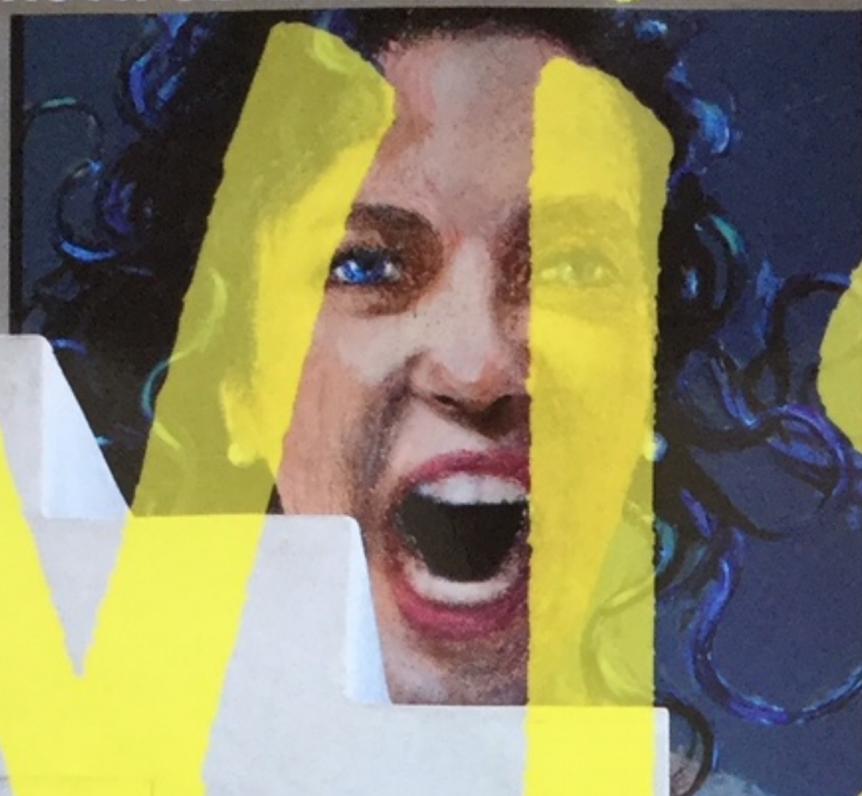


16083  
APR / MAY 2016  
NO 83  
SA R49.95  
OTHER COUNTRIES  
R43.82  
EXCLUDING TAX  
9 771810 470000

**WIS**



**HE'S GOT TALENT**  
MEET JAN HENDRIK VAN DER WESTHUIZEN  
SA'S FIRST MICHELIN STAR CHEF

# ART OF LIVING

- CLOCOLAN • CAPE TOWN
- MONTAGU • PRETORIA
- BRITANIA BAY

**COME ON TOUR**  
OF SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE SPACES

BRITANIA BAY HOME PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAN RAS



## VISI SHOUTOUT!

CREATIVES WE'RE CRUSHING ON

- LOUIS JANSEN VAN VUUREN • THABISA MJO • LADUMA NGXOKOLO
- KEVIN MACKINTOSH • DARYL MCGREGOR • DANIELLE CLOUGH
- SIYANDA MAZIBUKO • CARO DE WAAL • HELE DE BEER

PHOTOS JAN RAS  
PRODUCTION SUMIEN BRINK  
WORDS ANET PIENAAR VOSLOO

# FRENCH

# CONNECTION

Louis Jansen van Vuuren and Hardy Olivier, who live in a chateau in the French countryside, have built a holiday house on the West Coast that marries **THEIR LOVE OF FRANCE WITH THEIR SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE.**



**W**hen you travel north-west from Cape Town to Britannia Bay, past Yzerfontein, you become acutely aware of the desolate, barren countryside. It is a harsh yet beautiful landscape.

For well-known artist and blossoming poet Louis Jansen van Vuuren and his life and business partner Hardy Olivier, the West Coast is their South African haven. They are the duo behind La Creuzette in Boussac, France, a retreat loved by the hundreds of happy visitors who have experienced the beauty and charm of their petit château in the Limousin region, where they get to spend time cooking, painting, writing and delighting in Louis and Hardy's varied offers.

Louis and Hardy may have spent the past 18 years building this unique French experience for themselves and those who are privileged enough to share it, but they always knew they would never divorce themselves from their motherland. Which is why they decided to establish a South African nest in a village on the West Coast.

There are perlemoen farms, fish factories, fishermen's houses and newly built holiday mansions in Britannia Bay. The earth is hard and barren, the sea misty and cold.

"We decided on this part of the country because we used to come here to dive and fish when we were students at Stellenbosch. It holds very special memories," says Louis.



"The landscape is in sharp contrast to the softness and opulence of La Creuzette, which is exactly what we wanted."

