps the most striking is the vast, walnut library unit, which brings warmth and purpose to a subtly toned room. Elsewhere, contemporary design rubs shoulders with vintage furniture, much of it bought on auction, from heavyweights such as Finn Juhl, Sigurd Ressel and Percival Lafer. In the plush main bedroom, Aimee opted for a retro aesthetic, hence the palette of smoky grey, gold and black paired with a show-stopping set of Worn Store loungers, whose curved cane and webbed rattan frames look right at home.

From their lofty position, the owners can see the Ponte City Apartments, Sentech Tower, Ellis Park stadium and the MetroRail Line carving its daily route past the stadium. In amongst them, murals such as Belgian street artist ROA's slumbering animals and Freddie Sam's iconic depiction of a shadow-boxing Mandela all form part of the vibrant city canvas laid out before them. In contrast to the chaos of a day in the city, early morning, when all is quiet and the light is gentle with a pinkish filter, is the homeowners' favourite time of day to be here. It's this contrast that's not unlike the refined sophistication of their home against the grind of the metropolis that frames it. ■

this page The living room shows off a selection of works by the owners' favourite artists, among them Marcus Neusetter, Enricho Daffonchio, Rodan Kane Hart and Benji Liebman. The red armchairs are original Percival Lafer designs, the white asset and side table are by Finn Juhl and the coffee table is one of Aimee's own designs. The wool rug is from Argentina.

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this page The kitchen barstools are Tulip chairs from Guideline MNF. The painting is by Enricho Daffonchio **opposite (clockwise from top)** The kitchen is understated, with joinery designed by Aimee and countertops in Volakas marble. The walnut library unit doubles as a display case. The hanging chair on the balcony was designed by Aimee in collaboration with Pichulik. The private lounge downstairs has a more subdued palette with a modular sofa and walnut unit both designed by Aimee

this page The main bedroom has a retro feel and features a panelled backboard in silk by Kelly Wearstler, gold Flowerpot table lamps from Créma Design, black Cane Loungers from Worn Store, a Tonic coffee table and vessels by ceramicist Madoda Fani **opposite** In the guest bathroom, illustrator Laura Berger's Falling design has been made into wallpaper. Smoky marble and brass faucets complete the moody aesthetic



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this page The cinema room is all about escaping; burgundy Easy Velvets from Mavromac and aubergine walls mingle to lavish effect. Above the sofa is an artwork by Fred Clarke **opposite** The scallop bed was designed by Aimee and is covered in a velvet from Romo; the bedside tables were an auction purchase; on top of them are a set of Flowerpot table lamps