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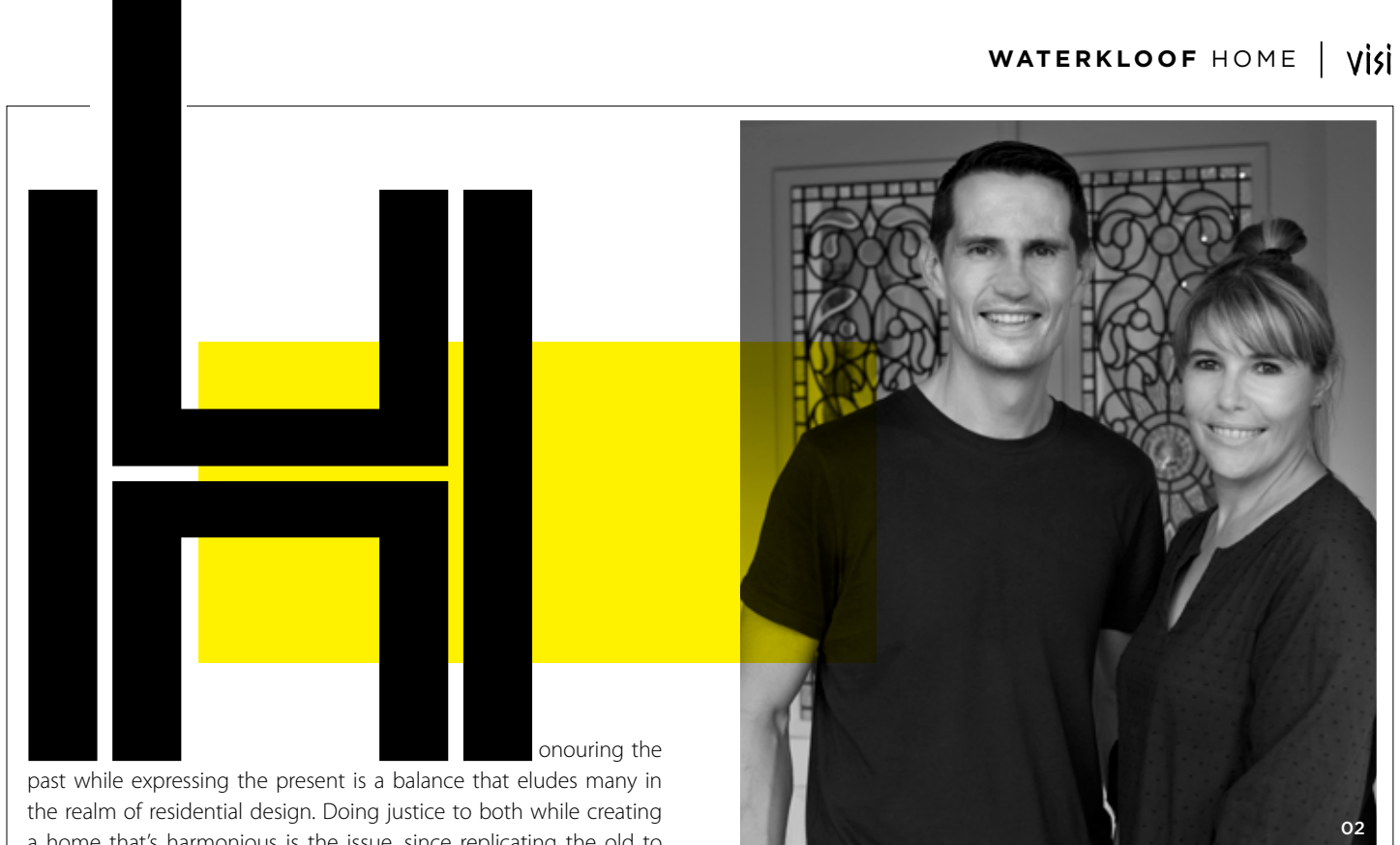
IN RENOVATING
A 100-YEAR-OLD
HOUSE IN THE CAPE
DUTCH REVIVAL STYLE,
THE ARCHITECTS ADDED
MODERN FUNCTIONALITY
YET KEPT THE INTEGRITY
OF ITS CLASSIC FORM.

TIME

PHOTOGRAPHS DOOK
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WORDS MILA CREWE-BROWN



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honouring the past while expressing the present is a balance that eludes many in the realm of residential design. Doing justice to both while creating a home that's harmonious is the issue, since replicating the old to introduce the new is a fault too often seen.

