

A photograph of a modern interior space, likely a kitchen or living area. A man in a light blue shirt and dark pants is standing at a white kitchen island, looking down at something in his hands. The kitchen has light green cabinets and a white countertop. To the left, there are large glass doors leading to an outdoor area with a white lounge chair. The ceiling is made of concrete, and there are wooden beams and a staircase visible in the upper part of the frame. The floor is a mix of polished wood and concrete.

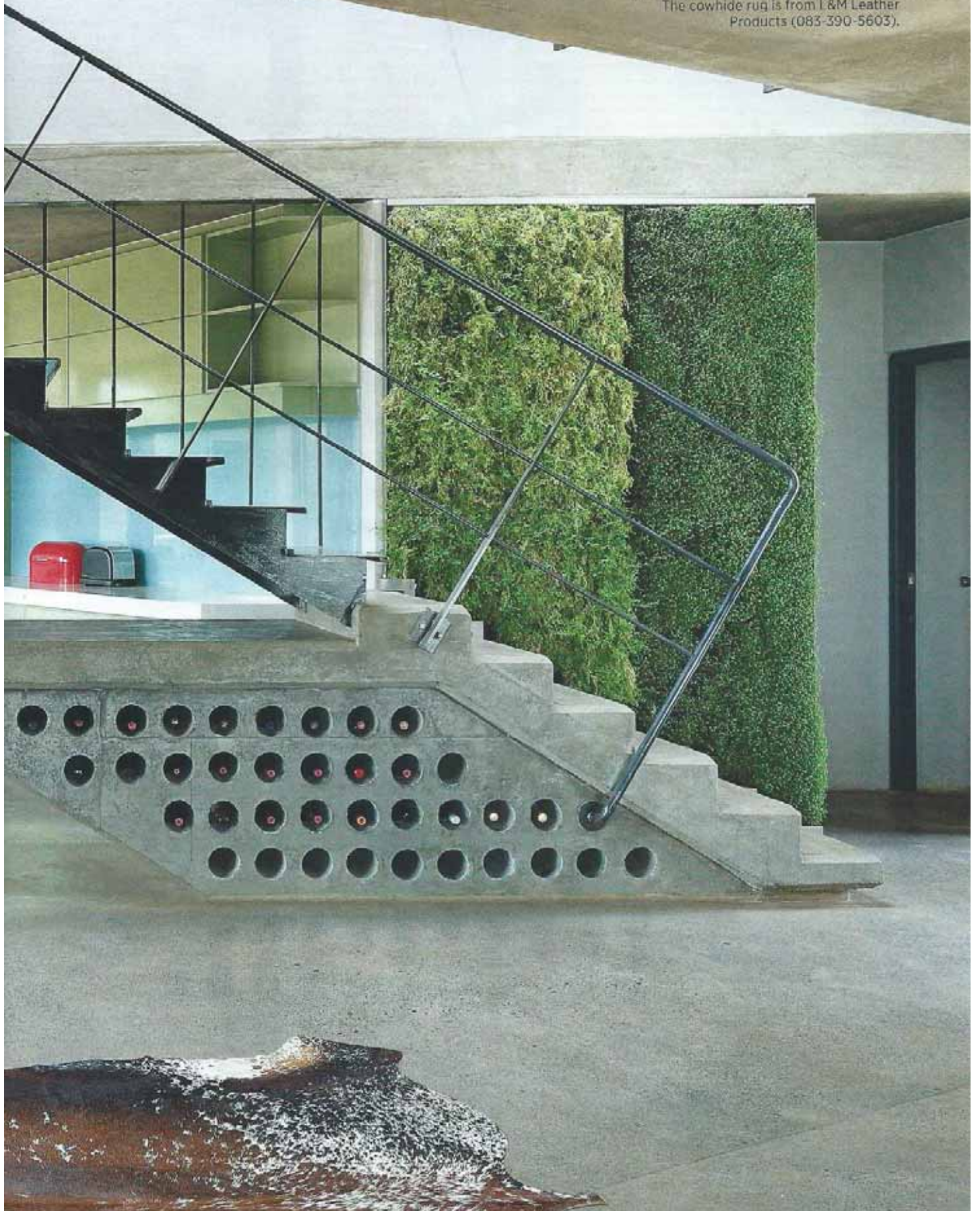
in fine form

A MODERN REBOOT OF THE CLASSIC BARN SEES THIS UNEXPECTED IRENE HOUSE RAISE THE BAR FOR LOCAL DESIGN

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HOUSE OF THE MONTH COUNTRY HOME

At Jaco Lotheringen's home in Irene, the dual-use staircase, used as a kitchen counter and wine storage rack, is one of the home's standout features. Vertical Landscapes (verticallandscapes.co.za) created the vertical garden, which is fed by rain water. The cowhide rug is from I & M Leather Products (083-390-5603).



