

**Who lives here?**

Cara and Marvin Saven and their kids, Idana (12) and Mira (8)

**WHERE** Fresnaye, Cape Town

**SIZE** 470m<sup>2</sup>



*We love this!*

The hexagonal Douglas Jones wall tiles to the left of the fireplace on the stoep create a statement wall.



# THE BEST of both WORLDS!

Cara Saven has given this heritage home a makeover using two of her favourite décor styles: mid-century and modern.

*By Kim Arendse • Photographs Justin Patrick  
Styling Marian van Wyk*



The covered stoep is jokingly referred to as “the black lung” because of the residue above the fireplace, but roof paint in dark grey works magic on the wall. >> Coffee table from Weylands; cane chairs from Anouk Furniture; downlights from Lightworld



*The front...  
...and the back!*



Cara received the Andrew Sutherland painting next to the window as a gift and it inspired the use of blue in the sitting room. The chairs were a gift from the previous homeowners; Cara had them upholstered in a bold blue velvet. The sheer, grey curtains hung close to the ceiling create a sense of height and grandeur in this space.

Rug from Hertext

## When house-hunting back in 2013, buying an old heritage home wasn't quite what Cara and Marvin Saven had in mind.

It wasn't open-plan, for one. On top of that, the exterior and garden were run-down and the interior finishes just weren't to their taste.

What they did fall in love with, however, are the beautiful bay windows, spacious front stoep, original wooden floors and the location – Fresnaye is mostly wind-free and it has easy access to the mountain and beach. "It also had a huge avocado tree," Cara says. "When we began renovating, I told the builders they could mess up anything but my avo tree!"

Cara, owner of Cara Saven Wall Design, has a special place in her heart for pre-loved items, but she was itching to add

some fresh, modern interior elements. So she and Marvin, who works in the film industry, agreed on an interesting solution that would allow them to have both...

The front of their home has a mid-century aesthetic with retro furniture, wooden floors and warm colours while the back of the house, a new addition, has a modern look and feel, thanks to concrete ceilings, plenty of glass and white screeded floors. To further separate the two styles, Cara used colour: the façade has been painted white, while the back is a trendy grey! Yin and yang forming a perfect whole... >>

The retro server in the living area was a second-hand find to which Cara added sliding mirror doors; prints from her store adorn the wall.

Pendants from Lightworld



## A breath of fresh air

During the 10-month renovation, several interior walls were knocked down, rooms were repurposed and an entirely new L-shaped section was added to the north-facing side of the house, extending the home into the back garden.

Inside, the existing doors were heightened and windows made larger or moved to let in more light. In keeping with the history of the house, the wooden floors were simply sanded and sealed.

Once the major renovations and finishes were done, Cara could start decorating her home. "I'd say our overall décor style is eclectic," Cara explains. "But I'm mad about mid-century design and décor, so most of my furniture is from that era or influenced by it. The style speaks to a time that seems so much simpler..."

Cara often changes up her décor according to trends. "At the moment, I love a variety of blues, emeralds and teals as well as blush pinks and plush fabrics," she says. "But I can't live with red tones, so hopefully those aren't making any kind of comeback!" Every few months, she'll introduce or repurpose scatters and rugs; of course, wallpaper is also regularly used to make changes. "For example, the couch in my sitting area is about 100 years old but the look of the space surrounding it has changed many times in just three years."

While Cara has a keen eye for "putting a room together", she admits that she needs more practise when it comes to DIY. "I actually wish I was more of a 'DIY type' and that I had time for it! I work really hard during the week so when the weekend rolls around, I spend a lot of time unwinding in nature – and then the idea of being creative often feels like work. But on the odd occasion, I will hit a vintage market and try my hand at sanding something or painting it – with little success!" she adds with a laugh. >>

Once the ceiling boards had been removed, Cara discovered the wooden trusses and decided to leave them exposed.



The kitchen's modern elements – wooden cupboards painted a subtle mint-green, white metro tiles and sleek Stucco Italiano cement floors in the colour Glacier with a low-sheen sealer – contrast beautifully with the more

rustic wooden table and chairs that came with the house. "Just as the previous owners sat around this very table with their family for about 60 years, so too will our family," says Cara, nostalgically.



### [CARA'S TIPS]

- Plan for the future. We laid a cement slab WHERE EXACTLY – KIM CHECKING when we first renovated so we can build up a level when the time is right. This will save us money and it means that we don't have to move out of the house during the process. We will also go with lightweight steel so we don't have to use excess water in the process.
- When decorating a particular space, find a piece or two that you love and work around those instead of buying a whole new look for an entire room in one go.
- Avoid clutter.

What used to be a bedroom is now part of the open-plan dining area and kitchen; Cara introduced colour into this space by spray-painting her mother's antique chest of drawers a zesty blue. Dining table from Coricraft; chairs from Pezula Interiors

*I love a cohesive palette with pops of something unexpected. This makes changing things up easy and affordable. - Cara*



**A few quick questions**

**Do you visualise a space and make it happen or do you make changes one at a time?** I tend to make changes one at a time; I find it difficult to see the whole picture in just one sitting. I often buy an item that I love and then figure out

where it should go in the house at a later stage. **What were the biggest challenges in creating this space?** While there were some things we just couldn't do until we'd saved up some more money, I actually

enjoyed the challenge of making things work within a budget. **What's next?** We might go up a level by adding a light steel-frame structure. This would allow me to have an office with a separate entrance – which is overdue! ↑



*Love this bench?*

Turn to page xxx for step-by-step instructions on how to make your own.

A sturdy pine bench provides seating on the spacious front stoep. Cara painted the Malawi chairs pastel pink – one of her favourite colours – so they stand out beautifully against the tiles.

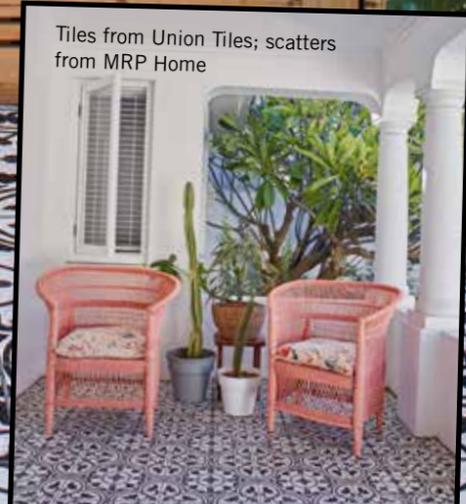
The main bedroom (above) has a tranquil atmosphere with its muted colours and minimalist décor.

In the guest bathroom (far left), an accent wall was created with wallpaper, a visual of Venice from Cara's range. "My husband and I both fell in love with the city, so this is a beautiful reminder," says Cara. The wooden vanity is a second-hand find, while the mirror was made using an Oregon frame from the Savens' previous home; it was once a window.

The tree house (left), made by Cape Jungle Kids, has a zipline attached to it that leads directly into the nearby swimming pool – much to the delight of Idana (above) and Mira.



**CONTACTS AND STOCKISTS** Anouk Furniture 079 489 4206, anoukfurniture.co.za Cape Jungle Kids 021 824 5437, capejunglekids.co.za Cara Saven Wall Design carasaven.com Coricraft 011 611 8700, coricraft.co.za Hertex 021 461 7420/3, hertex.co.za Lightworld 021 552 8881, lightworld.co.za Mantis Design 021 434 9111 MRP Home 0800 212 535, mrphome.com Union Tiles 011 663 2000, uniontiles.co.za Weylandts 0860 103 400, weylandts.co.za Pezula Interiors 021 424 2661



Tiles from Union Tiles; scatters from MRP Home