Having suffered a previous renovation that upset the balance, this house in the jacaranda-lined Pretoria suburb of Waterkloof has risen again. When owners Cornelius and Hendrien Louw first came to view the house, they sensed that it could be resuscitated, but needed it to adapt to 21st-century family life. With the input of Johan Wentzel and Grete van As of W design architecture studio, harmony was achieved by way of duality.

Apparently built as a farmhouse in 1910 by architect JR Burg in the Cape Dutch Revival style, the house had a series of gables, which have become its defining features. "We had to keep the gables, since they're an essential part of the story, but for the rest we wanted to recreate the feeling of living on a big farm stoep," Johan says, looking at the northern facade with its elaborate gables, symmetrical layout and striking glassed additions. These jut out of the building in an intentionally converse language to their solid Cape Dutch counterparts, using floating steel and glass to set themselves apart. In this way, what has been added makes no attempt to detract from the original.

"It had to feel like if you connected something to this building you could just as easily pull it out. That's the feeling... that this, the new, is 2017 and the rest is 1910. It's very legible," Johan says.

The additions to the house include the expansive stoep, the master bathroom, and Cornelius's study with its show-stopping views of the garden.

In order to unveil one of the most promising features of the house, its views of the garden and a magnificent jacaranda tree, a process of removal

and in turn expansion was undertaken. What was once a warren of small living spaces was opened up into one voluminous living space encompassing the kitchen and dining room. All furniture was kept low and pendant lights were avoided.

Interior designer Adèle van der Merwe, who has a bent for understated and calm spaces, tackled the interior. "This house doesn't ask for clutter; it loses something when you introduce too much stuff," she says, standing in a room whose contents make up for in scale what they lack in number. By way of a muted palette of whites punctuated by shades of grey; a spartan, sensitively chosen inventory of furniture, most bespoke, some old; and a sharp sense of dimension, the interior is almost monastic in its serenity. "We had to get the scale right," Adèle says. "So many items were simply too small and ultimately had to be custom-made."

"The benefit was having this strong history and presence of the old structure to work with, so we were able to just slot the new in. In that sense everything we added doesn't exist in physical form, because it's transparent and light," Johan says of the home's bold dichotomy.

It is no surprise that W design recently won an award of excellence from the Pretoria Institute for Architecture for its sensitive yet innovative handling of the alterations. **V**

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- **Adèle van der Merwe: 012 460 9712**
- **Landscaper De Wet Louw: 083 263 1517**

PREVIOUS PAGE

01 The two matching gables are still the dominant features of the facade, as the additions to the house remain light, lean and unobtrusive. The new bathroom can be seen on the far left, the stoep in the middle and the new study on the far right.

THIS PAGE

01 Looking through the doorway with original leaded-glass doors, the entrance hall features a painting by artist Lynette ten Krooden and a crow sculpture by Rossouw van der Walt.

02 Architects Johan Wentzel and Grete van As.



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- 01 The kitchen, which was opened up to the lounge, features bar stools from Chair Crazy and Technistone countertops. Note that there's nothing above counter height to distract from the outward views.
- 02 A humble dining table on a grand scale, made of the home's recycled pine ceiling planks, is complemented by a series of David Krynauw Joburg Stoel 602 chairs. Hendrien was sure to avoid pendants lights in this area so as not to interrupt the views.
- 03 The Kirkness brick fireplace in the living room was restored. Alongside it is an elaborate glass-fronted armoire that Cornelius's brother and landscaper De Wet Louw bought at a Bethlehem antiques shop. Cornelius and Hendrien bought the antique trunk years ago at an antiques shop owned by fashion designer Gert van der Merwe.



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"THE INTERIOR IS ALMOST MONASTIC IN ITS SERENITY."



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A PROCESS OF REMOVAL,
AND IN TURN EXPANSION,
 WAS UNDERTAKEN.

01 The main bedroom, which is still in its original position, opens onto the stoep. An artwork that Cornelius bought at a gallery in Brooklyn, New York (it reminded him of Hendrien), rests atop an ash wall unit.

02 In Cornelius's study, his handsome antique desk is paired with a David Krynauw chair and a wall unit built of European oak and metal sheets.

03 The new main bathroom is a locus of calm, with doors that fold away to reveal a secluded garden. The freestanding bath is from Dado Baths, and it's matched with an old side table of Hendrien's and a white ceramic stool by Anthony Shapiro.



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