



**before** OLD-FASHIONED FARMHOUSE

Desperately in need of an upgrade and opening up to create better flow between the old house and its charming garden

**after** WELCOMING GUESTHOUSE

A major renovation cleverly transformed this three bedroom, one bathroom house with no flow, narrow passages, dark rooms and an outdated kitchen and bathroom, into a light and airy guesthouse. Open-plan living areas and four bedrooms, each with ensuite bathrooms, all of which open out into the garden, creating generous flow throughout. Once the building was done, all new planting was indigenous

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE The original name of this house was Orchards and for many years its fruit trees have bloomed and produced fruit. When Pam Sorel bought it two years ago, she renamed it Au Pear and began a miraculous metamorphosis. Lived in by a delightful couple, Dave and Phyllis Carter for 54 years, the property was dotted with cramped outbuildings and an old stable with none of the flow of contemporary homes today. But it had undeniable charm, especially in spring when the purple haze of wisteria rambles all over the front garden and when the bees buzz away in the pear trees laden with blossom. Belinda Williams from China Works (021 687 9266) in Newlands designed and handmade the guesthouse sign.



## URBAN FARMHOUSE

Rarely does a fixer-upper in the right location come on the market but this gem in Newlands also needed a brave visionary to breathe new life into its dark and pokey interior

Text Michelle Snaddon | Production Michelle Snaddon | Photographs Warren Heath



For years, Newlands estate agent Pam Sorel, had stared out of her kitchen window at this house in the next road. The when it up for sale, she spent hours showing keen buyers around, but most of them were daunted by scale of renovation needed to transform it into a contemporary home. Despite doubts though, the house did sell quickly, but eight months later, it was on the market again as the new owners were indeed daunted. This time, Pam had the courage to consider it for herself but to fully realise her dream she needed a bigger budget to complete the plan. So when Mark Jakins from Geomatics Cape, her land surveyors, advised that there was a solution (to move the boundary wall instead of applying for subdivision) she realised the smart plan would be to give the neighbours the garden they've always pined for, so that she could use the proceeds of the sale to renovate the house. So with that genius solution sorted, Pam and architect-turned-builder, Neville Lance from Lance Projects embarked on a seven-month journey together.

'I think the secret is to find someone you like and you can trust implicitly. Neville is also a Capricorn so we had the same work ethics and understood each other! He wasn't sure what he would find in the old building, so wouldn't give me a quotation. Instead we worked on a fee for him to do the job, employ all his own people, purchase materials and pay labourers, two of whom stayed on site 24/7 for security. He gave me a bi-weekly reports with all the invoices and wage slips, did all the drawings and even got them through Council. And, besides getting approval from Heritage we had to get a street light moved as well as the water metre, which was in the piece of land that I sold.'

'It would have been much easier to design the kitchen, scullery/laundry, dining and lounge area around the equipment and furniture we needed, however,

'The front door lights are a little ornate for the Karoo farmhouse look I wanted to achieve, but I felt it needed Frenchifying a little - like a woman with a little cleavage showing!'



I had to do it the other way around: fit the furniture and equipment into the spaces I had. The dining room was supposed to be in front of the open-plan kitchen, but we could not fit an eight-seater table there plus the dresser. I called Pierre Cronje and he sent Meagan Houtzamer around. She suggested moving the dresser into where I had envisaged the lounge would be and finding an oval table. Sometimes you just need the experts to see what works, don't you?' laughs Pam. 'Light is very important in Newlands where we have a few hours less every day than our Camps Bay friends - earlier sundowners for us as a client once pointed out! In order to do this I open-planned the living areas and put in tall doors - I also wanted each room to lead outdoors.

'Neville got old doors repaired and copied, wrought-iron gates made to match a neighbour's gate, hiring equipment to cut railway sleepers and finding the stonemason to match the existing stone walls in the garden. It was very important to me to retain the soul of the house.

'There were times we disagreed: I insisted that the toilets be behind the bathroom doors so Neville reluctantly redesigned the plumbing in two of the bathrooms and I gave in on the other two. He also wanted to chop down the wisteria over the entrance, but I persuaded him to gently pull it back, remake the rotten trellis and drape it back again. I'm so glad I won that one!' Bathrooms were originally to be added onto the side boundary but because the house has such a long frontage, the council insisted on building three meters away. 'Neville came up with the idea of losing the Mulberry tree and building a suite toward the back instead,' says Pam.

The outside fittings at the front door were a last-minute find and 'a little ornate for the Karoo farmhouse look I wanted to achieve, but I felt that it just needed Frenchifying a little - like a woman with a little cleavage showing!' And so 5 Manson Road was ready to welcome guests, and is now the not so best-kept secret in Newlands.



**before** OUTDATED BATHROOM AND STUDY

The was the only bathroom in the house and its geyser and original fittings were the first to go but the plumbing was perfectly suited for a scullery off what was the study, which became this new kitchen. Solar heating was installed instead by? can you supply name???

