

THIS PAGE Patrick, Antonio and Fernanda Fehring in the area between the kitchen and sunken lounge. The cast-iron pillars, an original feature of the house, were moved to form the central feature of the open-plan living area. OPPOSITE Large industrial-style windows – in keeping with the originals – were introduced on either side of the fireplace to let the light into the lounge.



### RENOVATION 3

# A MEETING OF AGES

The contemporary reinvention of a Parkhurst home honours its original character

Text Alex Dodd Production Retha Erichsen Photographs Elsa Young





### KITCHEN MAGIC

What was once a poky raised dining area became the elegant entrance to the house, linking the sunken lounge to the large kitchen as part of an open living area. The exposed brickwork above the stove and the pigmented screed floors pick up on the industrial accents that run through the house.



When Fernanda and Patrick Fehring met in Cambridge in their early 20s it was a match made in cross-cultural heaven, and one that would fuel their travels to destinations around the world. He grew up in a village outside Frankfurt and she in the sweet shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain in Rio de Janeiro. Since they've been together they've lived in Hong Kong, England, France and Brazil.

When they first visited South Africa in 2000 they were 'blown away'. When Patrick, who works for British Airways, got a job offer in Jo'burg, they didn't need much convincing. 'We've been here for two years and are in love with the place,' says Fernanda. 'It's such a green city and we love the light.' Shortly after arriving they decided 'to settle for a while and buy our own place'.

The couple started out renting in Parkhurst and, as 'Patrick likes to introduce himself to the neighbours', they soon became friends with Shelley Raymond, who invited them over for a braai one Sunday in spring. When they mentioned they were looking for a home of their own, she said she knew just the house. Shelley's sister, Adrienne Feldner, who has a 'great eye for architectural antiques', had just finished renovating in the area, integrating prized antique fittings and finds into the reinvention of the house.

Before they could finish their *espetadas*, the couple had driven over to take a look. 'The moment we arrived we said, "This is it." We loved it. The renovation was already complete, ready for us to move in. And the furniture from our apartment in Rio matched the style of the house just perfectly.'

The renovation was the result of a winning partnership between Adrienne (who had bought the house because of the three cast-iron pillars that now form the central feature of the open-plan living area); Sean Wall and Mia Anfield of 4 D and A Architects; and building contractor Bernard Wall (Sean's father) of Wall Management Services. This gifted group has been renovating and reinventing homes in the Parkhurst and Parktown North area for about five years, uncovering and restoring the original character, style and aesthetic of these 1920s to 1940s houses.

'From the start we loved the raw brickwork, pressed ceilings and original rare parquet floors,' says Fernanda. 'They had the mix just right between the old character stuff, with its yesteryear feel, and the modern contemporary aspects like the open-plan kitchen. From the fitted carpets in the bedrooms to the exposed trusses in the TV lounge, every single detail seemed to work.' She and Patrick adore the mix between the lovely antique pieces, such as the old fire hydrant in the central courtyard garden, and the modern – such as the large windows with their factory feel that allow glorious highveld light to pour into the house.

Last year was an eventful one for the couple. After moving into their new home in March, Fernanda opened a decor shop in Parkhurst in July. She named it Leblon after the beach that lies alongside trendy Ipanema in her native Rio. Sean, the architect who reinvented the couple's home, also designed her shop, which picks up on the French and Brazilian accents that have defined her story so far. The Fehring's home is decorated with similar Latin panache – elegant and understated throughout with vibrant touches of colour and character in glassware and intricately detailed porcelain pieces painted by her Brazilian grandmother. Just as the house is a balance between old and new, so the decor is a subtle pairing of timeless international classicism and personal pieces packed with feisty flair. □

**Fernanda Fehring, Leblon, 072-862-7733**

### CHARACTER HOME

THIS PAGE The brickwork in the TV lounge is offset by the exposed trusses. The parquet floors, restored by Clifford's Floors, were one of the house's original winning features. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM The architects' inspiration for the en-suite bathroom was the pared-down classicism of a boarding-school shower room. They opted for standard white Johnson 150x150mm tiles as the backdrop to features such as the antique wooden swing doors and the Victorian bath. The Philippe Starck Ghost Chair from Twice International adds a contemporary touch.

