



The Kids



ARE ALRIGHT

Built around a massive oak, this Joburg family home may be impeccably designed and illustriously furnished, but it's the toddlers who got the long end of the stick and are making the most of it.

PHOTOS DOOK PRODUCTION ANNEMARIE MEINTJES WORDS NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

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ot many three-year-olds can ride their tricycle through the living area of their new house, with a Ridgeback puppy in hot pursuit, without leaving mayhem in their wake.

Jeanne and Paulo Stravino, however, had just that scenario in mind when planning their Hyde Park home: "We wanted an easy, uncomplicated house that Sebastian (three) and Sammy (almost one) could enjoy freely, as well as inside-outside living with no formal spaces, as that's not how we entertain."

They also had another non-negotiable: they told architect Joe van Rooyen to centre the house around the huge pin oak tree that stands in the garden. "It's so gorgeous, we loved the idea of the children being exposed to nature," says Jeanne, an interior designer and owner of Room 31 Interiors.

So that's exactly what Joe did, and you can see the tree from almost anywhere in the house – from the entrance hall that displays an artisanal rug from Paco and a print of Vladimir Tretchikoff's "Chinese Girl", to the double-volume area upstairs and the indoor patio with its rustic custom-made copper lighting. Everywhere really, except the man-cave Paulo built for their wine collection.

Says Joe: "The whole house – painted mainly in Jeanne's favourite grey colour, Dusted Moss – is designed as a box with shutters on the outside so the house can be ventilated even when secured." The L-shape also uses the building itself to block out the neighbours in the exclusive gated community, creating extra privacy.

Throughout, the contemporary steel doors were custom-made, though Jeanne's favourite door is the antique Burmese teak gate, which she found at Private Collections in Cape Town, recently arrived from India. "It was probably an entrance to a courtyard," she says.



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“WE WANTED AN **EASY HOUSE** THAT SEBASTIAN AND SAMMY COULD **ENJOY FREELY.**”

Upstairs Jeanne wanted something classical and romantic for the main bedroom – “nothing industrial or edgy”. Complementing the engineered oak wood flooring, sleek wooden cupboards were designed and built with plenty of storage space and secret compartments for accessories like hairdryers for supreme tidiness.

With exposed trusses and colours like bottle army green, the kids' bedrooms raised some eyebrows, says Jeanne: "I didn't want baby blues or traditional kiddy decor that dated too quickly." Wallpaper around the dressing areas soften the colours – both boys' rooms have bathrooms and dressing rooms en suite. Sebastian also has a hide-away space under the bunk bed, with plans for a loft when he's a bit older.

Coming from a flat, the "space, the luxury, the scale" is what Jeanne loves. "I still feel like we wake up in a hotel every morning. Even after being here for nearly a year, the novelty hasn't worn off."

Today, a cloudless Gauteng day, Sebastian is on his tricycle and the leaves are falling from the oak. Just the scenario they planned. **V**

• jvrarchitects.co.za, room31.co.za

PREVIOUS SPREAD

01 The 'no-nonsense' teak timber bench and table under the old pin oak tree is multi-functional so the kids can play on it, while also ideal for informal, al fresco family lunches.

02 The house was originally set to be designed in a U-shape for privacy, but Joe and the Stravinos settled on an L-shape to keep the courtyard effect Jeanne wanted, without losing any of the abundant north sunlight.

THIS SPREAD

01 Architect Joe van Rooyen in the double-volume space at the top of the staircase.

02 The rustic copper light fittings in the indoor patio hang off a concrete ceiling where Joe used old floorboards as a shutter board, leaving a timber imprint.

03 The Ruhan Janse van Vuuren sculpture that looks into the informal living area was a gift from Jeanne to Paulo.

04 The staircase leading to the sleeping area was designed to be as 'clean' as possible with free-floating steel, frameless glass as a balustrade and solid oak treads.



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- 01** Joe designed the kitchen display bulkhead which is suspended over the working island to store utensils and cook books. Recessed LED lights under the shell light up the surface.
- 02** The couple's dressing room is warmed with oak timber flooring and sleek cupboards with long, elegant custom-designed handles.
- 03** Paulo and Jeanne's bedroom is a romantic retreat with a reading area so the couple can enjoy a moment of quiet when the kids are asleep. On the table is the painting "We are all equally blessed" by Nelson Makamo.
- 04** Joe describes the Philippe Starck-designed bath with its view of the garden as "sociable, functional and sexy". Jeanne and Joe designed the vanity, which has been mono-coated to give it a distinctly classical feel.



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01 The huge sliding door in Sammy's room opens up completely and, with the frameless glass balustrade almost invisible, has a glorious view through the branches of the oak tree. Jeanne ordered the hanging wicker chair online so she could breastfeed in comfort.

02 Jeanne, Sammy and Sebastian look through Jeanne's favourite door in the house – the antique Burmese teak gate from India.

03 Sammy's dressing room, designed so that clothes are within reach of a still-growing boy, was warmed up with textured wallpaper Denim and Co from Black Fabrics.

04 Sebastian's bedroom shows off solid wooden trusses and has a small reading area for bedtime stories in the evening. The wallpaper is by Design Team from their Young at Heart range and is called Retro Road; the yellow lamp is from Tonic.



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