

Truth or Dare




A corner of the kitchen is graced with a Jacobean-style chair and "The Long Wait," a socially incisive work by artist Faith 47.

Designer **Nicky Tyers** and her sculptor husband Philip respectively take an art-driven approach in their South African home

TEXT THOMAS CONNORS PHOTOGRAPHY KARL ROGERS
INTERIOR DESIGN NICKY TYERS



The sharp verticals of a chair designed by Philip Tyers and the decorative swirls of the elegantly turned staircase railing generate a lively rhythm in the entry foyer.



Nicky Tyers took art courses at university and has long been keen on art. “Many of my pieces were purchased on a whim when on holiday in Vietnam, Bali or Thailand and sometimes even here on a weekend away,” she notes. “Others were bought at auction and the Joburg Art Fair in Johannesburg.”

The kitchen was reconfigured to accommodate both a sit-down island for quick breakfasts and a round table for leisurely family dinners. The home's original teak floors were repaired and stained a luscious ebony. The home's collection includes pieces by a variety of South African artists, including the Serbian-born Maja Maljevic, Louis de Villiers (now residing in New York) and Conrad Botes. "The Matador" by Nandipha Mntambo, hangs on an ink-hued wall in her kitchen.



Artwork by Takashi Murakami and Balinese artist DK Sujana adorn the walls in the laid-back living room.



PRIMARY BEDROOM SUITE: Plastered in Dark Onyx from Plascon, with TV room beyond. A work by artist Jennifer Dickson hangs above the home's original Victorian tub. A mahogany Cape Georgian library table with green leather inlaid top anchors this study area.

The pull of the past can be hard to resist, yet it takes a solid footing in the here-and-now to embrace what has gone before without falling down the slippery slope of nostalgia. Interior designer Nicky Tyers has always been drawn to older homes, but the 1939 Cape Town house she shares with husband Philip is no period piece. Graced by a love of art and an eye for sympathetic updating, it combines the kind of solidity only time can confer with an utterly of-the-moment liveliness.

Located about two miles from central Cape Town in suburban Kenilworth, the Tyers residence is surrounded by vineyards and olive groves. A generous forecourt and handsome rear garden afford the property a far from urban ambiance, but there's nothing rustic about it. A color palette dominated by black, gray and white gives the home a pleasantly formal aspect; structured but not restrictive. While attracted to such

features as the original teak floors, Burmese rosewood staircase and large sash windows, the couple weren't overly respectful as they made the house their own, merging two second-story bedrooms into a suite and opening up a wall between the kitchen and living room. And throughout the home, there's a distinctly relaxed vibe to the disposition of the furnishings and artwork. In the living room, a large sectional and a pair of Louis XV-style chairs upholstered in an ikat-inspired print keep company with life-size, antique Buddhist statues and two large bevel edge mirrors.

A welcoming veranda sports a sofa that could have wandered there from a cozy study; a vintage easy chair upholstered in a weather-resistant velvet; and a large, three-panel painting of a Nguni cow in acrylic. A sculptural seating piece designed by Philip (he showcases his work at his Villa Africa Gallery in Cape Town) sits strikingly in the foyer.

Tyers' design sense was cultivated, in part, by her mother, who "had a strong artistic sensibility, and a natural flair with respect to interior design and exotic color combinations" – plus an extensive collection of British House and Garden to devour.

Similar to her mothers' disposition to moving, Tyers has adopted a certain restlessness as an adult. "I can never live in one home for very long, I love the challenge of un-forming spaces and

restoring buildings to their former glory. Naturally, location is always a key criterion, but very often houses first speak to me and I cannot resist the desire to wave my magic wand." Tyers explains, "When viewing a potential new home, I'm always keeping a mental note of where the art will be placed. As soon as your favorite painting is hung on the wall, a space suddenly feels familiar and grounded. It feels like home."



The handsome landscaped garden is centered around an inviting swimming pool.



FULLY FURNISHED VERANDA: A mustard colored chair – Nicky's favorite color – provides a bright contrast to an otherwise monochromatic palette. **SIDE GARDEN:** A life-size crocodile fabricated from recycled metal stands guard. **DOORWAY:** Through a doorway, a glimpse of a work by noted South African artist Conrad Botes – one of Tyers' favored artists.