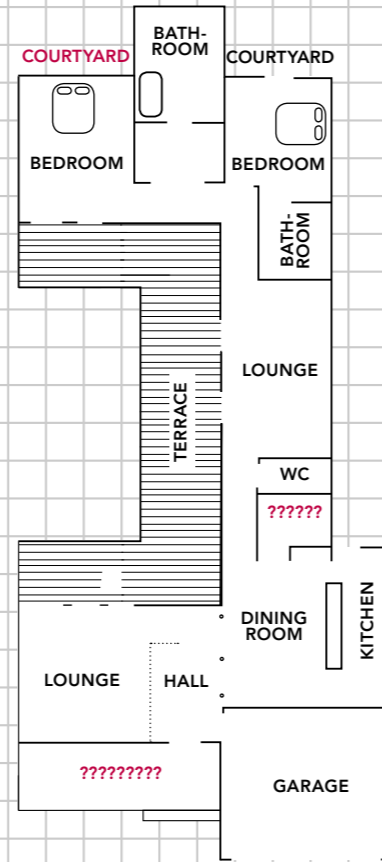




THIS PAGE Five-year-old Antonio's bedroom – straight out of a *Boy's Own* annual – opens out onto his little courtyard, created by the architects to maximise indoor-outdoor space and the vistas of every room. OPPOSITE Fernanda had Antonio's teepee made up from Cath Kidston fabric.







**WHAT THEY DID**

- Made the most of the house's original charm by paying attention to its original features under the watchful eye of Sean Wall and Mia Anfield of 4D and A Architects.
- Took down and restored the original pressed ceilings, reinstating them in other rooms. Where more was needed to cover a ceiling, it was specially made up using fibreglass.
- Retained the geometric-patterned vintage parquet floors. Where necessary, more of the same was specially made up to cover extra ground.
- Had more of the basic steel windows in the original house made up in order to maximise the flow of light into the house and establish the industrial aspect of the design.
- Instructed the builders to take out the unattractive old anthracite fireplace – and the original was found hidden behind it. Similarly, when knocking out the walls and ceilings of two old bedrooms to open up the TV lounge, they uncovered the original wooden trusses, which were kept exposed.
- To make the most of a small plot, the architects maximised the flow between interior and exterior space, constructing the central courtyard onto which most of the rooms open.
- Created small private courtyards as a special feature for both bedrooms, to use limited space to its best potential.

**LITTLE BLACK BOOK**

**4 D and A Architects** 011-880-4754, 4da.co.za **Cath Kidston** (teepee fabric) cathkidston.co.uk **Clifford's Floors** (restoration of parquet floors) 082-705-7377 (Clifford Basson) **Demolition World** (butler's sink and various doors) 011-704-0060 **Die Ossewa** (patio table) 011-482-9785 **Home Fabrics** (Nina Campbell wallpaper) 011-262-3492, 021-425-8287, 031-303-1202, 041-374-5000, homefabrics.co.za **La Grange Interiors** (patio sofas) 011-444-5379, 021-876-2155 **Laura Ashley** (wrought-iron bed) lauraashley.com **Leblon** (glassware) 072-862-7733 (Fernanda Fehring) **Pressed Ceilings** (restoration of ceilings) 082-444-5435 (Sydney Gordon), pressed-ceilings.co.za **The Yard** (windows, doors, fireplace surrounds) 011-616-0522, theyard.co.za **Twice International** (Philippe Starck Ghost Chair) 011-343-8900, 021-487-9060, twice.com **Wall Management Services** (building contractor) 082-291-0771 (Bernard Wall)



**PATIO KNOW-HOW**

The house was reinvented around a central courtyard, with a deep veranda and steps leading down to the garden. The concrete pavers carry the industrial feel through to the exterior. The corrugated-roof sheeting, painted white underneath, offers some cover from the sun without cutting out the light.



**THIS PAGE** The patio sofas are from La Grange Interiors and the table from Die Ossewa. The Brazilian glassware is from Fernanda's shop, Leblon. **OPPOSITE** The wrought-iron bed is from Laura Ashley, the porcelain lamp stands were hand-painted by Fernanda's grandmother and the wallpaper is Perroquet by Nina Campbell from Home Fabrics.