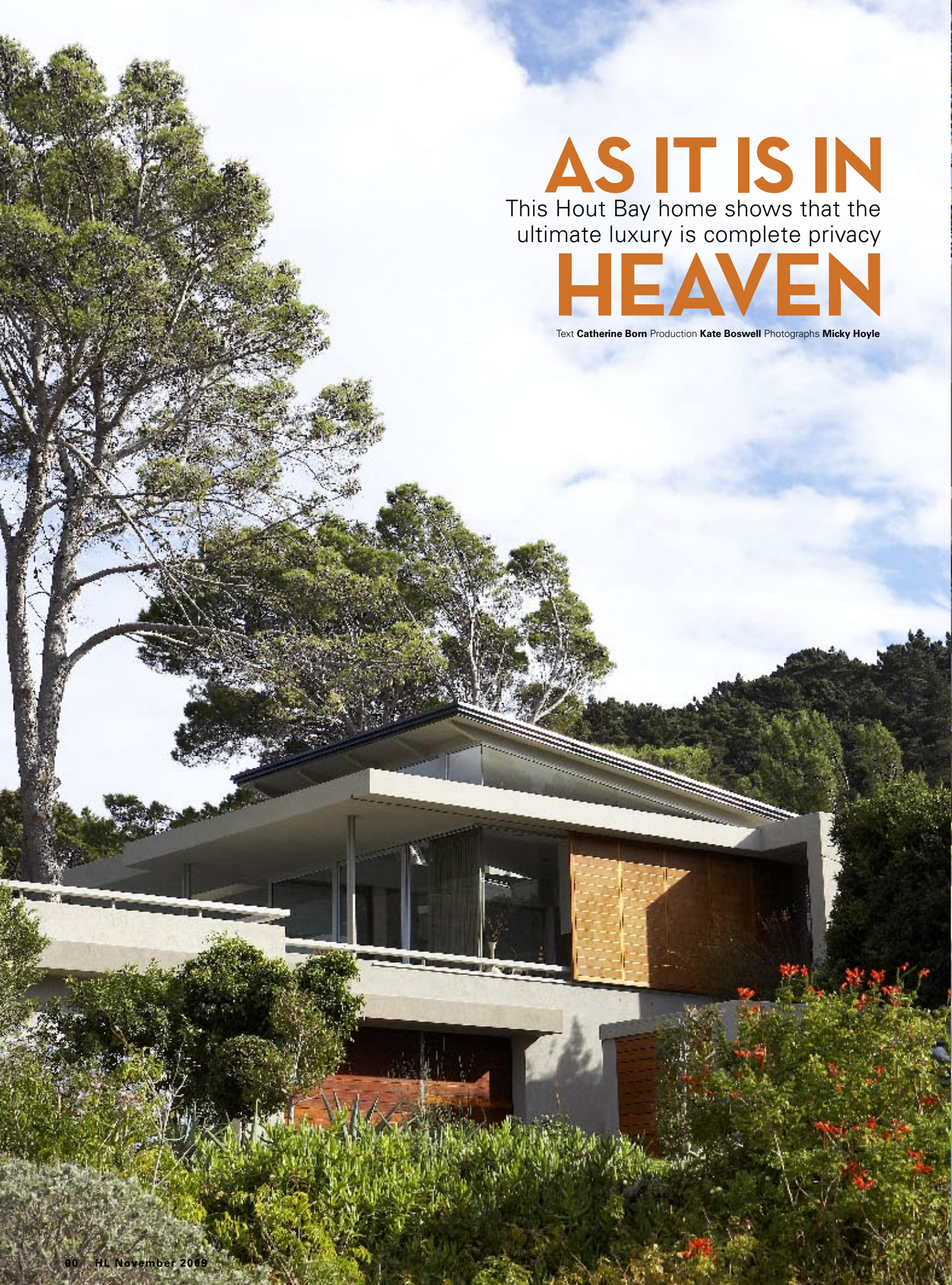


AS IT IS IN

This Hout Bay home shows that the ultimate luxury is complete privacy

HEAVEN

Text **Catherine Born** Production **Kate Boswell** Photographs **Micky Hoyle**



THIS PAGE Dirk and Lauren Molsen's elder son, Delon, dives into the rim-flow pool. Hout Bay and Chapman's Peak can be seen in the distance. The pool loungers are from Weylandts (011-467-8001, 021-425-5282, 031-584-7906, weylandts.co.za). **OPPOSITE** Wooden finishes and neutral paint – Elmwood by Midas Earthcote (011-325-5985, 012-347-3085, 021-461-8324, 031-303-4994, earthcote.co.za) – help blend the home with the surroundings.



Like a telescope working in reverse, the first experience you have of Dirk and Lauren Molsen's Cape Town home is of the rocky shoreline below Chapman's Peak and the mountains that curl around Hout Bay like protective arms. Next you become aware of the towering South African and stone pines that hide the surrounding houses in swatches of green. It is only then that you realise you are standing in a home that, in any other setting, would scream 'Look at me!' And that's exactly what Dirk and Lauren wanted when they conceptualised their home tucked under the Hout Bay end of Table Mountain. 'I love the way it blends with the environment,' says Dirk. 'It doesn't stick out of the land.'

