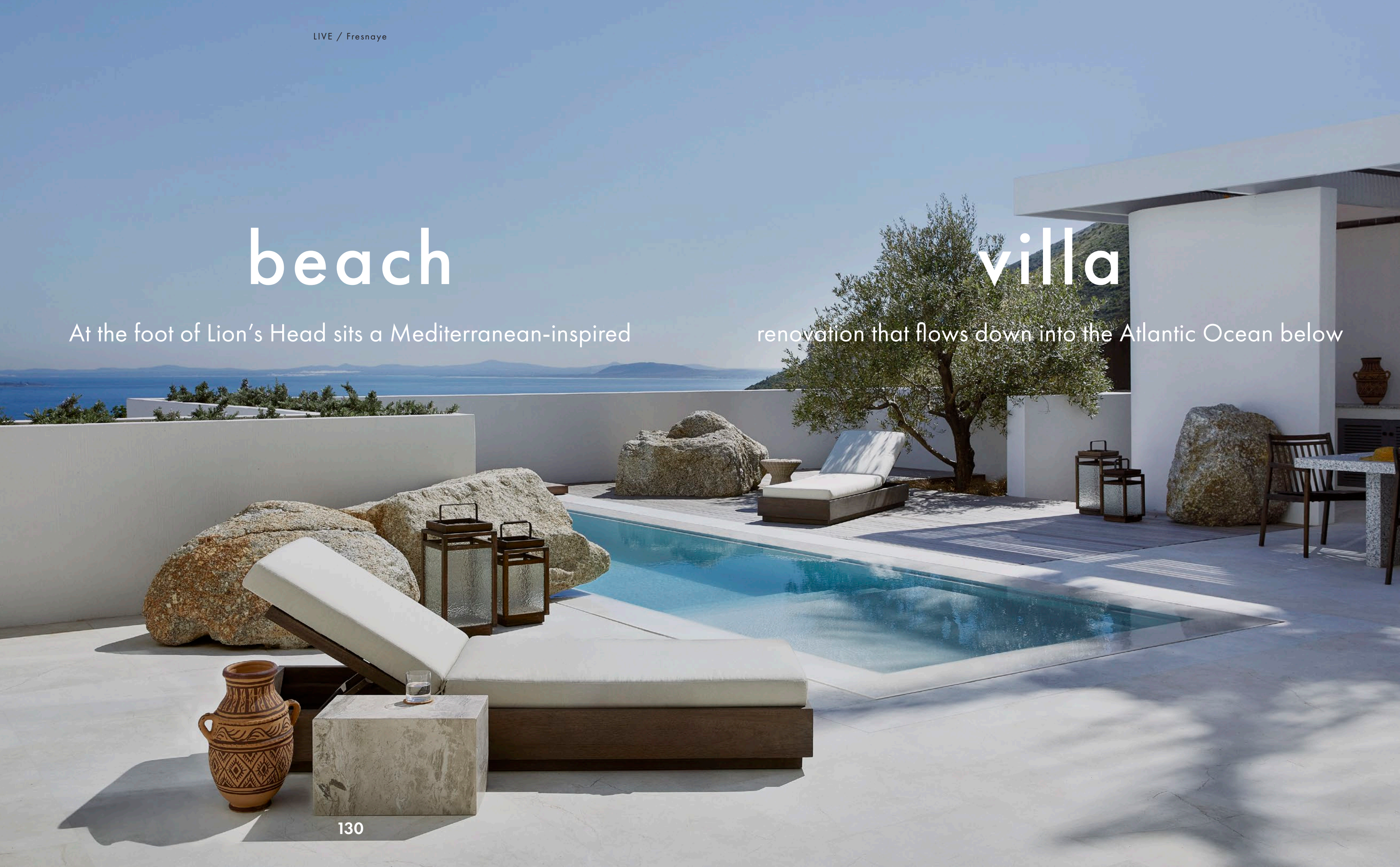


beach

At the foot of Lion's Head sits a Mediterranean-inspired

villa

renovation that flows down into the Atlantic Ocean below



Words by Margot Molyneux Photography by Elsa Young Styling & production by Marlon Leggat

Looking to create a relaxed, laid-back home for their young family in Cape Town's Atlantic Seaboard suburb of Fresnaye, the owners of a buttermilk-yellow, Roman-columned, ornamental Hellenistic house approached interior architect Marlon Leggat with a single reference image – a modern, whitewashed Cycladic villa.

