

HOUSE & GARDEN

SOUTH
AFRICA



June / July '26
R120.00 (incl. VAT)
N\$125.00 (incl. VAT)
Other countries
R104.35

TRENDS
Karoo Gothic
Winter Gardens
Rethinking
outdoor living

KITCHENS + BATHROOMS

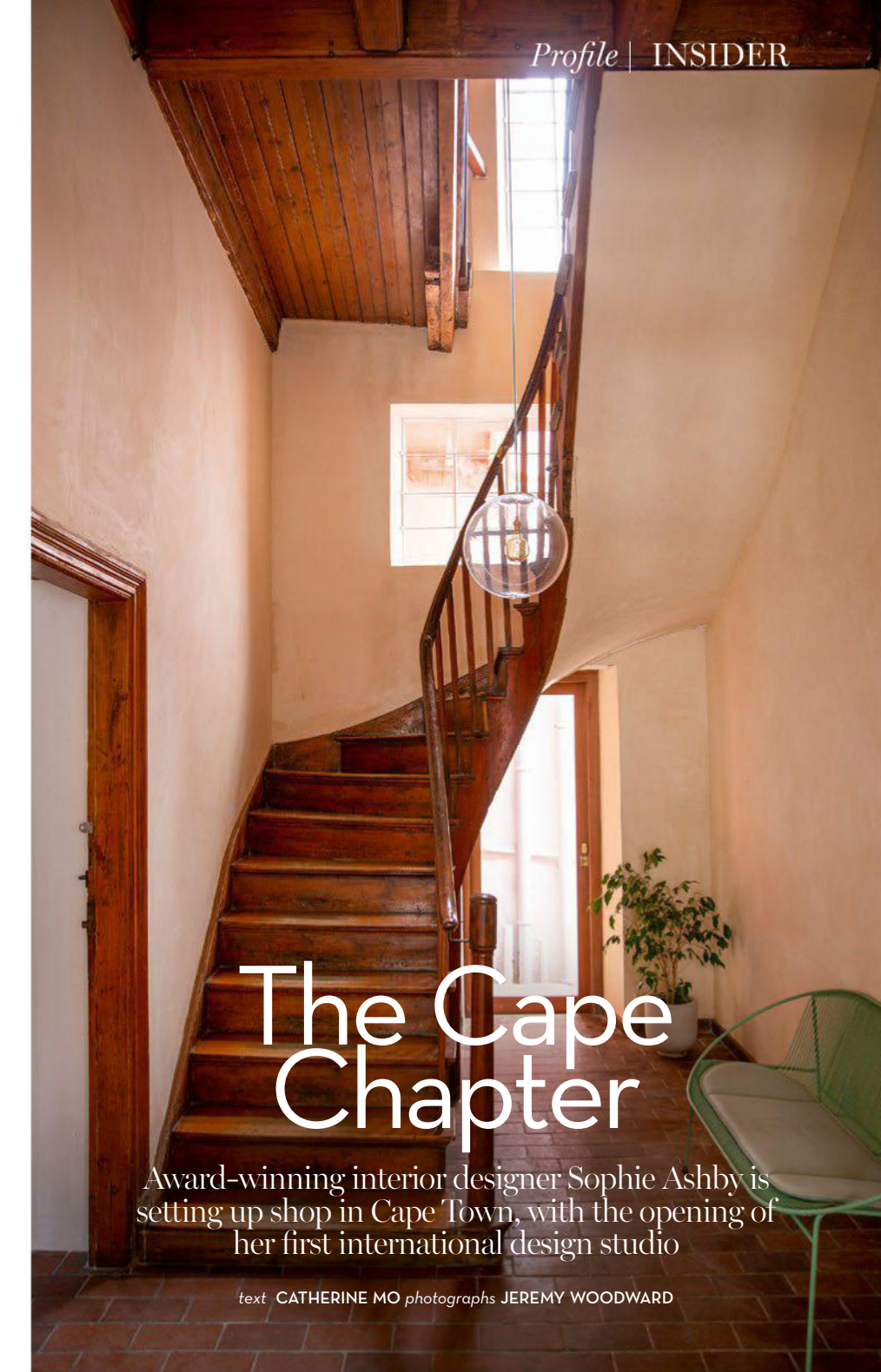
THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE



For interior designer, Sophie Ashby, opening a Cape Town studio feels both instinctive and deeply personal. Growing up between South Africa and the UK, she has long held an affinity for the city. A connection that first took professional shape with the renovation of The Robertson Small Hotel in 2014, the same year she launched her eponymous studio. Since then, Studio Ashby has built a reputation for soulful, layered interiors, defined by authenticity, timeless elegance and an eclectic sensibility.

Her new studio, located on Loop Street in a 19th-century building, reflects this ethos with quiet confidence. Original features like the Georgian spiral staircase and yellowwood floors lend warmth and patina, while considered interventions introduce a more contemporary rhythm. "We were drawn to the space for its old-world character, beautiful finishes, and brilliant central location," she says, noting its proximity to a network of galleries, restaurants and studios that shape the area's design-led energy.

Rather than imposing a signature aesthetic, Ashby's approach is one of careful calibration. Spaces are pared back yet deeply considered, where proportion, materiality and atmosphere take precedence over ornament. It is a philosophy that finds a natural counterpart in Cape Town – a place, she notes, where light, landscape and an honesty of materials encourage a more restrained, integrated way of designing.



The Cape Town studio marks the practice's first international outpost, working in tandem with its London base while supporting a growing portfolio of local projects, including the Tamodi Estate & Polo Reserve in Plettenberg Bay. It also signals a deeper commitment to collaboration, opening further dialogue with South Africa's rich community of artists, makers and artisans; relationships that have long informed the studio's work.

Globally, the studio's portfolio spans private residences, hospitality and commercial projects, from a Georgian townhouse in London to a coastal retreat in Brighton and a forthcoming hotel in Majorca. Yet here, in Cape Town, the focus feels more immediate and immersive. "The Cape Town office will allow us to be in the same city as so many of our favourite collaborators," Ashby reflects. "It brings me such joy." studioashby.com

LIVING

*An informed edit of where to go, what to try,
and what's shaping the way we live now.*



Step inside Tamodi Estate & Polo Reserve in Plettenberg Bay.

Sanctuary in Motion

At Tamodi Estate & Polo Reserve, interiors unfold as an extension of the landscape: tactile, tonal and designed to slow the pace.

text CATHERINE MO





The road to The Crag has a way of recalibrating you. The light softens, the air shifts and the pace, almost imperceptibly, begins to slow. By the time Tamodi Estate & Polo Reserve comes into view, the transition feels complete.

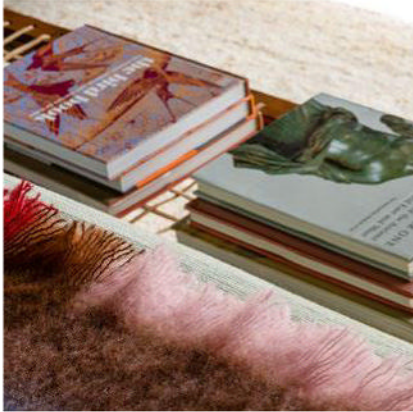
Positioned between the Robberg Peninsula and the Tsitsikamma mountains, the estate sits within one of the Garden Route's most quietly dramatic landscapes. It is a setting that asks very little of you, beyond presence. London and newly Cape

Town based, Studio Ashby, was tasked with reimagining the interiors, introducing what founder Sophie Ashby describes as "depth, warmth and soul" while elevating the experience for a more discerning traveller.

The approach is intentionally restrained. Stone, timber and clay anchor the spaces, while painted surfaces and bespoke joinery bring cohesion without excess. "Our vision centred around creating a space where guests felt instantly at ease," says Ashby, "as though they had arrived somewhere

familiar yet distinctly special." It is a subtle realignment of luxury: less about statement, more about atmosphere.

