



The Villager

July • 2025

AGM: DEADLINE TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

Communication Link to Estate Management

Interior Décor Styles & Trends

Successful Online Home Schooling



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The Villager focuses on Irene Farm Villages. The magazine is distributed digitally to each resident on the estate. The magazine is co-ordinated and published by Estates in Africa (Pty) Ltd trading as EIA Publishing, on behalf of the Home Owners Association of Irene Farm Villages. The opinions of contributors and personnel of Estates in Africa (Pty) Ltd do not necessarily reflect those of the HOA of Irene Farm Villages.

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GoldClub Status recognises the highest levels of service excellence and outstanding sales success for which the Pam Golding Properties brand is renowned.

Thank you for your continued support and trust in making this accolade possible.

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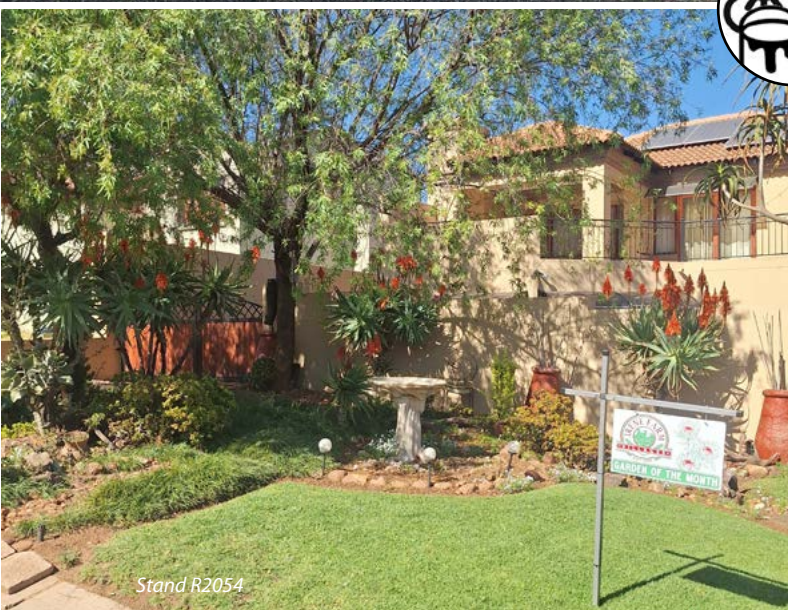
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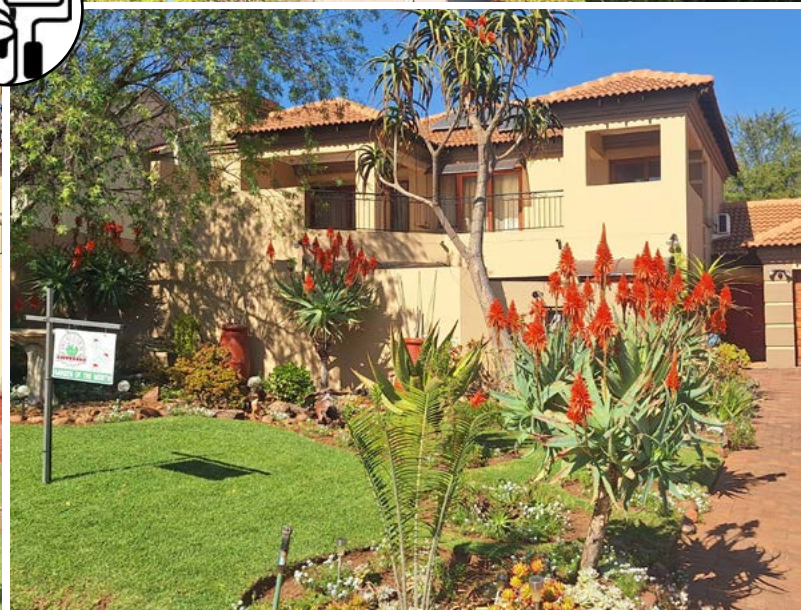
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Stand R2450



Stand R2054



Dear Residents,

As winter wraps our estate in its crisp embrace, we warmly welcome the season with exciting news and important community updates.