Previous spread and right Taking full advantage of the windless nature of Fresnaye, the home's living spaces, including a guest room, open onto the family's outdoor entertainment area. The zero-edge pool is surrounded by carefully placed Cape granite boulders that echo its mountainside position. Upstairs, Juliet balconies offer privacy to the bedrooms while still showcasing the home's incredible views.





‘Having largely free rein on this project was a dream come true, but it didn’t come without its challenges. The first was to make this home live up to its full potential,’ says Marlon.

The exterior is minimalist and timeless and features a stark, whitewashed façade punctuated by deep-set windows and a swooping curved wall. Dark wood lintels over the front entrances, the use of Aegean blue detailing, and dry-packed stone walls are an undeniable nod to the traditional island architecture of the Mediterranean. The layered yet pared-back interior is filled with natural materials: raw granite, honed Spanish marble, woven rattan and jute, and white-rendered walls. It’s coloured in rich terracotta, dark walnut and deep hues of blue.

‘The client has a large extended family, so I wanted to ensure they had a home designed for entertaining, while keeping it practical for day-to-day living,’ says Marlon. A large, rounded central fireplace wall divides the living spaces, bold furniture pieces are used indoors and out, and soft, full-length drapery provides cover to almost every window. The home – with its five bedrooms, gym, office, playroom and separate guest studio – feels both spacious and homely.

As you step into the large entrance hall, you’re welcomed into a warm, light-filled, open-plan kitchen, lounge and dining room. Oversized floor-to-ceiling French doors on parliament hinges and a large sliding kitchen window bring the outdoors in with views of the ocean and textures of the rocky mountain face from every vantage point.

In the kitchen, a solid walnut countertop is effortlessly held up by a Cape granite boulder, whose quarried texture and ancient character is juxtaposed against the seamless Bianco Rosso marble floor and modern kitchen finishes. The space is flooded with natural light through a generous, round, recessed skylight, and leads onto a back-of-house kitchen in one direction and a concealed kids’ playroom in the other, all the while overlooking a secluded outdoor seating area, perfect for dining al fresco.

Taking inspiration from Bauhaus and organic Brutalism, the living room is the blueprint for the true style and personality of the home, with a collection of curated objects, both new and found. A standing lamp by Spanish designer Miguel Milá for Santa & Cole and an original Sheriff lounge chair by Sergio Rodrigues

all find their place. A panelled sculptural artwork, created by Marlon and inspired by Matisse’s *The Swimming Pool*, hangs above an L-shaped couch, while floating limestone shelves display a collection of loved objects found locally and on travels abroad. ‘Working on this project for almost two years allowed me to source unusual objects and partner with local craftspeople to create custom-made pieces that I think collectively make this home unique,’ says Marlon.

Treasure-filled niches line a curved balustrade, while generously high ceilings, a large window and a second skylight allow sunbeams to stream through, casting ever-changing shadows. Upstairs, the bedrooms offer impressive ocean views from private Juliet balconies, designed to obscure neighbouring homes to reveal only the hues of the sea and the endless horizon. Natural textures and tones of jute, rattan and travertine are brought to life with bold nautical stripes, wool rugs and dark wood accents in the form of locally made stools and custom-made wardrobe handles.

