

NATURAL BEAUTY

Influenced by nature and a mid-century-modern aesthetic, the clean lines of Matthew Hodgson's home are the perfect backdrop for his design-classic furniture

Text Kerryn Fischer | Production Kerstin Ester/Frank Features | Photographs Elsa Young/Frank Features



THIS PAGE The six-metre-tall entrance area is clad in balau wood that provides warmth and texture. Alongside it and above the garage are the pool and deck that lead off the living area. 'There was only one place to put the rim-flow pool. Initially we had wanted it to run the full width of the property but it proved impossible as we also wanted the double garage to be a part of the house,' says owner Matthew Hodgson
OPPOSITE An Eames Lounge chair and ottoman are perfectly at home in the downstairs living area



'As a surfer and a runner, I feel incredibly connected to nature here. Noordhoek's laid-back vibe and outdoor lifestyle are a refreshing antidote to my big-city lifestyle'

In another life Matthew Hodgson would have been an architect, so it's not surprising to hear that after years of dreaming, he has finally designed and built his own mid-century-inspired home. 'My day job is investment banking but my creative outlet has always been dabbling in property,' he says. Four years ago he had a sudden impulse to put his experience of 'dabbling' into building his dream home. 'I was on a plane and started doodling ideas. I thought, "How would it look if I designed something from scratch?" Amazingly, with a few twists and tweaks those doodles have metamorphosed into an iconic house by the sea.'

Living in west London but originally from Cape Town, Matthew went back to his roots to build the house. 'I've been lucky enough to travel extensively but Cape Town will always be home because that's where I grew up,' he says. 'With a house there I'm more inclined to spend time visiting, catching up with family and friends.'

Although the decision to build the house happened quite quickly, the process of designing, refining and getting planning approval took two years. Joining him in the project was his property business partner Anthony Meyer, who handled things in Cape Town. 'I was living and working in Tokyo at the time, so Anthony and I communicated by daily phone calls, email and digital photographs. You could say it was almost built by virtual reality,' he laughs.

As an antidote to his city lifestyle, Matthew longed for a house by the sea. 'It was tough to find the right site in the right area, but the place I've ended up, Noordhoek, has a relaxed beach vibe, yet it's just a short drive from the city,' he says. 'I had decided on the area when, quite a rarity, a sea-front house, ripe for demolition and surrounded by sand dunes, came up for sale,' he recalls. It was a done deal. 'I took inspiration from the mid-century architects, in particular Pierre Koenig's Stahl and his house in Los Angeles,' says Matthew. 'The idea of building a modernist glass-and-concrete home in an area of natural beauty was very exciting.'

Matthew wanted the house to be at one with the elements but had to factor in local weather conditions. 'This area is not known as the Cape of Storms for nothing,' he says. During the building process a massive storm claimed the roof of a neighbour's house. 'That made us realize how vulnerable the area is, so we ended up reinforcing the concrete structure with steel and installing storm-proof windows and doors that can be shut off independently, depending on which way the wind blows.'

The concrete and steel of the house are softened inside with iroko wood and outside with balau for the decking and cladding. 'The surrounding environment with its sand dunes and long grasses does a lot to soften the minimalist lines, too,' says Matthew. Inside, the home gets year round northern light streaming through the vast glass doors and windows that frame the views outside. 'We made the ceilings high and left open doorways in the hall and upstairs living areas to make the space feel as spacious as possible,' says Matthew. Rather than have curtains to distract from the clean lines, he has installed discreet electric blinds throughout Waterline, as the house is now known.

Not surprisingly, there is as much intention to detail inside. 'Anthony and I did the interior design ourselves, with each piece of furniture purchased or specifically custom made.' So you'll find design-classic furniture sitting alongside artworks commissioned in Japan and poster-size photographs taken by Matthew on his travels. 'I wanted the furniture and the art to act as the glue between the design of the house and its mid-century inspiration,' he says. 'Accentuating that ideal was top of my mind with every purchase I made,' he says. 'For example, I snapped up the cowhide in the living room when I was in Los Angeles because of its classic colouring.'

Matthew escapes to Waterline as often as possible. 'I unwind here,' he says. 'It's a place for reading, eating, beach walks, trail running and relaxing. It offers total privacy, yet also lends itself to communal living with family and friends who often come to stay, too.' Lucky them.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
The house has dramatic views of the sea from the top level where the kitchen, dining and living areas are located; the sleek kitchen is functional yet inviting; Matthew spent years living in Tokyo, and the kitchen reflects the simplicity and perfectionism of the Japanese; the kitchen has spectacular views, including of the surrounding mountains



'My entertaining style is relaxed and inclusive.
I don't go in for formality much ... in fact, I love it
when family and friends arrive unannounced'

The lower lounge faces the garden. 'I love sitting in this lounge at night, glass of wine in hand, with the doors open to the garden and the trees all lit up,' says Matthew



THIS PAGE 'The house works as it allows for privacy, with the bedrooms serene, silent and contained spaces. Each bedroom spills onto the garden and the soft lush greenery it offers,' says Matthew
OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The bathrooms are experiential rather than just one-dimensional washing zones; the rim-flow pool overlooks the Atlantic Ocean; the vibrant wall covering – a digital print of a textile Matthew loves – provides a vibrant counterpoint to the dark grey concrete floors by Earthcote



WHY BUY IN NOORDHOEK?

The suburb of Noordhoek is like self-contained country village, about 30 minutes' drive from the centre of Cape Town. Tucked away between the sea, mountains and a protected wetland, it boasts an 8km-long white sandy beach, exceptional views and a friendly, unhurried, down-to-earth ambience. It is home to many horse lovers and artists, but also to families who want to bring up their children in a more rural setting where they can enjoy outdoor pursuits such as surfing, hiking and mountain biking. It has a convenient shopping mall as well as access to good schools in Fish Hoek, Kommetjie, Constantia and Bergvliet.

According to Lightstone, 70% of homeowners in the area have lived there for more than five years, and most of them are in their mid-30s or older. The 821 freehold properties in Noordhoek account for more than 80% of the local housing stock and the average price of properties sold and transferred in the area over the past 12 months is R2 050 million.

This home in Noordhoek is for sale. Please see www.pamgolding.co.za for further details.

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