The style of and inspiration for the house originated with a few stones, shells and a cormorant bone that Louis and Hardy picked up on the site. They soon found their design soul mate in Langebaan architectural draughtsman Leonard de Klerk. Hardy became the force behind the design and, together with Leonard, the couple analysed wind direction, sun position, shadow and style before the first brick was laid.

One of the most challenging facets of the build turned out to be a floating staircase that stalled the building process for a few months while engineers struggled to figure out the construction. It took 18 months to complete the house, during which time Louis and Hardy indulged in their passion, sourcing antique pieces from vintage markets all over France.

Their finds were meticulously placed in the interior. The focal point of the house is a 17th-century Aubusson tapestry displayed on a wall that was custom-built to fit

**"THE LANDSCAPE IS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE SOFTNESS AND OPULENCE OF LA CREUZETTE, WHICH IS WHAT WE WANTED."**

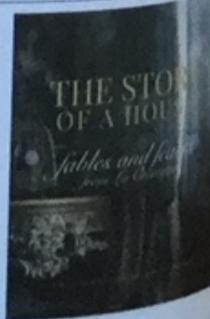
this precious treasure to the millimetre. The title of the piece is, aptly, *Summer* – it depicts Apollo and Aphrodite being pulled in a wagon by lions. This, says Louis, is symbolic of their connection with France and Africa.

The house is a place where the two men can reacquire themselves with their Africanness. Hardy cooks, entertains and looks after the administration, and Louis indulges his soul in the tall studio space, giving his artistic emotions wings on canvas. "This," says Louis while gazing out of the tall studio window, "is where the West Coast meets Versailles." **V**

- [lacreuzette.com](http://lacreuzette.com)
- [louisjansenvuuren.com](http://louisjansenvuuren.com)
- Leonard de Klerk, L2 Draughting Consultants: [L2draughting.co.za](http://L2draughting.co.za)

**WIN**

To stand a chance to win one of two copies of Louis and Hardy's book *The Story of a House: Fables and Feasts from La Creuzette* (Quivertree), worth R600, enter at [VISI.co.za/win](http://VISI.co.za/win).



**PREVIOUS SPREAD**

**01** A 17th-century Aubusson tapestry, fittingly entitled *Summer*, dominates the entrance to the lounge area. The elaborately carved stone mantelpiece was bought many years ago at Plaster Art in Cape Town and was kept wrapped up until it found its rightful place around the fireplace of the new West Coast home. The hearth is flanked by two gessoed Louis XIV-style chairs that have been upholstered in black-and-white fabric from Pierre Frey in Paris. Above the fireplace is a distinctive pastel painting by Louis. The glass coffee table from @Home Living stands on a rug imported from Belgium by Herbol. The stoneware schnauzer is the work of ceramicist Janet Lightbody.

**THIS SPREAD**

**01** Hardy strolls through the garden, designing and maintaining it by horticulturalist Hannes Coetzee from Velddrif.

**02** Louis in his spacious studio on the first floor has wrap-around views of the ever-changing West Coast sea. The spider pendant lamp is from Amsterdam.



*We love!*

IT'S SYMBOLIC OF THEIR  
**CONNECTION WITH**  
FRANCE AND AFRICA.

01 The cantilevered concrete staircase has the same white cement finish as the floors and verandas throughout the house. The striped retro fauteuil is from The Showroom in Stellenbosch. Above the chair is a late French Impressionist painting of a beach scene at Deauville.

02 White plantation shutters open into the guest bedroom, where one of Louis's gigantic portraits of Christine van Wyk hangs above the bed. An 18th-century French chandelier found at the famous Parisian auction house Drouot illuminates the space. The piano is a rare Sébastien Érard instrument that bears its creator's signature and the date 1828.





01



02

THEY SOURCED **ANTIQU** PIECES FROM VINTAGE MARKETS



03



04

- 01 Viewed from the first-floor balcony, the dining area is dominated by an oak table from Block & Chisel. An eclectic collection of chairs mixes vintage with modern.
- 02 Hardy designed the kitchen around his very first stove, which came all the way from Boussac. The hanging lamps are from Ikea Paris.
- 03 On the hall table in front of the tapestry – flanked by a pair of lacquered and gilded Napoleon III opera chairs – is an ornamental urn from Boere Sjiem in Brackenfell.
- 04 Africa meets France in a creative mix on one of the first-floor balconies. Warm wood and earth tones complement the natural stone and grey of the exterior.
- 05 The dramatic staircase zigzags past another of Louis's large-scale portraits. On the carpet is a square-backed French Louis XIV-style bergère chair, upholstered in cotton-and-silk damask.



05

"THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY HOLDS  
**VERY SPECIAL MEMORIES."**



01 In a minimalist bathroom, a painting of a Grecian head dominates the silent space.

02 The bed is covered with a faux-fox throw for nocturnal chills and a mosquito net for summer bugs. Sepia family portraits adorn the light-grey wall, the Earthcoat colour aptly called Karma.

01



02