The palette draws directly from the Western Cape with soft mauves, olive greens, sun-warmed terracottas and sky blues echoing the surrounding terrain. "We embraced the rhythm of the landscape," Ashby explains, "allowing colour to feel intuitive rather than imposed." Layered through textiles and handwoven rugs, many produced locally, the interiors carry a quiet tactility. Nearly 80% of the



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

A tonal composition of greens anchors this quiet vignette, where contemporary South African art meets considered styling; Sunlight filters through timber-framed windows, warming walls washed in rich terracotta; Woven textures and artisanal craft take centre stage, with locally sourced pieces reinforcing the project’s commitment to authenticity and material richness; Interior designer Sophie Ashby; Set against a sweeping valley, the deck extends the living space into the landscape.





furnishings were sourced within South Africa, reinforcing a sense of authenticity over artifice. “Our approach was to create something rooted and real, rather than anything overt or performative,” she adds.

The central building unfolds like a private home. A library, reading room and terraces encourage a slower rhythm. A once-overlooked corner now houses the Library Bar, where an honesty system and curated shelves introduce an easy informality. Guests pour their own drinks, settle into armchairs and stay longer than

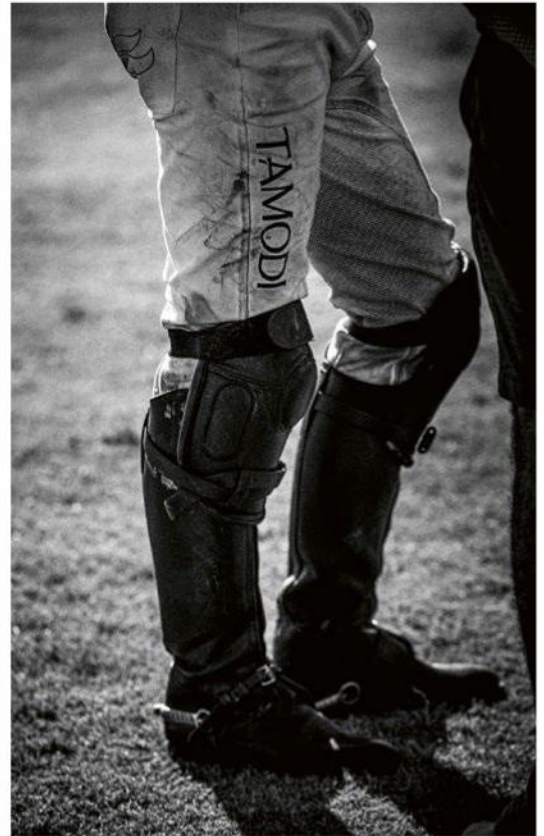
‘From the moment GUESTS ARRIVE, we want them to feel a genuine SENSE OF WELCOME’

SOPHIE ASHBY

intended. “From the moment guests arrive, we want them to feel a genuine sense of welcome,” says Ashby.

Art quietly influences the experience. “Everything always comes back to art,” she reflects, with pieces by South African creatives such as Gabrielle Kannemeyer and Balekane Legoabe woven throughout the interiors.

The ten suites, each expansive and outward-looking, offer a more introspective counterpoint with fireplaces and deep bath tubs. Furniture, lighting and textiles have



been layered to support how the spaces are lived in, rather than simply how they appear. “We wanted guests to have space to slow down, reflect and recharge,” says Ashby. It is a design language that prioritises feeling over formality.

Tamodi's connection to place extends beyond aesthetics. Local sourcing, durable materials and environmental rehabilitation, including the restoration of indigenous fynbos, form part of a broader commitment to the land it occupies.

For Ashby, whose own history spans South Africa and the UK, the project carries a personal resonance. “Working here felt incredibly natural,” she says. What remains is not a single defining moment, but a series of quiet impressions, the light shifting across stone, the stillness of the valley, the sense of having, briefly, stepped outside of time. A place you arrive at slowly, and leave reluctantly. ■ tamodi.com