The HOA congratulates Stands 2054 and 2450 as the recipients of the Garden of the Month award.

Congratulations on a wonderful example of a Wildlife Garden — combining indigenous plants and exotic species to form a natural habitat for birds and other wildlife.

The Aloe arborescens (Krantz Aloe or Kransaalwyn) forms a magnificent sight when in flower. The Krantz Aloe is an attractive aloe with nectar-rich flowers that provide food for sunbirds in winter, as well as attracting insects

and thus other birds. It forms a beautiful background in the garden. The bird bath will also attract birds to the garden.

By combining a formal garden with clipped hedges and shrubs, such as Syzygium paniculatum (Brush Cherry plants), with an informal garden featuring Hemerocallis aurantiaca (Day Lily), the design blends structured, symmetrical lines with naturalistic, free-flowing elements to create a visually rich and harmonious landscape.

The wishing well forms a beautiful focal point in the middle of the garden, and the controlled planting of roses brings vibrant colour to the space.

Congratulations, and thank you



Anna-Mart Steyn

for your effort in making our estate beautiful.

Thank you to both families for their creativity and effort in making our estate bloom beautifully.

Spring Clean Boot Sale – Saturday 23rd August

A first for Irene Farm Villages Estate!

Clear out your home and join us for a fun boot sale event.

Save the date: Saturday, 23rd August from 08:30 – 12:00

Details will follow in the August edition of *The Villager*.

Post Boxes Renewal

All current post box holders must renew by **31 July 2025**.

Renewal Fee: **R250**

Email: **office@irenefarmvillages.co.za**

Use this address format:

PRIVATE BAG X1

IFV 0000 (ERF NO)

Pierre van Ryneveld

0045

New Estate Magnets

The office has delivered the new magnets – bigger is better – to each stand.

If you have not received one, kindly contact the office on **012 662 3505 x1** and we will ensure that you get one.

The telephone number – **066 008 8523** – is the number from which the estate sends the official WhatsApp messages. Please save it on your phone to ensure that you are on the list and receive messages.

The new magnets include the telephone number of the Duty Manager from the new security firm, Thorburn – **082 937 8391** – as well as other emergency contact numbers.

Communication Link to Estate Management

We are excited to launch a dedicated communication link for residents to submit:

- Information requests
- Maintenance issues
- Gate and access queries
- Noise complaints
- Dog or child-related concerns
- Registration requests
- Security matters
- Aesthetic queries
- Suggestions
- Compliments

Submit via: <https://forms.office.com/r/FKvjHu88qh>

You can also find the link:

- On the Irene Farm Villages Website under "Contact Us"
- Via the official WhatsApp group

Annual General Meeting 2025

As planning for the AGM begins, residents are invited to submit proposals for rule changes or new rules.

Email your fully drafted proposals to: **estatemanager@irenefarmvillages.co.za**

Deadline: 24th July 2025



IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOA

Country Living in the City

Office number: 012 662 3505

Estate Manager - Anna-Mart Steyn

066 008 8523

estatemanager@irenefarmvillages.co.za

Office e-mail addresses:

Administration: admin@irenefarmvillages.co.za

Contractors: office@irenefarmvillages.co.za

Reception: support@irenefarmvillages.co.za

Emergency Numbers:

Security Duty Manager 082 937 8391

JOC Emergency 079 528 1630

Fire - Tshwane 10177

Emergency Assistance 112

Managing Agent: Account Ability 082 780 0059

accounts@aams.co.za / info@aams.co.za

Bank details:

Irene Farm Villages HOA

Standard Bank

Acc no: 052 586 413

Branch: 012 645

Selling Your House

We have found that many residents are unaware of the process that should be followed according to the Irene Farm Villages Homeowners Association Rules and Regulations when selling a home.



Kindly find an extract from the Rules and Regulations:

4.8.2.2 Obligations of the HOA

The HOA must:

4.8.2.2.1 Issue Clearance Certificates within a reasonable period, provided that all requirements as mentioned in Rule 4.8.2.2.2 and all HOA Rules and Regulations issued by the HOA from time to time are met.