If you happened to own one of the 530 stands on Centurion's vast Southdown's Estate, being different would mean that the odds were stacked against you. Yet the home of mining engineer Jaco Lotheringen and his four-year-old son manages to rise above the estate-living mould with its modern aesthetic governed by raw materials and clean lines. Furthermore, that this has been achieved in an area that practises a strict vision for farm-style architecture is nothing short of exemplary.

The jumping-off point for Jaco was Chilean architect Felipe Assadi's Deck House, seen in the book *Houses Now 2*. Its sleek structure, crisp facade and pitched ramp served as Jaco's earliest inspiration when conceptualising his new home. Subsequently, it was his intention from the beginning to leave as small a carbon footprint as possible.

Approaching architect Emilio Eftychis of EFTYCHIS was as much about his identification with strong designs that make an impression as it was about his propensity for creating spaces that are relevant to their surrounds. 'We wanted to avoid the tendency of estate dwellers to personally select their finishes while leaving the core of their houses largely the same. Instead we focused on changing the bones of the property as much as possible,' explains Jaco.

For most, the word barn conjures notions of a long, open-plan, pitched-roof structure, dedicated to agriculture. ▷



The swimming pool in the courtyard is unique in that a section of the decking slides back over the pool, completely covering it up. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP The dining-room chairs and table are from Weylandts (weylandts.co.za), and the standing lamp in the background was bought at Lighting Warehouse (lightingwarehouse.co.za); Jaco found the ceiling pendant at Lighting Warehouse. The balustrade upstairs doubles up as a bookshelf.



BELOW A Caesarstone (caesarstone.co.za) countertop gracefully steps down to form the breakfast bar in a kitchen that was deliberately designed to blend in with the rest of the interior. OPPOSITE A vast plane of off-shutter concrete and a predominantly linear silhouette greets the onlooker from the entrance, declaring the home's minimalist language.

The home shares a connection to nature.



In Southdowns, the concept has been reworked into a livable edition of the original with a manifestly Scandi undertone. The interior styling, for example, is minimal, functional and beautifully designed. Inherited pieces from Jaco's family marry effortlessly with those that Emilio custom designed.

Here, a bold interplay of concrete, steel and wood forms the backbone of the building. All materials that speak for themselves, it was their raw state that first drew Emilio and his client in. 'I have a passion for working with concrete – it's a huge component in this house,' remarks Emilio of its appearance throughout the dwelling.

'The footprint of the building is based on twisted geometry,' he explains, 'incorporating two barn-like structures that intersect at the western end.' In this way the negative space between the buildings forms an open triangle, which now constitutes the courtyard and wetland pool. Furthermore each wing maximises on light from the north. While the north wing is dedicated to open-plan living downstairs and sleeping upstairs, the south wing encompasses a spare bedroom, gym and garage.

The deck that sparked Jaco's imagination seems to pour out of the house in one continuous line down to the lawn linking indoor and outdoor living seamlessly. In the courtyard, meanwhile, the wetland pool is self-sustaining with water being fed through bio filters and gravel at the top level, then oxygenated by lilies further down before filling the pool and beginning the process again. When not in use, a clever sliding deck can be pulled over the pool, covering it completely. This element of dual functionality is something that Emilio has a bent for.

Hemmed in on the eastern side by grassland, rows of acacias and wandering Friesland cows from the Irene Dairy Farm, the home is private and shares a direct connection to nature. For Jaco and his son, Southdowns is the antidote to city life with its wholesome approach and slower pace. Weekends often see Jaco riding the area's bike trails, braaiing on the deck or playing with his son on the lawn.

