

Pretty as a picture



Mary-Lynne van Vuuren, a recurring subject in her husband's paintings.

THE WIFE of an artist is often the figure who lingers anonymously in the shadow of her husband's creativity. Not Mary-Lynne van Vuuren. She shares much of the pleasure and inspiration of her painter-husband's work, and leads a busy life as model, clothes designer, boutique manager, housewife and hostess.

Her striking face is also easily recognized in her husband's large canvasses for she is a major inspiration for him.

Louis Janse van Vuuren is currently holding his first one-man exhibition at the SA Association of Arts gallery in Church Street.

For the opening last night, Mary-Lynne prepared the snacks and cooking and entertaining are very much

part of the couple's life in Stellenbosch where their cottage is the meeting-place for a wide circle of friends and Louis' students. (He is lecturer in History of Art and Paintings at the University.)

Mary-Lynne's face is much sought after by photographers and she has had her share of exposure in the media. She enjoys designing and making her own clothes and dressing up in them with her own particular brand of panache.

Her designs are classical with a heavy emphasis on contemporary elegance. She loves heavy materials, her designs following the texture and colour of the cloth with which she works.

Mary-Lynne comes from Hibberdene in Natal, where her family has a large sugar estate

"Colonials" her husband jokingly says. She is, however, fluently bilingual and mixes easily with the mainly Afrikaans speaking students and academics on the Stellenbosch campus.

She met Louis when he was teaching at the Technical College in Durban. She was one of his students in the painting class and immediately fell in love with the tall blond lecturer. They were married shortly afterwards.

Their cottage in Stellenbosch is a friendly place full of paintings, antiques, objets d'art, books and music. There is a constant stream of visitors who come to talk art, clothes, recipes or simply to enjoy the company they both so readily share.