4.8.2.2.2 Requirements for issuing a Clearance Certificate:

- 4.8.2.2.2.1 No outstanding money is due by the member to the HOA
- 4.8.2.2.2.2 The Managing Agent

must be in possession of all the relevant contact details of the buyer

- 4.8.2.2.2.3 The buyer must have had a meeting with the Estate Manager and signed for receipt of the HOA MOI and Rules
- 4.8.2.2.2.4 The administration fee must be paid by the Estate Agent, as indicated in 7.6.1
- 4.8.2.2.2.5 The member's property must comply with the standing Architectural Guidelines to the satisfaction of the HOA
- 4.8.2.2.2.6 A copy of HOA and City of Tshwane approved building plans must be on file at the Estate Office. The member is responsible for supplying these.

If you are considering selling your house, please begin by ensuring that a copy of your HOA and City of Tshwane approved building plans is on file at

the estate office.

Facial Readers at the Turnstiles

For residents who use the turnstiles to enter or exit the estate, please visit the estate office to enrol your face on the facial recognition system.

Additional Office Hours

The estate office will now be open on the last Saturday of each month from 08:00 – 12:30, to assist residents unable to visit during the week.

The next open Saturday is 26th July.

Stay safe, stay warm, and thank you for your continued commitment to keeping Irene Farm Villages a beautiful and thriving community.

Warm regards,
Anna-Mart
Estate Manager

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police Emergency	10111
Lyttelton Police Station	012 644 8600
Pierre van Ryneveld Community Policing Forum	079 528 1630

Fire Emergency	10177
Medical Emergency	082 911

Main Gate Guardroom	012 662 3505
Security Duty Manager	082 937 8391
Controller	012 662 3505 Ext 3

Irene Farm Villages:	
Estate Office	012 662 3505
Estate Manager	066 008 8523

Managing Agent: Account Ability	
• Tel: 082 780 0059 • Fax: 086 671 9798 • info@aams.co.za	

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V O L V O

CHOOSE BEST DECK FOR CLASSIC OUTDOOR ELEGANCE

Stuart Martin, the founder and CEO of Best Deck, says creating spaces that feel like home, especially in the outdoors, has always been about more than good looks.

"People want beauty, but they also want peace of mind," he explains as he walks across the expansive poolside deck of a recently completed home in a luxury estate. "That's why our composite wood solutions are designed to look incredible and last for decades."

Now in its 10th year, Best Deck has become South Africa's leading name in composite wood innovation, providing and installing pool decks, pergolas and other items. Be it a contemporary entertainment deck or weather-resistant cladding you want, the focus for any project undertaken is on durability, design excellence and eco-conscious materials. This has made Best Deck a trusted partner in premium residential homes.

Set above a crystal-clear pool, the featured pergola in the installation pictured blurs the line between indoors and out. It's a serene, architectural retreat, a space designed for luxurious open-air living without compromise.

"This is what outdoor comfort should feel like," says Stuart. "You're immersed in the outdoors, but with all the refinement and shelter of an interior space."

Crafted from Best Deck's premium Diamond Range composite wood, the pergola exudes lasting elegance. Engineered to withstand South Africa's diverse climate, from intense sun to heavy rain, the material resists fading, cracking and splintering over time.

"It's the most advanced product on the market," explains Stuart. "Clients love the richness and texture, which captures the natural look of timber without any of the ongoing upkeep."

This poolside haven showcases Best



Image credit: Best Deck • Composite Wood

Deck's ability to transform outdoor areas into functional extensions of the home, ideal for entertaining, relaxing or simply enjoying the view.

"Our pergolas are not just shade structures," says Stuart. "They bring definition, sophistication and real architectural value to a space."

"You'll love how the parallel shadows cast by the pergola create a beguiling atmosphere over your living area as the sun moves across the universe, delivering a deep sense of serenity, luxury and belonging that lingers emotively with you."

By offering flawless installation and quality materials, Best Deck continues to set the benchmark for premium composite wood living. Products are guaranteed for up to 25 years.

Best Deck's reputation is built on quality and consistency. Not only does each product enhance the visual appeal of a home, it can also extend the home's usable living space, which is something estate homeowners particularly value.

