



WIDE OPEN SPACES

Seamlessly integrated into the landscape, this mod, steel-framed home makes the most of the country views without detracting from them



AT A GLANCE

THE ARCHITECT: Philip Briel of Philip Briel Architecture.

THE CLIENTS: Kirk and Adre Kruger and their two sons, Kyle (19) and Byron (12), as well as Bella and Lily, their two Yorkies.

THE CLIENTS' BRIEF: A spacious

family home that opens to the outdoors while retaining privacy.

THE HOUSE: A single-storey, five-bedroom home distinguished by a barn-inspired steel framework. The living areas are contained in a glass-enclosed pavilion.

“We’ve always been a nature-loving family so it came as no surprise that we all appreciated the amazing setting,” says Kirk Kruger of Monaghan Farm, a sprawling, scenic country estate near Lanseria Airport in Jo’burg, where he and his wife, Adre, and their two sons, Byron and Kyle, live. For Kirk and Adre it was important that the design of their house embrace the beautiful natural surrounds, but still provide a degree of privacy.

With this as the anchor of the brief, architect Philip Briel came up with a steel structure that allows large expanses of glass walls to maximise the views. “I was inspired by the portal frame steel construction used widely in Highveld farm barns and with Monaghan being a working farm, the use of this vernacular was quite appropriate,” he explains. “I felt leaving the concrete walls exposed added to the integrity of the structure.”

The home is defined by a simple linear layout – from the lofty open-plan kitchen, living and dining area, the TV room



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and bedrooms are accessed by a wide passage that runs the length of the house. This layout has a dual benefit. Firstly, it visually 'breaks up' the structure minimising its presence on the landscape. "While the guidelines at Monaghan specify robust contemporary architecture," explains Philip, "the homes should sit comfortably within the landscape and not compromise the views. For this reason they are required to be single storey." Secondly, it means each room is north-facing and has sliding doors opening to the outdoors, making the garden feel like it's part of the interiors. "The open-plan living space is the best place to experience this as you feel as though you're halfway outside when the sliding doors are open," remarks Adre. The fact that the unique timber ceiling, which assists in insulation, extends to the roof line further enhances this ambience.

The merging of indoors and out also offers the Krugers a lifestyle that conveniently incorporates work and play. "My work can get quite stressful," comments Kirk, who works from home, "so it's a joy to take a break, step outside and take a walk on a trail along the river with the knowledge that I can return and effortlessly make the transition back to my workplace." Adre home-schooled Kyle and is doing the same with Byron. "There are no distractions so it's easy to put your head down and study," he shares enthusiastically.

The farm, which incorporates 10 hectares of land on which vegetables, herbs and flowers are grown, strives to be partially self-sustaining, an environmental ethos that is carried through into the architecture of the Krugers' home by means of solar power heaters and rainwater tanks. To counteract overheating, timber overhangs deflect the harsh summer sunlight when the sun sits higher in the sky. Conversely in winter, when the sun is lower, clerestory windows on one side of the house allow more natural light in. "We love that we live in a home that's been so thoughtfully and sensitively integrated into a natural, unspoilt environment," says Kirk. GH



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