



# Made to measure

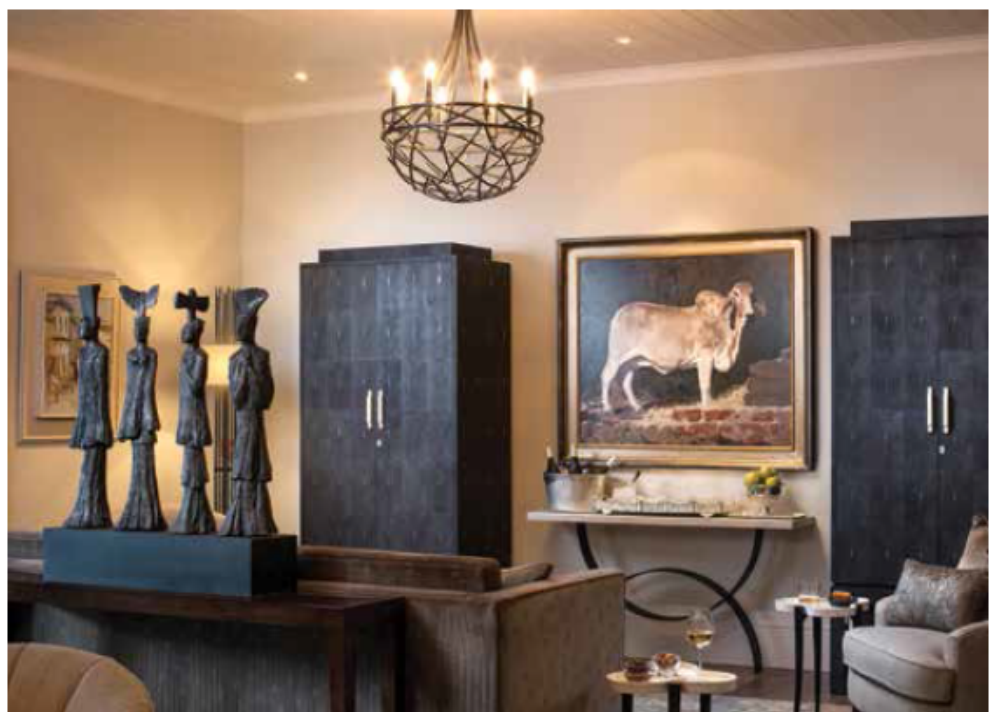
Breathtaking mountain views were already there. Beverley Boswell explains how she used bespoke design and magnificent art to give a Franschhoek boutique hotel an international foothold

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PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

The Leeu Collection's luxurious Leeu Estates opened in the Franschhoek valley in June 2016. It is the flagship property of Anajit Singh and combines three adjoining farms. SA's first wine tourism initiative by an Indian investor, the Leeu Collection includes the recently refurbished guesthouse, Leeu House, and established Le Quartier Français, both on Franschhoek's main road. One of India's most successful entrepreneurial businessmen, Singh said he was betting on Franschhoek to provide "pleasure returns" with his massive Western Cape property injection.

The 68-hectare luxe Leeu Estates offers nature trails, vineyards and spacious gardens landscaped around eye-catching sculptures. Massage and holistic treatments at the Leeu Spa take place overlooking a heated infinity pool fringed by vineyards. A wine studio gives tastings from Mullineux & Leeu Family Wines, which Singh also owns.

The 19th century manor house has been meticulously refurbished as a boutique hotel, where individually decorated bedrooms, suites and cottages include marble bathrooms, private terraces and fireplaces, all with vineyard or mountain views.



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## Introducing Beverley Boswell of Beverley Boswell Designs

I am South African-born and I divide my time between London and Cape Town. Mr Singh was looking for a designer with international experience of working in the high-end residential market but who also had a connection with SA. My details were passed on to Mr Singh by the agent from Fine & Country who had sold him the farm.



Working in the high-end residential market in London, my clients expect bespoke and unique designs. This includes all the built-in joinery, the fireplaces, skirtings, ceiling details, mirror details, flooring and all the decorative lights down to the door handles.

Everything on this project is bespoke design. You start with the shell and you build the interior layers, as we did with the tongue and groove ceiling to the French smoked oak flooring. This was my first hospitality project, so I was delighted to be able to indulge my

passion for beautiful things and bespoke design and detailing as I had a client who wanted the same thing.

I am passionate about texture and colour and I have used both in a restrained way to achieve interiors that are luxurious, elegant and calm. If you take a look at the reading room, every piece of furniture has a different pattern on the fabrics but it all comes together and works. For example, the pattern on the Tibetan rug, the fabric on the sofa, there are stripes, circles and squares ... if it is done correctly it works harmoniously.



Mr Singh wanted a look that was international. When you enter the manor house the feeling is that of a luxurious, comfortable home, which is what he wanted to achieve. There is an elegance to the interiors that also reflects the elegant man that he is.

The reading room has an open wood-burning fireplace where guests can sit and play a game of chess. They can also relax on a sofa reading a book, many of which were procured from Assouline in Paris. In the living room there are a pair of magnificent custom-designed drinks cabinets and a console table, all in shagreen

(skins of legally harvested stingrays) with bone inlay and details. These were specially made by Simon Orrell Designs in London.

I worked with Mr Singh in curating the art. He is an avid and passionate collector. About 98% of the art is South African. In the living room, the sculpture "Tim" by Daniel Firman is from Paris. Two important paintings, by Irma Stern and Tretchikoff, are also in this room. In the reading room there are paintings by Ricky Dyaloyi and Tinus de Jongh. In the manor house entrance hall there are two magnificent works by Robert Slingsby,

a maquette by Dylan Lewis and the blue "peace man" sculpture by Beezy Bailey. There are paintings by Neil Rodgers, Sasha Hartslief, Lionel Smit and a Pierneef in some of the bedrooms.

The design element for Leeu House was to use and source local suppliers and crafts people, but the Leeu Estates project offers the perfect combination of local and international design. Many of the pieces were designed and procured in England — in the living room there are the two drinks cabinets by Simon Orrell Designs, and lovely side tables from William Yeoward. The guinea fowl inlay side tables came from Charles Saunders Antiques in London. The table and floor lamps throughout the property are from Porta Romana, Richard Taylor Designs and William Yeoward in England. The upholstered furniture was made locally, all custom-designed, using beautiful, imported fabrics.

I like creating an element of surprise with colour on walls and joinery. For example, painting the inside of a cupboard a completely

different colour, such as the joinery in the reading room, where I have used a grey colour called skimming stone, and then I've used a darker blue on the shelves and back wall inside. That pop of colour picks up the blue in the hand-knotted Tibetan rug from Luke Irwin in London. I applied the same principle in bedroom six where I used a pale grey on the cabinetry and a custom colour called pumpkin on the back wall.

There are four bedrooms and two suites in the manor house. All rooms are individually decorated. The curtains in all the bedrooms are lined and interlined. The fabrics used are cashmere, wool, linen, horsehair and silk. All practical and functional aspects have been thought through. For example, sockets for plugs are at desk level and the dressing room safes are at eye level.

I started working on the Leeu House project in November 2012. Leeu Estates opened its doors in June 2016. It's been a labour of love and a wonderful project to be a part of.