"People are investing in outdoor lifestyles," says Stuart. "Our products help them make the most of it."

As demand grows for intelligent design and low-maintenance luxury, Best Deck continues to lead the way. From Gauteng to the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and beyond, discerning homeowners are discovering how premium composite wood can enhance everyday living with elegance, comfort and confidence.

Best Deck is there to make your outdoor dreams a reality, one perfect composite wood installation at a time.

BEST DECK. FOR LIFE.

Explore our full range online or visit our Midrand showroom:

www.bestdeck.co.za

Riversands Outlet Park, Midrand

Call: 010 500 2897

Email: info@bestdeck.co.za





IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Summary Income Statement – May 2025

May 2025

Year to Date

YTD Variance

Actual

Budget

Actual

Budget

Value

%

Operational Income						
Levy Income	1 504 303	1 504 303	4 449 510	4 449 509	1	0,0%
Other Income	54 853	40 500	199 524	121 500	78 024	64,2%
1 559 156	1 544 803	4 649 034	4 571 009	78 025	1,7%	
Operational Expenditure						
Professional /Administration	104 994	142 436	305 832	427 308	121 476	28,4%
Accounting and Auditing	52 926	57 117	150 301	171 351	21 050	12,3%
Insurance, Legal and Admin	52 068	85 319	155 531	255 957	100 426	39,2%
General Office	31 519	33 067	88 670	97 611	8 941	9,2%
Office Administration	31 519	33 067	88 670	97 611	8 941	9,2%
Operational Expenses	264 225	327 970	780 455	983 910	203 455	20,7%
Municipal Charges	68 087	72 499	235 682	217 497	(18 185)	-8,4%
General Operations	22 717	39 271	65 401	117 813	52 412	44,5%
Salaries & Wages	173 422	216 200	479 372	648 600	169 228	26,1%
Security	599 512	605 259	1 813 150	1 815 777	2 627	0,1%
Security Operations	111 509	108 565	366 141	325 695	(40 446)	-12,4%
Guarding Services	488 003	496 694	1 445 105	1 490 082	44 977	3,0%
Insurance Claims and Excess	0	0	1 905	0	(1 905)	100,0%
Repairs & Maintenance	263 207	275 123	757 885	825 369	67 484	8,2%
Repairs & Maintenance	262 694	268 811	752 417	806 433	54 016	6,7%
Park Maintenance Contract	514	6 312	5 467	18 936	13 469	71,1%
	1 263 457	1 383 855	3 745 992	4 149 975	403 983	9,7%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	295 699	160 948	903 042	421 034		
Non-Recurring Income	43 355	0	121 062	0	121 062	100,0%
Estate Penalties	29 800	0	78 550	0	78 550	100,0%
Speed Infringements (Net)	16 595	0	45 177	0	45 177	100,0%
Other Revenue	(3 040)	0	(2 665)	0	(2 665)	100,0%
Non-Recurring Expenses	0	635 000	70 156	955 000	884 844	92,7%
Net Positive/ (Negative)	43 355	(635 000)	50 906	(955 000)	(763 782)	
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	339 054	(474 052)	953 948	(533 966)		

"Wealth is not about having a lot of money; it's about having a lot of options."

– Chris Rock

Summary Income Statement by Account Ability

Office Address:

Sovereign Drive, Route 21 Corporate Park

Accounting Office Hours:

8:00 to 13:00 Monday to Friday

Office Tel: 082 780 0059

Accounts Email: accounts@aams.co.za

IFV Accounts: Winny Boshoff



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Experience

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Children
Welcomed Daily

Nurturing Children Who Know Their Worth

Imagine a world where every child grows up knowing, without a doubt, that they matter. That they are seen, heard, and cherished—not for what they achieve, but simply for who they are. As parents, isn't this our deepest hope? That our children grow with a strong sense of self, a heart full of kindness, and the confidence to embrace life with joy? At Dibber, this is the heart of what we do. We call it Heart Culture—a way of nurturing children that cultivates self-worth, deepens relationships, and builds a true sense of belonging.

