



these pages: On the spacious patio built onto the pool's edge, a hand-made dining table with contemporary Italian imported chrome and black leather chairs stands adjacent to a patio suite designed by the owners in collaboration with Mojo of Cape Town. This outside setting fits in seamlessly with the adjacent interiors; French candle lamps and bowls on the walls flank a travertine server.

JOIE DE VIVRE

location: Sandhurst, Sandton
 interior by owners
 project development: Summersun
 photo-reportage: Colin Sharp

JOY OF LIFE; THIS IS THE NAME THE OWNERS DECIDED ON FOR THIS UNIQUE HOME IN A GATED DEVELOPMENT IN SANDTON, NORTHERN JOHANNESBURG. WHAT FOLLOWED WERE ARCHITECTURAL, STRUCTURAL AND INTERIOR CHANGES TO AN ESSENTIALLY CLASSICAL STRUCTURE.



Appearances can be deceptive. The interior of this home is an eclectic mix of antiques, contemporary artworks and objects, classical pieces, contemporary furniture (office at left) and some excellent collectors' items.

opposite: An ample airy stairway leads to the first floor, note the neo-gothic handrail. The double volume entrance is furnished with an antique red Chinese banker's chest.

below: Black solid wooden flooring gives a sense of unity to the different common areas of the ground floor. Slabs of high quality travertine, as opposed to tiles, were used throughout.



The structure is set on a double stand in the sought-after Lafayette complex in up-market Sandhurst, where the architectural style is essentially French Provincial. The Provençal vernacular has its origins in the rural manor houses and chateaux built by the French nobles during the reign of Louis XV – in the mid-1600s. This popular Revival style resurfaced in the 1960s, and again in SA, in the new millennium, replacing pseudo 'Tuscan-designed' homes, most of which local examples bear scant resemblance to the authentic Tuscan villas of the Italian countryside.

Balance and symmetry are key characteristics of this formal style. This example comprises steep, high-hipped roofs with balconies and balustrades, rectangular doors set in arched openings and double French windows with shutters. An elegantly manicured garden in the French style utilises lollipop trees, structured hedges, lattice-patterned stepping stones, neatly manicured lawns and gravel laid in demarcated spaces. Balls of iceberg roses and a plantation of lavender finish off this French garden, replete with small birch forest at the rear.

As it appears today, the garden is a complete makeover. It >

opposite: The library features high ceilings and geometric black woodwork inspired by 16th century English style. Key antiques include a Victorian mahogany library table and desk with red leather / gold inlay. The Chobi rug has a black and cream floral pattern; leather-bound books and a collection of coffee table literature complete this timeless interior.