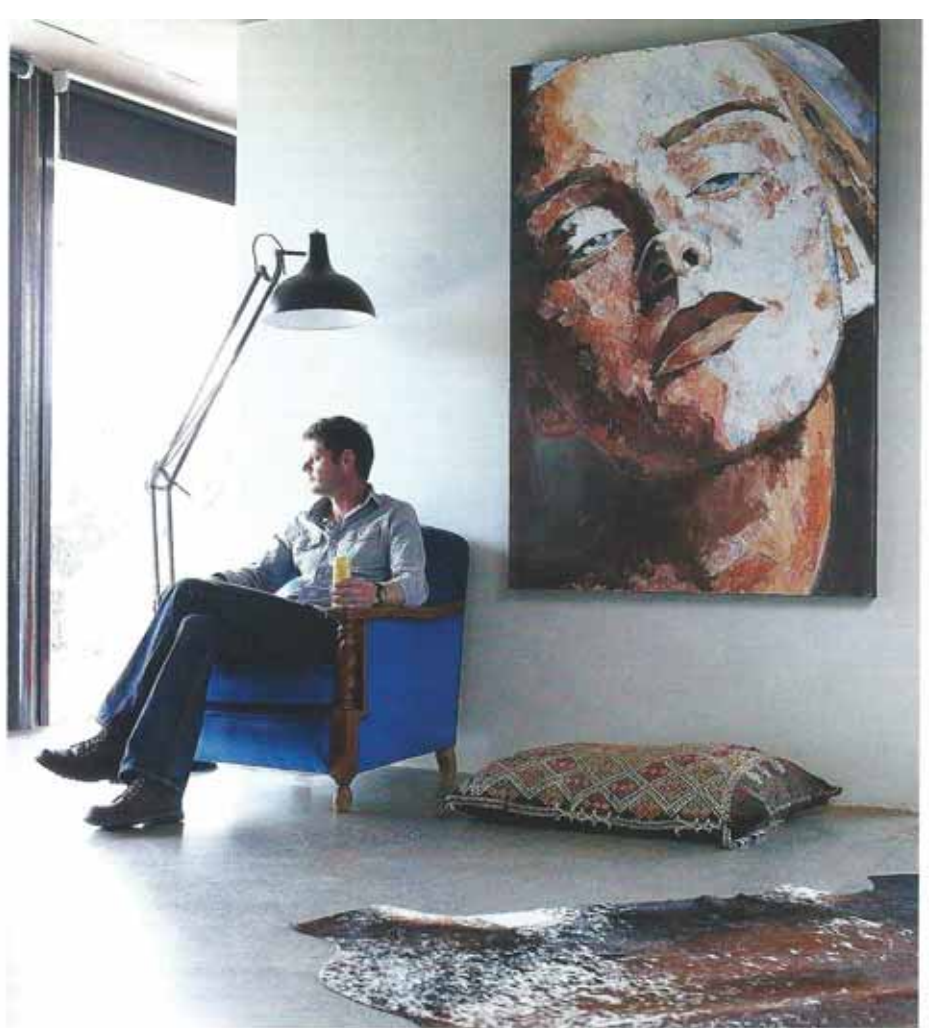
His home is a space that cultivates a sense of calm and order through a spartan interior and well-defined structure. 'It feels like everything is where it's supposed to be,' says Jaco with satisfaction – hinting at the talent of Emilio and his meticulous, yet seemingly effortless planning. □

EFTYCHIS, eftychis.com



JACO'S HOME TRUTHS

The best thing about the New Year is that it offers a new opportunity to do it better. **My New Year's resolution** is more travel to exotic eco-destinations and further travel on our beautiful continent. **I love the veld**, open spaces, public spaces, the cows, birds and frogs on the estate. **Competent people** with a healthy enthusiasm and fresh ideas inspire me. **My interiors motto** is firstly, patience, secondly, use dedicated pieces for focal points, and, lastly, if you really like it there, keep it there. **My favourite space in my home** is the lounge opening onto the deck, braai, wetland pool and garden. **Pillars and brightly coloured facades** are my pet design hate. My built-in coffee machine and goose-down duvet are my favourite possessions. **Limes** (for cocktails) are a constant in my fridge. **Green trees, afternoon thunderstorms and longer days** all spell summer to me. **I unwind** by taking long baths and doing various improvement projects around the house and garden. **On my iPod at the moment** are Tricky, Unofficial Language, Thievery Corporation, Bittereinder, The Doors, Nursery Rhymes for Africa and The African Alphabet by African Treehouse. **My most treasured piece of furniture** is my grandfather's blue chair. **This summer I'll be entertaining** with a fillet braai. **On my shopping list for 2014** is a useful tablet computer.



FROM TOP Jaco Lotheringen sits in an armchair, which was handed down to him by his grandfather. Next to him is a painting by local artist Marittie de Villiers; in the lounge a red filing cabinet from Big Blue (bigblue.co.za) keeps odds and ends hidden. The red leather pouffe is from Klooftique (klooftique.com). OPPOSITE The main bedroom and bathroom are open plan and separated by a Le Corbusier-inspired concrete chaise longue. Jaco treasures his Granny Goose bed linen.