From the moment a child takes their first steps into our learning spaces, they are encouraged to explore their “I”—their own unique identity. Who am I? What makes me feel happy, safe, and proud? What do I bring to the world? Every smile, every discovery, every shared moment adds to their growing understanding that they are important. Through play, storytelling, and meaningful conversations, they begin to understand their emotions, their strengths, and their heart treasures—their deepest values. They learn that their voice matters and that being true to themselves is something to celebrate. This self-acceptance becomes the foundation for resilience, emotional intelligence, and the courage to face life's challenges.

But self-discovery is just the beginning. As children grow, they step into the “You”—the people around them. They learn that just as they have dreams, fears, and feelings, so do their friends, family, and teachers. Through playful interactions, shared laughter, and small acts of kindness, they begin to see that relationships are built on trust, understanding, and care. They listen, they learn, they grow. They begin to appreciate both the things that make us similar and the beautiful differences that make each of us unique. They ask questions, they engage, and they start to see the world beyond themselves. These experiences shape children into thoughtful, compassionate individuals who not only understand others but care deeply for them.

Then, their world expands even further into the “We”—the understanding that they are part of something much greater than themselves. The community, the country, the world—they all become places where a child knows they

belong. They learn that their actions matter, that kindness ripples outward, and that even small hands can make a big difference. Through inclusive experiences, they explore different traditions, customs, and ways of living, realising that diversity is not something to fear but something to embrace. They don't just learn about the world; they become active participants in making it better. A child who has been nurtured in Heart Culture doesn't just grow up with knowledge; they grow up with a heart for the world.

At Dibber, we don't just teach children—we nurture them. We create spaces where they feel safe, seen, and celebrated. We guide them as they develop the social, emotional, and cognitive skills that will serve them for a lifetime. We empower them to be their truest selves while teaching them the joy of connection and community. Our learning environments act as a third teacher, inspiring curiosity, exploration, and discovery.

As parents, we want our children to be happy, kind, and confident. We want them to wake up each morning knowing they are loved and go to bed each night knowing they have made a difference. Heart Culture is the bridge between those hopes and reality. When children experience their own intrinsic value and recognise the worth of others, they step into life with empathy, confidence, and a desire to make the world better—not just for themselves, but for everyone around them.

This is what it means to raise children who are the heart of the world. And it starts with knowing, deep down, that they are already enough. Because a child who knows their worth today will change the world tomorrow.





MERCEDES-BENZ SA

Launches 7-Year PremiumDrive Plan

Mercedes-Benz South Africa elevates ownership experience with new 7-Year PremiumDrive Exclusive Care Plan

Mercedes-Benz South Africa has unveiled a bold enhancement to its after-sales offering with the introduction of PremiumDrive Exclusive Care – a comprehensive 7-year / 140,000km service and maintenance plan designed to bring unparalleled peace of mind to drivers of the iconic brand.

This latest offering marks a significant milestone in the brand's commitment to customer satisfaction, elevating the standard of care and convenience for new and existing owners across the range.

