

# CONDÉ NAST House & Garden

SOUTH AFRICA

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## DECORATORS AT HOME

Top trendsetters show us  
their signature style

*including*

CRAIG  
KAPLAN

ALFREDO  
PAREDES

JULIA  
TWIGG

HUBERT  
ZANDBERG

COOLEST  
PAINT  
COLOURS  
under the sun

## GARDENS

- Coastal Plant Paradise
- Focus on Trees

20 PAGES  
ECO  
DESIGN  
IDEAS





# Natural Evolution

SA-BORN DESIGNER HUBERT ZANDBERG'S GLAMOROUS AND ECLECTIC LONDON HOME IS A MASTER CLASS IN CONTEXT AND COMBINATION

TEXT JULIA FREEMANTLE  
PHOTOGRAPHS SIMON UPTON

Less is more is certainly not a dictum with which designer Hubert Zandberg is familiar. His London home is chock full in a thrilling where-to-look-first kind of way – an extravaganza of artefacts, art, curios and curiosities commanding every surface.

The house's history is almost as quirky as its contents, no doubt part of why it appealed to Zandberg, whose passion for the provenance of pieces has informed his singular style. Split over five levels, it was once the canal-keeper's house, the lower levels storing hay, horses and coaches. But, oddly enough, its most recent incarnation before the designer moved in was as a motorbike workshop. 'The house has been many different things, so it seemed to welcome all my disparate objects, and even invite them,' says Zandberg.

The designer's South African heritage is immediately apparent. 'It's a cliché but the truth is you can't grow up in the Karoo and not be affected by it. It's always prevalent in my work,' he says. For him it has two sides – the

**Designer Savvy**  
Designer Hubert Zandberg has displayed treasured artefacts in beautiful cabinets in the nightclub-style living room, lending the scene a subtle formality. He worked cleverly with colour to bring out the best in the space, off-black and mahogany walls offsetting the gold accents, and chose a wheat-coloured Cecco Beppe curtain fabric, available at Silk and Cotton Company, specifically for the way it filters light and animates the scene







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### Designer Savvy

The designer's taste in artworks spans a multitude of different media – but contemporary art is a particular focus. This, in contrast with the religious symbolism, makes a dynamic contrast basement. A wall-mounted hippo skull pops against the dark-blue wall flanked by cabinets containing shells, horns, quills and other black and white artefacts. BEDROOM Charcoal and black form the base of the master bedroom's palette, bright yellow lifting the scheme. On the wall, a graphic work by Diann Bauer adds colour and a Zulu skirt provides texture. A black folding screen was purposefully situated to block out light – a technique Zandberg uses to make artwork pop. The original Guido Mocafico snake photographs are so tactile they seem alive



bright Africa of gold sun and sand, and bold tribal colour, and its spare, monochromatic counterpart – sun-bleached bones, quills, horns.

Despite an affinity with the past, Zandberg is also about reconciling it with the present and his London life has given these long-held pieces a Eurocentric swing and new context which adds an element of edginess. 'I feel that by showing the artefacts and art not as separate concepts, it gives the effect relevance. My friend, designer Inca Waddell, described it as "Pitt Rivers Museum meets the Tate Modern",' he says.

Foremost a collector, then a designer, the 'higgledy ungallery' space, as he calls it, was found to house his collections rather than they being acquired to fill it. 'For some it may be

overwhelming but for me the dialogue of all these objects is actually strangely calming. It's a concept rather than clutter,' he says.

The dialogue is one of culture and colour, life and death, heritage and humour, and art. In curating the rooms, Zandberg found that pieces acquired further meaning, a process he finds fascinating. 'The spaces evolve organically and sometimes when I stand back and look at a scene again, I see symbolism I didn't ever intend, but that must have been in the back of my mind,' he muses. He's referring in particular to a tableau of objets in a guest-room, where a Madonna under a cloche sits alongside a toy army tank. 'The reference to religion and war isn't lost on me – it shows you how powerful the subconscious is,' he says. ▶





**Designer Savvy** Antlers, shells and taxidermy all contribute to the museum feel – Zandberg acquires many such pieces from antique markets

**LIVING ROOM** Striking artwork hangs on the walls. A minimal photograph by Edgar Martins (top left) lifts the scheme, while the dynamic pairing of a Pieter Hugo photograph and a Francis Bacon lithograph alongside an arrangement of tortoise shells displays Zandberg's wide range of interests. A geometric sculpture by Bruno Peinado serves as a shelf and divides the room

**GUEST ROOM** A flamingo stands next to a 1960s American Memphis-style desk

**STUDY** The study features a moody photograph by Anne Hardy







GOLD ACCENTS,  
MIDNIGHT-BLUE  
WALLS AND MOODY  
CONTEMPORARY ART  
GIVE IT THE MYSTIQUE  
OF A SEXY NIGHTCLUB  
RATHER THAN A RUN-OF-  
THE-MILL LIVING ROOM



In the master bedroom pops of yellow are an incongruous accent in a predominantly black space underpinned by religious symbolism and imagery that borders on the macabre – skulls, snakes, crucifixes. Zandberg's skill is in the mix – the colourful ikat cushions and overscaled pop art pulling it back from the edge.

Zandberg has also played on the idea of light and dark, with certain rooms engineered to function better as night-time spaces. The main reception room – trickily situated in that you enter it straight off the street – is almost a public space and so has been conceptualised as such.

'I decided that rather than fight the room's characteristics, I should hand it over to that purpose,' he says. The result is ultra-glamorous – gold accents, midnight-blue walls and moody

contemporary art give it the mystique of a sexy nightclub rather than a run-of-the-mill living room. Conversely, the study one floor down is a sunny, rustic, almost-safari-feeling space, whose savannah-inspired palette of browns and tan and a photograph by Anne Hardy of lush foliage are a door to another world. 'It's ethnic but also Modernist,' he says of the evocative space that sees a Brazilian rosewood desk nonchalantly paired with bunches of African beads and a tribal-pattern rug.

These seemingly effortless and yet complex combinations offer insight into Zandberg's world – a fascinating playground of challenging imagery, rich symbolism and charming, playful irreverence. ■ *Hubert Zandberg Interiors*  
☎ +44 208 962 2776; ✉ info@bzinteriors.com

### Designer Savvy

Mismatched pieces give the rooms depth **GUEST ROOM** A riot of colour, this room's bed was custom designed by Hubert Zandberg **DRESSING ROOM** Even here art features. The glass-fronted cabinets glazed to the designer's specifications quirkily house his clothes **LIVING ROOM** A Gaivota chair by Brazilian designer Ricardo Fasanella is a nod to Zandberg's appreciation of pieces from different origins. Artwork is displayed in a fresh way: propped up or hung in interesting combinations. He sources works from a variety of galleries, including Heidi Erdmann and Michael Stevenson in South Africa