The couple commissioned Cape Town architect Marco Bezzoli of Archilab to create a 'nice little house; nothing spectacular'. However, while managing the two-year project himself, Dirk admits to becoming 'very interested in design and finishes; suddenly everything had to be the best'. And that's how his 'nice little house' turned into a 'spectacular, magnificent house'.

Originally from Hamburg in Germany, Dirk came to South Africa in 1989 for a six-month course at the University of Cape Town. Fast forward 20 years and Dirk, together with Lauren and their sons, Delon, 23, and Ali, 17, still hasn't found an excuse to return. Having lived all over Cape Town, from Green Point and Tamboerskloof to Milnerton, the couple thought they had built their dream home in a leafy estate above Hout Bay, and planned never to move again. Then they were presented with an offer on their home that they could not refuse, and found themselves scouring nearby Llandudno and Camps Bay for a new plot of land. But something about the Hout Bay estate drew them back. 'We realised we really wanted to be here,' explains Dirk. 'It's a community. We became good friends with our neighbours. Here there's a different

dynamic to living off-estate.' Suddenly the steep, narrow erf available on the opposite side of the estate began to look more appealing. 'We realised this stand had huge potential because of the views,' says Dirk. 'Plus we could design a house that's very private.'

Today it's hard to believe that the advantages of this stand remained overlooked for so long. A contemporary crosshatch of uprights and unbending levels in wood, glass, stainless steel and textured-paint finishes was cut into the hillside on one side – making the mountain feel even closer – while on the sea-view side cantilevered decks and a rim-flow pool drop away to the property next door. Unbelievably for modern estate living, the couple enjoy virtually unobstructed 180-degree views.

Inside the home is all about sociable living. A highly specced kitchen and dining area flows into a living room with wall-to-ceiling glass doors on two sides. It is here that the state-of-the-art home-automation system lives in a concealed cabinet. Aside from the irrigation and security systems, the unit also controls the lighting and music, the latter being piped to all rooms of the house and the outdoor spaces. Here the dramatic outdoors and indoors become one; the living areas are friendly spaces where people in the computer nook can talk to others in the kitchen, living room or even the swimming pool.

With the city 15 minutes and 'the best drive in the world' away, the family are hardly isolated. Yet when you are here the home feels like a secret hideaway in the trees. It's not hard to imagine all the stresses of daily life melting away as soon as they open the door and turn on their music in what Dirk describes as his 'own slice of the Garden of Eden'. □

Dirk Molsen Productions, 021-422-2994, dmprod.co.za;
Archilab, 021-447-8675, archilab.co.za

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THIS PAGE, LEFT Floor-to-ceiling glass doors in the living room open up onto the veranda area. Clerestory windows make the most of treetop views. RIGHT Unobtrusive cabinetry hides a sophisticated home-automation system that controls the lights, music, television, irrigation and security systems. The corner sofa is from Limeline (021-421-3545, limeline.co.za). OPPOSITE A cantilevered dining table links the kitchen and living areas. The kitchen floor was built lower so that the kitchen counter and dining table could be built as one continuous unit. The Miele kitchen appliances were bought from Euro Appliances (011-463-1303, 012-348-3838, 021-424-6688, euroappliances.co.za).





THIS PAGE, ABOVE The en-suite bathroom enjoys tree-framed views of both sea and mountains. The bathroom fittings are New Form from Exquisite Bathrooms (012-809-4072, 021-674-0080, 044-874-5400, exquisitebathrooms.co.za). The vanity counter has a glossy Duccoed finish. LEFT Delon in the kitchen. The counter tops are CaesarStone from The World of Marble & Granite (011-234-4401, 021-447-6161, 021-854-4431, womag.co.za). RIGHT With every detail considered, the home-automation system includes speakers tucked behind the Jacuzzi so that music can be enjoyed at the outside shower. OPPOSITE With a glass wall that slides into an especially built recess, the pool becomes part of the main bedroom.



DIRK AND LAUREN'S HOME TRUTHS

My favourite travel destinations are our holiday house on Thesen Island (bellaresito.co.za), and Italy and France – my sister lives in Montagnac in the south of France (Lauren). **The first thing I do when I get home is** play with my dogs (Dirk). **I collect** anything that runs on an internal combustion engine (Dirk). Stones and shells (Lauren). **What I love about this time of year is** that the summer holidays are so soon (Lauren). **The best thing about living in Hout Bay is** the drive to and from work along the coastal road (Dirk). **My necessary extravagance is** a reasonably fast car (Dirk). A good coffee machine (Lauren). **We entertain by** cooking meals and sitting by the pool on weekends. We leave the entertaining to the house – it does it all for us (Dirk). **My passions are** my family (Lauren). **My favourite weekend activities are** going for breakfast with the family, reading books and lying around the pool (Dirk). **I relax** by reading and doing Sudoku (Lauren). **I'm currently reading** *The Monster of Florence* by Douglas Preston (Dirk).