A new era of automotive confidence

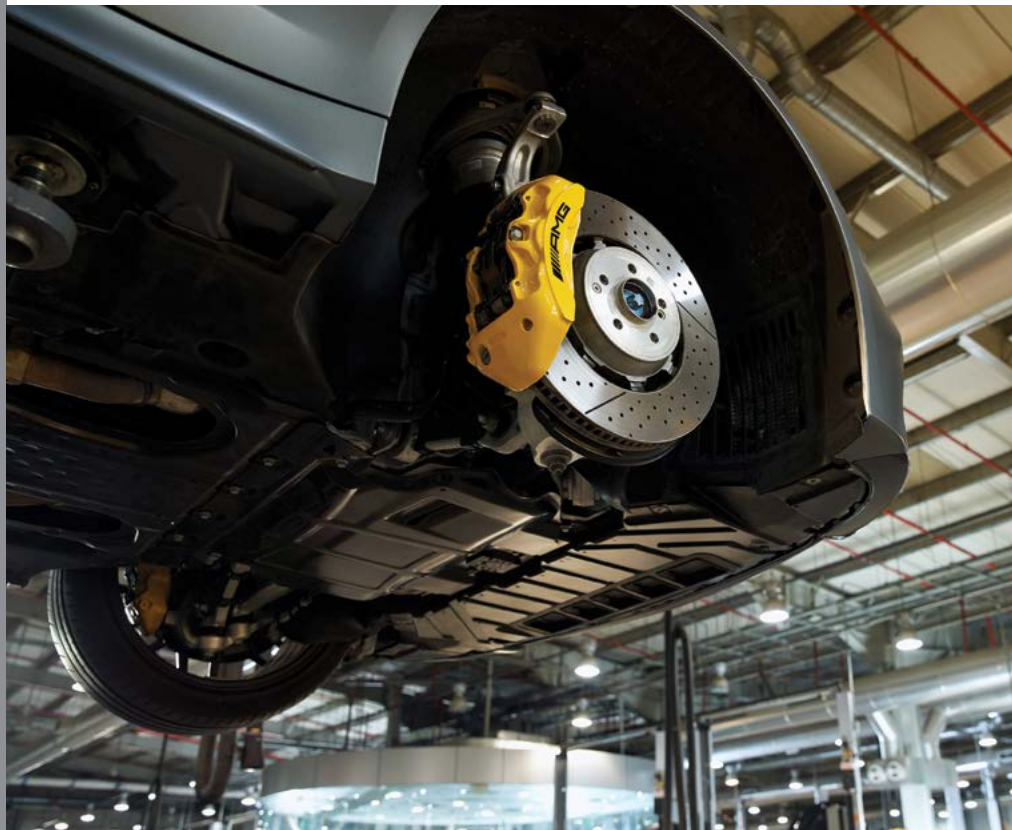
More than just a service plan, PremiumDrive Exclusive Care is positioned as a new era in service coverage. It's built to deliver not only long-term maintenance and repair coverage but also the confidence that every journey in a Mercedes-Benz is supported by world-class expertise and genuine parts.

"Mercedes-Benz is about more than just driving – it's about a feeling of trust and assurance that stays with you well beyond the road," said Claudius Steinhoff, Executive Director MBC and Co-CEO MBSA. "This new 7-year plan ensures your vehicle remains in peak condition while delivering unmatched peace of mind."

What's included in the PremiumDrive Exclusive Care Plan?

This all-inclusive service and maintenance plan covers essential repairs, scheduled services, and much more, carried out exclusively by authorised Mercedes-Benz technicians. Key benefits include:

- **24/7 Roadside assistance:** From flat batteries to lost keys, expert help is always available, anywhere, anytime.
- **Mobility services:** If your vehicle needs attention, Mercedes-Benz ensures your day doesn't miss a beat with alternative transport or a replacement vehicle.
- **Stand By Me Services:** Should you find yourself stranded in an unsafe situation, Mercedes-Benz will dispatch security to remain with you until help arrives.
- **Complimentary tyre and rim insurance:** Customers choosing the Exclusive Care plan will also benefit from added peace of mind with complimentary cover for tyre and rim repairs or replacements.



Additional option: PremiumDrive Comfort Care

For those seeking a more flexible solution, Mercedes-Benz South Africa also introduced a refined version of its popular 5-year plan: PremiumDrive Comfort Care. This version maintains robust service and maintenance support tailored to a shorter ownership horizon.

"Our focus is always on delivering relevance and reassurance in every moment," stated Alexandra Boavida, VP of Sales and Marketing, Mercedes-Benz South Africa. "The launch of this new 7-year plan reflects our vision to redefine luxury – not just in our vehicles, but in the care and experience we offer our customers."

Exciting offers to mark the launch

To celebrate the launch of PremiumDrive Exclusive Care, Mercedes-Benz South Africa is rolling out a series of exclusive deals across its vehicle range. Whether you're in the market for a sleek sedan, a sporty coupe, or a family-ready SUV, flexible financing options are also available to help make the dream of owning a Mercedes-Benz more accessible than ever.

"We are proud to offer our customers peace of mind through these new service and maintenance options," expressed Shania Govender, General Manager Customer Services and Technical Operations. "It's a commitment that goes beyond expectations and helps ensure every Mercedes-Benz stays as exceptional as the day it was delivered."