**after** OPEN-PLAN AND WELCOMING

The kitchen and its handy scullery are now light, airy rooms. Double doors replaced the old window (seen in Pam's painting) and the original passageway from the front door was blocked up to create a new entrance and a capacious pantry on the kitchen side.

**THIS PAGE** Today, the kitchen and living area opens directly onto the garden where a healthy breakfast enjoyed outdoors. Pam collects water from the Newlands spring for her guests and stores it in the urn found at Prince Albert Country Store (023 541 1077) OPPOSITE Knocking down the wall between the old living room (now dining area) and one of the back bedrooms (the new lounge) was the biggest challenge. New foundations and a lintol were used to hold up the ancient clay walls. A wall was built behind the dresser to divide the old lounge in two and to create a spacious bedroom behind it. Quality Interiors (021 424 6793) made the comfy sofa but also restored and copied old chairs found on auction. The antique oval oak gateleg table was bought from the owner of T&Co in Green Point. Light fittings came from Private Collections 'at vast expense, but I'm a great believer,' says Pam, 'in not skimping on those kinds of finishes - a beautiful woman in a stunning dress needs the finest jewellery to complete the picture!'

'Oddly enough, choosing paint colours was one of the most difficult things about this renovation. I spent a fortune on little pots of paint but ended up with two different colours inside because the light made some walls too dark. After years of selling houses I realised the

The new-build third bedroom leads directly onto the stoep but is also accessed via a passageway leading from the new lounge/dining area inside the house. The passage and new bathroom for the second bedroom (part of the long original living room) were created out of one original bedroom - a clever solution to link the old house with the new extension (before and after plans on following spread)



**before** CRAMPED KITCHEN

To create an ensuite for the first bedroom, Pam turned the impractical and badly positioned kitchen into a gorgeous bathroom with double doors leading to the back garden.

**after** LUXURIOUS ENSUITE BATHROOM

More like wet rooms, Pam's bathrooms don't have tiles and the seamless wall and floor colours make the rooms appear larger. Hygienic floors were expertly laid by Maxi Coatings.

**BATHROOM TIPS**

Opt for a smaller Victorian style bath to save space and water (this one is from Victorian Bathrooms, web address here xxxx) and add a chair for a welcoming, lived-in feeling.

Pam really battled with bathroom mirrors.

'I wanted them to be really good with great lighting for us girls so I eventually put in shaving mirrors and found beautifully framed ones made from recycled ostrich shells in Prince Albert by Avoova.' (avoova.com)





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The original workshop, filled with tools and bits collected over decades, became this sun-filled bedroom at the back of the garden. The stable door is original but a small-paned window was added to bring in more light; Jones Murakho (who worked on the building project now runs the guesthouse) walks up the teak-slatted garden path next to the new boundary wall to pick fresh mint for breakfast; The old wall behind the bench is original - a sheltered suntrap; new white roofing replaced solid corrugated sheets to bring in more light to the house and lamps from Biggie Best were added to create an elegant French-style entrance; Historical details fill the garden that's now mostly indigenous. At the back, a large vegetable box provides all the herbs and greens needed daily; The new gates were copied from a neighbour and enhance the country charm, rather than blocking it off from the street  
OPPOSITE The view from the house into the new fourth, ensuite bedroom in the garden (previously the workshop)

**PAM'S BLACK BOOK**

**Builder** Neville Lance, Lance Projects, 084 806 0070, 021 785 5108

**Land surveyors** Geomatics Cape, 021 851 6519

**Fencing and security** EJ's Security Services, 082 884 4106 (Ernie Wyld)

**Flooring** Maxi Coatings, 021 783 5891, 082 453 9907

**Furniture** Randall Hare Antiques 021 762 9362 (Wynberg), Belle Ombre Antiques 021 788 9802; Block & Chisel, www.blockandchisel.co.za

**Lighting** The Lamp Workshop (for goose-neck light fittings in bedrooms) behind the Maitland Pawn Shop, 021 511 3531 (197 Voortrekker Rd, ask for Smiley), Private Collections 021 421 0298, www.privatecollections.co.za

**Tree doctor** Krige Tree Service, 082 658 0427 (Francois Krige)

**Window repairs** Doctor Sash Windows, 073 516 8942 (Edward Noland)

**Wood restoration** Strippers, 021 797 6987, www.woodstrippers.co.za



**before** NO INDOOR/OUTDOOR FLOW

Access to gardens was restricted to a single kitchen door and one off a bedroom at the other end of the house. Drains were exposed, gutter water simply ran off onto the concrete making everything wet and damp, particularly in winter  
**after** MAGICAL OUTDOOR STOEP

Four double doors now lead outdoors, and a new bedroom was added at the end. This linked the original house to the old outbuildings, which were restructured to create an ensuite bathroom for the new bedroom. In summer, ancient Hanepoot and Catawba grapes hang heavily from the vines that provides wonderful shade.