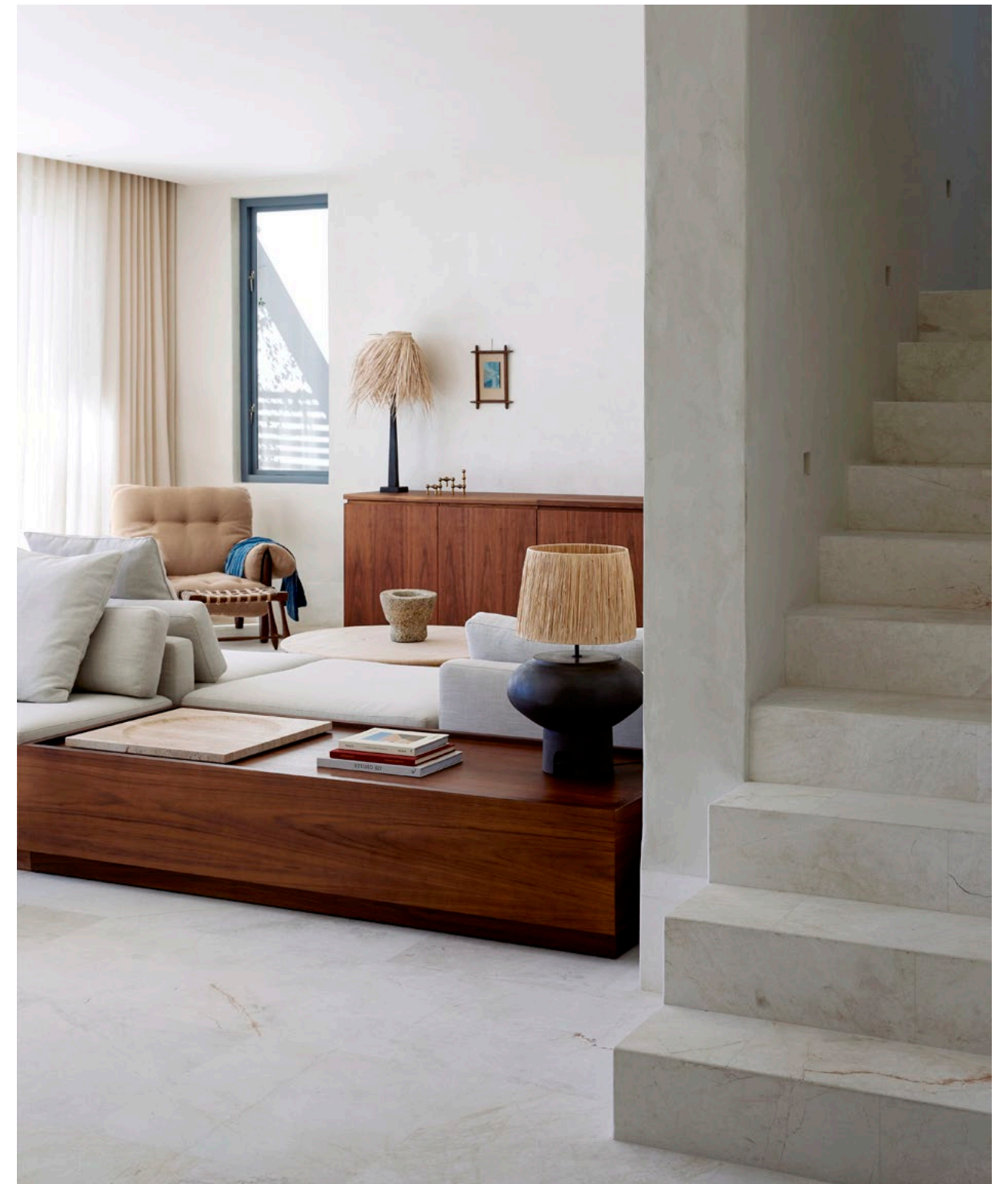
The main bedroom is a generous private suite with a dressing area, coffee nook and large bathroom that dominates the centre of the space. With the home’s third round skylight perfectly placed over a grand round bath, the room is filled with sunlight, while still feeling private and secluded from the rest of the home. The coffee nook and window seat take full advantage of the home’s incredible views with Robben Island in the distance.

Kate Mason from The Greenhouse Nursery was enlisted to help with the landscaping and took inspiration from the terraced farmlands of the Aegean isles, with each tier held up using stone sourced from the property. Olive trees, cork oaks and indigenous grasses help to blend the home into the slopes of the mountain, while large Cape granite boulders around the pool remind you of the home’s mountainside position.

A revamp that feels like a complete overhaul, this home has kept only the most important elements from its predecessor: its location, its clever use of space and its remarkable, uninterrupted views. Beyond that, this family home blends the best in minimalist design, local and natural materials and seamless indoor-outdoor living, ensuring it will be as relevant in years to come as it is today. ● @marlon_james @thegreenhousenursery

Left The entrance hall features a custom-made Brutalist console table, an antique candlestick holder and an artwork by Jeremy Rose. **Next spread, from left** The open-plan kitchen is punctuated by a large Cape granite boulder that supports a solid oiled American walnut countertop. Custom-made pendant lights made from vintage opal glass shades illuminate the breakfast nook. A collection of objects found on travels, a vintage Bakker & Steyger chair, and a turn-of-the-century seascape.





Left A custom-made dining table was designed by interior architect Marlon Leggat and made locally by Cannata. Danish FDB Møbler J80 dining chairs are complemented by a large Ferm Living Dou lampshade, and a West African Baule tablecloth from Out of Africa adorns the table.