With PremiumDrive Exclusive Care, Mercedes-Benz South Africa sets a new benchmark in premium vehicle ownership, reinforcing its legacy of excellence and commitment to customer loyalty.

Visit the Mercedes-Benz South Africa website to explore current offers and learn more about the new service and maintenance plans.

www.mercedes-benz.co.za





*Complimentary Tyre and Rim cover by Mercedes-Benz Financial Services (Pty) Ltd, an Authorised Financial Services Provider (FSP18604).

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DOMESTIC WORKER

Josephin is a hardworking, efficient, dependable, and trustworthy domestic worker seeking employment on Mondays and Wednesdays within the estate. She has been working for me for the past three years and is fluent in both English and Afrikaans (written and spoken). With a positive attitude and a proactive approach, Josephin consistently takes the initiative to go above and beyond, ensuring that every task is completed to the highest standard. If you're looking for a dedicated and capable domestic worker, please WhatsApp me at Heike (083 399 3239), and I will return your call, or you can reach out to Josephin directly at 079 515 3976.

Josephine, my loyal domestic worker of many years, has Mondays and Wednesdays available, if you are looking to employ someone, I can highly recommend her. Josephine can be contacted on 079 515 3976 or contact Suzanne for a reference on 084 250 4317.

Our domestic nanny Shiellah is an experienced, loving, and reliable woman with a passion for creating a positive and nurturing environment for children. Her housekeeping is excellent and she is a hard worker. She specialises in offering safe, fun, and engaging care, and is looking for work on a Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. She has 5+ years of hands-on experience; CPR and First Aid certified; honest; good references available upon request and comfortable with pets. Please contact Christelle 071 1690388 to get in touch with Sheillah.

Anyone looking for excellent domestic servants please call Tanya on 082 578 2619. I have the names of two very loyal, honest and great workers. They are both currently working for me.

Zodwa Maelola has been working for me for several years and I appreciate her as trustworthy, reliable, hardworking and diligent. She is already registered on your database for the access control system in Irene Farm Villages. If you would like Zodwa to work for you, contact her on 071 100 4549 or me, Nico on 076 413 2356.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

GENERAL SERVICES

DESIGNER WATER: Alkaline water pH10. 330ml R240 x 24; 500ml R264 x 24; 750ml R192 x 12; 1ltr R192 x 12; 5ltr R200 x 4; 10ltr R80 x 1. Please call 082 662 4084.

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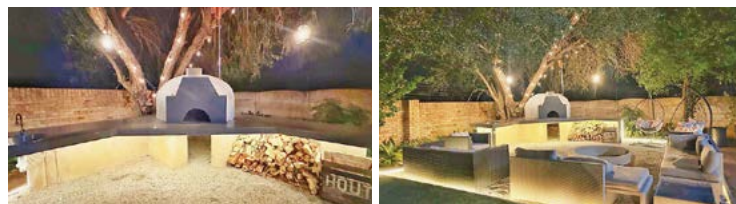
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Discover Exceptional Design at the **MAVROMAC & GATEHOUSE** Annual Sale – July 2025



Mark your calendars for one of the most anticipated events in South Africa's interior design calendar! The Mavromac & Gatehouse Annual Sale returns this July, promising design lovers and industry insiders a three-day celebration of style, craftsmanship, and incredible value.

Save the date

Join us from **Thursday, 24 July to Saturday, 26 July** at our Kramerville showrooms in Johannesburg for a curated design experience. Whether you're refreshing a home, retail space, or professional setting, this is your opportunity to shop signature pieces at reduced prices.

An exclusive design showcase

From luxurious textiles and sophisticated wallpapers to statement lighting, soft furnishings, mirrors, and furniture – our showrooms will be brimming with beautifully crafted pieces. Our knowledgeable team will be on hand throughout to provide guidance, recommendations, and styling tips tailored to your vision.

Your space, your style – for less

Enjoy exceptional savings on timeless Mavromac & Gatehouse collections. This is the perfect moment to source that standout item or complete a project with finishes that elevate your space.





