

DESIGN



MODERN AFRICA

location: Sandton, Gauteng
interior design: Diane Tevoedjre – Meha Art & Interiors
photo-reportage: Colin Sharp

JOHANNESBURG'S NORTHERN SUBURB OF SANDTON IS A BUSINESS AND RESIDENTIAL HUB COMPARABLE WITH INTERNATIONAL PEERS. MANY OF ITS CONCRETE AND GLASS TOWERS ARE RECENTLY BUILT AND IMPRESSIVE; SECURE, CAREFULLY CRAFTED STRUCTURES FOR HIGH-ECHOLON SUBURBAN LIFESTYLES. WITHIN THEM, DECORATIVE TECHNIQUES DIFFER.



This example – a two bedroom / two bathroom apartment – is home to a Nigerian businessman who travels extensively using Johannesburg as his base. West African-born Diane Tevoedjre handled the interior after consulting with her client. With origins in Benin and Mali, Ms Tevoedjre – the daughter of a diplomat – has lived in the USA, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, France, Sweden, Austria, Central Africa and the Far East – principally Thailand. She has practiced as an interior designer and art dealer for 15 years and enjoys using a diversity of cultures in her work. She describes this

as: ‘A melting pot of influences refracted through the prism of an African background.’ Her rationale here was to create a slick, easily maintained base which would reflect the owner’s appreciation for contemporary decoration yet also focus subtly on West African culture. She says: ‘This is not a large space and I wanted to make the most of it.’ One enters into a reception lift lobby; the kitchen is to the right and the reception area – sitting / dining – to the left. The bedroom suites are contained in a second wing and the main bedroom and sitting room both open onto a compact, square terrace. ▶

these pages: The designer chose pieces from Sandton-based P. Maldini which include Il Loft and Porada. Rugs were custom designed by Paco.



these pages: This designer has drawn extensively from her life in various countries. She brings together diverse cultures and styles in a pleasing synergy; examples here include an Il Loft sofa, Porada flat-screen monitor stand, various custom-made pieces of furniture and an eclectic mix of art and artifacts.

Says Diane Tevoedjre 'My client didn't provide a brief, he gave me carte blanche design-wise. I tried to create this apartment to match his personality; he's a very quiet person, peaceful and down to earth in his approach. I wanted his home to reflect this personality.' Ms Tevoedjre stresses that researching the client's lifestyle is vital; 'there is no formula' she says. 'Here, the result is minimalist and I was able to make choices across-the-board from cutlery and linen to the major pieces of furniture. He is an African and I wanted this to be evident; further, I have found that the right African art and artifacts works very well with contemporary furniture.'





this page: The designer says that she likes to 'bring artistic life into space making it more than a living area and rather a personal comfort zone'; this main bedroom suite is a good example.

Ms Tevoedjre sources and selects such artwork personally, often in the country of origin but otherwise via South African galleries. She also designs custom furniture and occasional pieces and works with Pastiche in the choice of material and their manufacture; occasional tables, lamp stands and bases and shades are examples. Skins, leather, stone and various woods are integral within her decorative palette, she adds: 'I feel that natural materials are part of the overall picture of Africa.' □