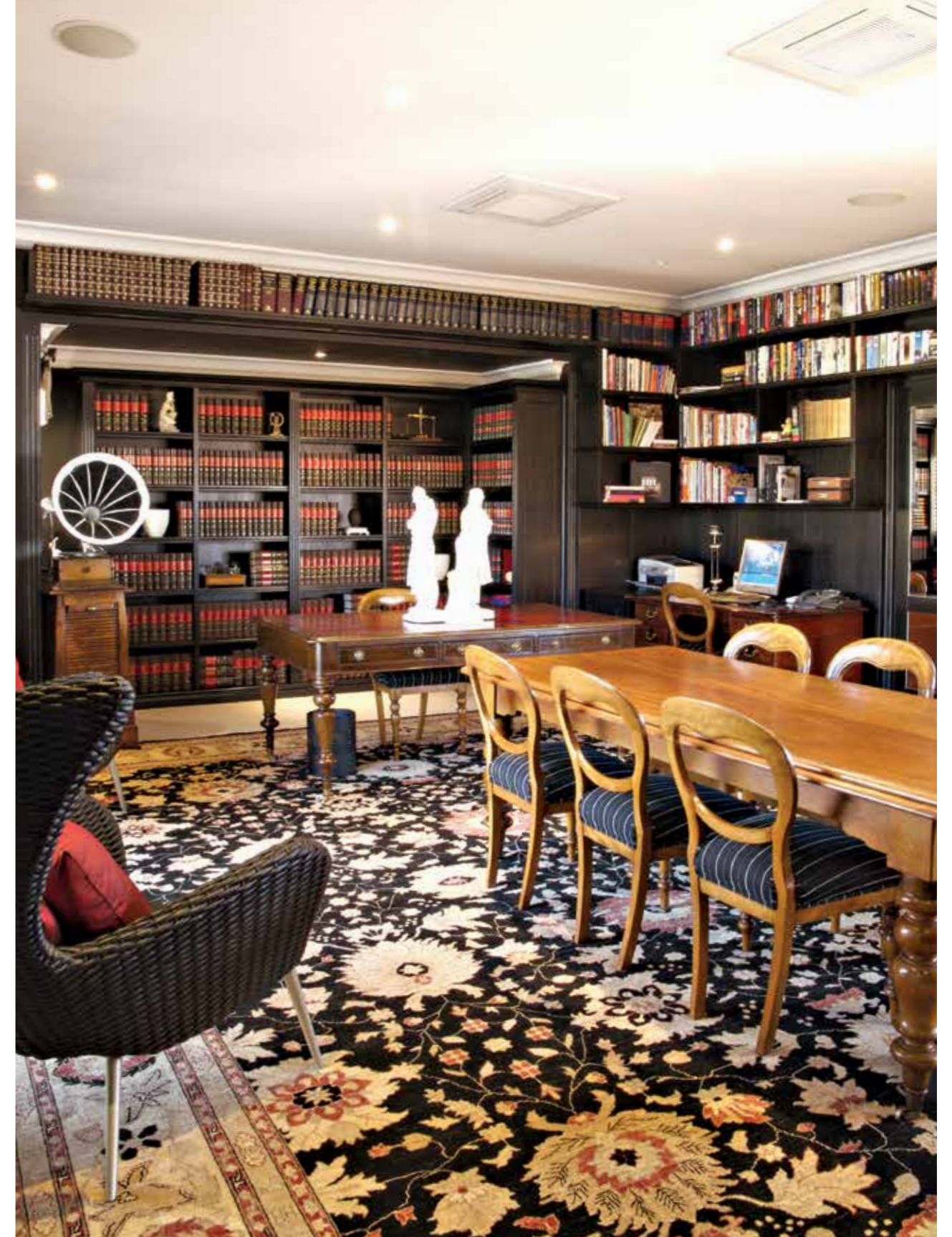


above: In the dining room, a grand Victorian antique table is placed upon a Himalaya Indian hand-made rug of aubergine and grey hues in a contemporary design by Paco. The antique table is offset by large oversized contemporary chairs of Chinese style with white Ginga Fabric by Tessa Sonik.

replaced an extremely severe, unwelcoming space without recognisable style. Similarly, the house had stood for six years and had been decorated in a somewhat austere classical style, which the new owners considered to be well-worn.

They have a penchant for contemporary, minimalist homes, with double and triple volume and a deep sense of space and proportion; they were to find this home a stimulating challenge.

Structural alterations include an addition to the kitchen, retaining the French Country look but utilising modern



technology in the form of Miele and Gaggenau appliances. They added on a sunny breakfast room and a walk-in pantry with skylight, leading onto a separate and secluded dining garden – perfect for intimate, romantic dinners on warm evenings.

A cigar bar was included with special humidifier, extraction equipment, ice machine, the inevitable LCD high resolution monitor as well as wine racks and a small bar area.

Within the interior is a metamorphosis of character. A pre-

requisite from the outset was to give life to a sophisticated and timeless play on the classical, using different stylistic philosophies joined harmoniously, but never forgetting contemporary elements. Having built, decorated and pioneered new architecture, pushing the envelope on various projects, the owners did not deviate from this previously successful recipe. In all their projects, a red thread that follows through to the end drives their philosophy that the environment becomes a museum of the soul, an archive of its experiences. The result





above: In the main bedroom matt black and gold are used in antique gilt mirrors and gold leather fabric for cushions. Contemporary art in abstract form includes original works by Robert Hodgins and William Kentridge.

left: Main bathroom is spacious and airy. Fittings are by Phillipe Starck.



is an interior that joins together various spaces, with influences of the past and hints of the Orient, whilst offering precise and decidedly contemporary comfort and design.

There are several key themes that provide continuity between rooms. Most of the flooring and furnishings are black and white and there is repetition of shape in much of the furniture, which has similar curves or lines to help pull the look together. Texture and pattern also influence the choice and the position of the particular items of furniture. These were sourced in various countries, including the Orient and overseas antique markets; but most were custom-made within the monochromatic palette and include high-echelon fabrics and rugs.

The owners summarise: 'Our approach was to harmoniously combine new design nuances with those that have stood the test of time, to create a look that is at once modern, yet in parts recognisably classical.'

'Although this is a far cry from the contemporary, minimalist spaces that we are used to, we feel we've achieved a result that is cosy, inviting, enticing and eminently livable. One could say we've gone from minimalist to maximalist, but behind the glamour, there is a highly organised design approach.' □