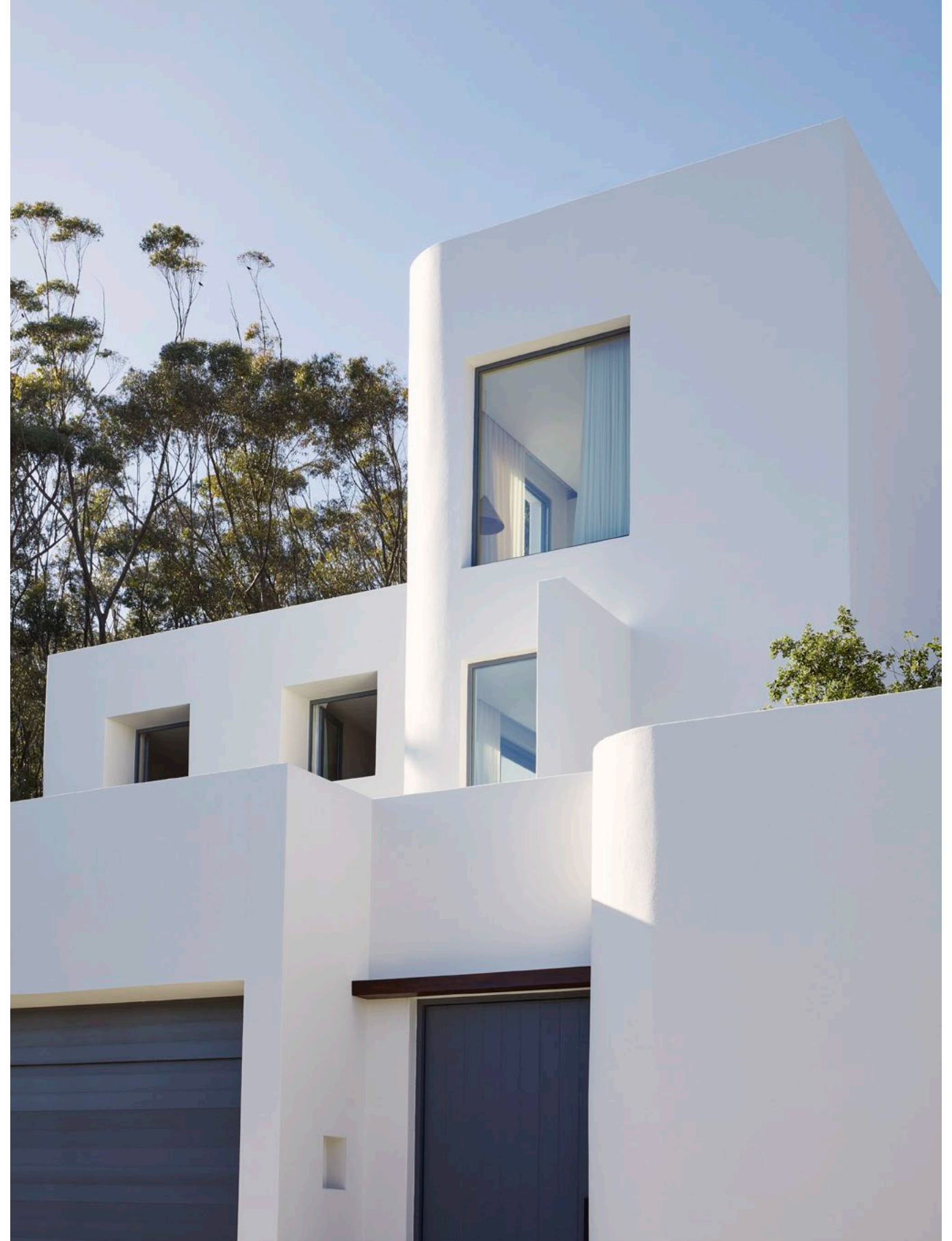
Above An original Sheriff lounge chair by Brazilian designer Sergio Rodrigues takes pride of place in the lounge, with an Arch table lamp from Bofred standing on a built-in coffee table. A grass lampshade from Moroccan Warehouse, lampstand from Cécile and Boyd and a brass candleholder from Danish brand Stoff Nagel complete the look.



Above A custom-made, vein-cut, unfilled travertine cylindrical basin is the focal point of the guest bathroom.

Right Cast pendant lights by Menu hang in the upstairs guest bedroom, where a Juliet balcony provides uninterrupted views to the horizon. An imbuia chair by EE Meyer adds a vintage touch.





Left Adjacent to the main bedroom's lift entrance and coffee nook, a sun-drenched window seat has views towards Robben Island. A pendant lamp and a French antique three-legged stool provide the finishing touches. **Above** This architecturally bold Cape Town home enjoys the Lion's Head mountain slopes as its back garden.