

CLOSE TO *nature*

A farmhouse-style home near the city provides the best of both worlds for the Kleu family

Although Pieter Mathews of Mathews & Associates Architects is known for commercial architecture such as bridges and stations, his diverse portfolio also includes high-end residential properties; more specifically a number of houses at Southdowns Residential Estate in Centurion, where the Kleu family lives. "I enjoy developing a local aesthetic and architectural vernacular, instead of simply copying European design," he says. Pieter also likes to introduce agricultural elements – for example a farm or 'shed' look – in urban spaces. This worked particularly well for the Kleus' house and was in keeping with the estate's strict rules and proximity to the Irene Dairy Farm. "I like the simplicity of the lines and the honesty behind these aesthetics," he continues.

As the family wanted a functional layout, passive design principles such as north-east facing bedrooms was the way to achieve this. "Janéne and Johan wanted a house that centred on the kitchen," says Pieter. The couple also asked for a visual connection between the TV room and the living room, so an



AT A GLANCE

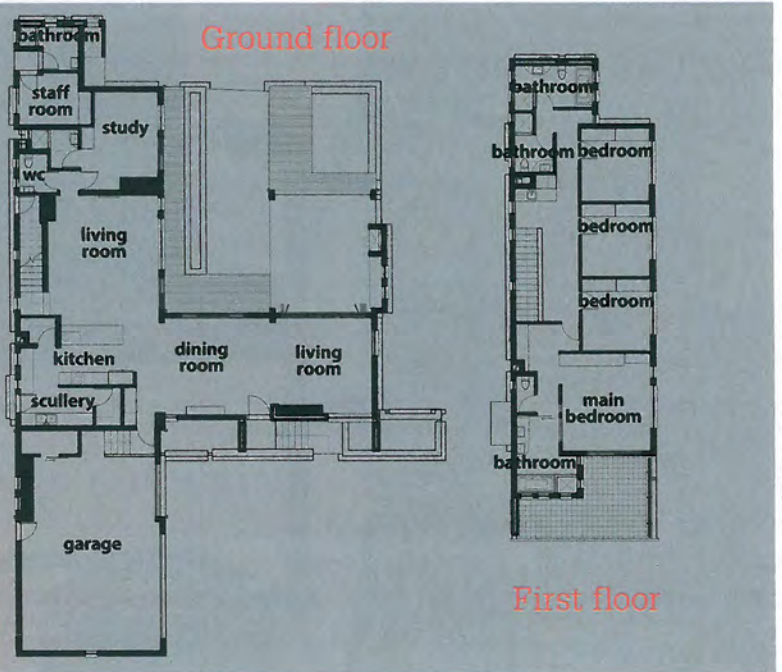
THE ARCHITECT: Pieter Mathews (pictured).

THE CLIENTS: Janéne and Johan Kleu, their children, Anrich, 7, Lisa, 6, and Wian, 4, and their Boston Terrier, Coco.

THE BRIEF: A modern home for a young family with small children. The design had to be functional, with no wasted space.

THE HOUSE: A double-storey four-bedroom house with an open-plan living area that opens up to the garden.





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open-plan layout was best. "My aim was to keep it simple so the design won't date," comments Pieter, who also planned certain spaces around the Kleus' existing furniture.

The newly built house features facebrick with plaster and aluminium. "The benefit of Pieter's design and choice of materials is that this house is cool in summer and warm in winter," explains Johan. "We also wanted our house to be as eco-friendly as possible and Pieter advised us on where to spend our money to make the most impact. We have a grey water system, gas and solar heating; we also insulated the floor and put in a slow-combustion fireplace," adds Johan.

The family wanted to be able to see the garden at all times, which is why Pieter opted for a glass front door and glass sliding doors all round. These were also much less expensive than stacking sliding doors, but still give the feeling of space, as the plants in the garden become exterior focal points. "I grew up on a farm in the Blyde River Canyon in Limpopo, so I wanted a home that's close to nature with a farm setting, and this home provides all this," says Janéne. **GH**

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