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## REDUCED GLAMOUR

THE NEUTRAL TONES OF GREY, BROWN AND BLACK IN THIS FOREST TOWN HOME SPEAK OF A NEW MINIMALISM, WHERE GLAMOUR IS ABOUT AUTHENTICITY AND SIMPLICITY RATHER THAN LOUD DESIGN STATEMENTS.





**THIS PAGE** Rectangular travertine tiles echo the design of the Barcelona Pavilion that inspired the elongated lines of this house. The floating oak staircase was made by Marcus Pieterse of Make. **OPPOSITE TOP** A print from V&S photographer Dook greets visitors to the house. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** The galley-like kitchen by Scic hides all functionality behind shiny white doors. **PREVIOUS SPREAD, LEFT** Grass loungers from The Moroccan Warehouse and a couch in a George Baker slip cover soften the clean lines of the pool area. **PREVIOUS PAGE, RIGHT** Make and Mezzanine were responsible for the interiors in the house.

When Shaun Baker went to meet architect Bryan Dunstan of BD Studio to discuss plans for his new Forest Town home, he took with him a rectangular piece of grey stone. Its clean lines and neutral colour were to be the chief source of inspiration for the calm space that was subsequently created.

Shaun, one of three partners in the new Johannesburg-based fabric house George Baker, also brought with him a love for one of the most iconic buildings of the modern movement, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion.

The pavilion, with its low roof, luxurious marble and lengthening travertine tiles, was destroyed a year after it was built in the 1920s, but was rebuilt in the 1980s. Its elegant tranquility has been ascribed to its lavish use of marble and glass in exquisitely simple lines, with a glassy pond adding to the mood.

Bryan has successfully created a similar serenity in Shaun's unobtrusive marble, glass and concrete home. In substance, the house is as compact as an apartment. But it lives lightly, with the rectangular living area sitting gently between a long black swimming pool and a peaceful fishpond. When the doors are open, this room has Barcelona written all over it – it's as if the entire house becomes a cool verandah inviting the outside all the way in.

The Scic Italian kitchen is a cleverly concealed galley within this space and is another cool, unobtrusive area where everything is hidden behind clean white doors.

And while the living and dining furniture is minimal, the mood is a far cry from the harsh minimalism of the 1980s. Shaun worked with Greenside interior design firm, Mezzanine, and has made extensive use of his own fabrics. There are soft laundered linens in shades of grey on the ottoman, couches and even the flop-down sofa out on the verandah, while two armchairs are covered in an Asian-inspired fabric by Jim Thompson – an international brand imported by T&Co and stocked by George Baker in Johannesburg.

Shaun and his partner Mandy Griffiths have worked in the fabric industry for many years and launched George Baker Furnishing Fabrics and Wallcoverings in May. It's a brand they feel caters for a very specific need. "There's plenty of cheap fabric around, as well as some very expensive fabric. We have created something for the niche in between and the response has been fantastic," says Mandy. All the company's fabrics are imported, but they carry the George Baker label – and South African pricing. The look and feel of the range is very much in keeping with the style of Shaun's house: natural cottons, laundered linens and Italian cotton velvets in a neutral, low-sheen palette. The latest collection, for winter 2011, is a study in rich pewter and brown tweeds – with timeless,



modern styling that would sit comfortably in both classic and contemporary spaces.

These same muted tones are carried into the house's bedrooms and bathrooms. Built onto the eastern side of the house, the two bedrooms sit on top of each other, with floating oak stairs leading the way up. Interior woodwork, done by Marcus Pieterse of Make, adds warmth among all the marble and glass.

The exterior walls are coated in a tyrolean cement finish that will weather naturally. "I wanted to allow the building to weather in a poetic way in order to tie it to the site," says architect Bryan Dunstan, who also designed artist William Kentridge's downtown studio.

The clean interiors of the building are made possible by an enormous, but invisible, storage area beneath it. The house is built over an old swimming pool – and Bryan suggested turning that entire excavated space into a basement, making it possible for Shaun to live in authentically minimal style.

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- BD Studio Architects, 011 482 7942, [www.bdsa.co.za](http://www.bdsa.co.za)
- Make 011 614 9900, [www.makefurniture.co.za](http://www.makefurniture.co.za)
- Mezzanine 011 888 3986, [www.mezzanineinteriors.co.za](http://www.mezzanineinteriors.co.za)



**ABOVE** The elongated, clean lines of the house extend to both bathrooms. **RIGHT** Architect Bryan Dunstan placed the two bedrooms on top of each other to give the house a presence from the street, but the living area retreats peacefully into the back of the property.









**LEFT** When the doors are open, the living area, pool deck and garden become one. **ABOVE** The living room is furnished with couches and armchairs from Mezzanine, covered in George Baker fabrics. The enclosed fish pond, behind glass at the far end of the room, adds to the sense of calm.