Final day: Saturday, 26 July at 2pm

Make sure to stop by before the curtain falls. Opportunities like this don't come around often – exceptional quality, thoughtful design, and remarkable prices all in one place.

Stay connected with us on social media for updates. We can't wait to welcome you.



A buzzing design destination

The atmosphere is always vibrant, with designers, decorators, and style aficionados sharing in the thrill of discovery. Come for the finds – stay for the inspiration.

Come prepared

Those who know, arrive early and bring their lists! With so much to see, planning ahead will help you make the most of this limited-time event.



HOW TO SET UP A PRACTICAL WORKSPACE AT HOME

The hybrid work week has become entrenched, creating the need for a functional home office

One of the most exciting home office trends is the continual rise of biophilic design. The term 'biophilic' is defined as "an architectural and interior design approach that integrates nature into the built environment to enhance human wellbeing and connection with the natural world".

It incorporates natural elements like plants, sunlight and organic materials into workspace design. Consider placing a few easy-to-care-for plants on the desk or near a window to bring life and freshness into the room. Add wooden or stone accents to maintain the nature theme while creating a serene environment that fosters both calm and creativity.

Smart technology is set to redefine home office design. Examples include having a desk that automatically adjusts to your preferred height, or installing lighting that lifts the colour temperature based on the time of day. Voice-controlled devices can manage everything from your calendar to your coffee maker, ensuring that your day runs smoothly.

Spending long hours at the desk



20 • July 2025 • The Villager





calls for furniture that supports your body's needs. Ergonomic chairs with lumbar support and adjustable desks are essential elements of home office design. Choose chairs that align with your spine's natural curve and desks that can switch between sitting and standing modes. Accessories like footrests and monitor stands can further optimise your setup, ensuring that your workspace is as comfortable as it is functional.

A minimalist approach is central to home office design. Clean lines, neutral colour palettes and uncluttered surfaces help create a serene environment that allows you to focus on your work. Opt for sleek, simple furniture that serves a purpose, like a minimal Zen home office makeover.

Keep decorative items to a minimum – a single piece of statement art or a few carefully chosen desk accessories will do. This not only enhances aesthetic appeal, but also promotes a clearer, more focused mindset.

Creating an effective home office requires more than just a desk and chair. You need a comfortable, ambient space where you can concentrate and be productive – a space that promotes wellbeing. So, you need to set up a home office that is personalised and thoughtfully organised. Here are some basics to bear in mind:

Home office design prioritises light and air

Numerous studies show that natural light elevates your mood and sleep quality and improves your productivity. Be sure to position your home office near a window, so you're exposed to natural light and air. Indeed, the occasional window opening lets fresh air enter the space, so you enjoy both a comfortable atmosphere and an energising environment.

If you don't have access to a window while working, you can achieve natural light effects by using full-spectrum artificial lighting devices. An air purifier can enhance air quality and provides the most benefit when used in confined areas.

Sensory touches

A personalised home office creates an environment where you feel comfortable and ensures a stronger connection to your workspace, which helps drive mental performance and work motivation. Workplace inspiration emerges through adding personal artwork along with vision boards and meaningful items that create an inviting environment. Incorporating these personal elements will also keep you focused on the job at hand.

As mentioned above, colour is

crucial when it comes to space design. Using soft blues or greens and neutral tones will establish a peaceful work environment that helps you concentrate better and reduces eye fatigue, particularly when you're spending extended time working.

The sensory experience of your home office goes beyond visual design elements. You need to position your light sources strategically to help prevent eye fatigue and maintain your concentration when working late. Background music, along with nature sounds at low volume, can also help create a soothing atmosphere.

For those who prefer to work in silence, it's best to set up your home office in a separate space or a secluded corner away from the main household activity areas. You may need to install thick rugs and heavy curtains, or even acoustic panels, to reduce noise.

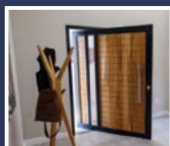
Scent diffusers with mild fragrances that include lavender, along with citrus, provide a comforting touch to the overall environment. A home office integration plan that balances workplace professionalism with comfort will generate an environment that enhances your productivity and your job satisfaction.

Sources: www.decorilla.com www.focusmagazine.co.nz





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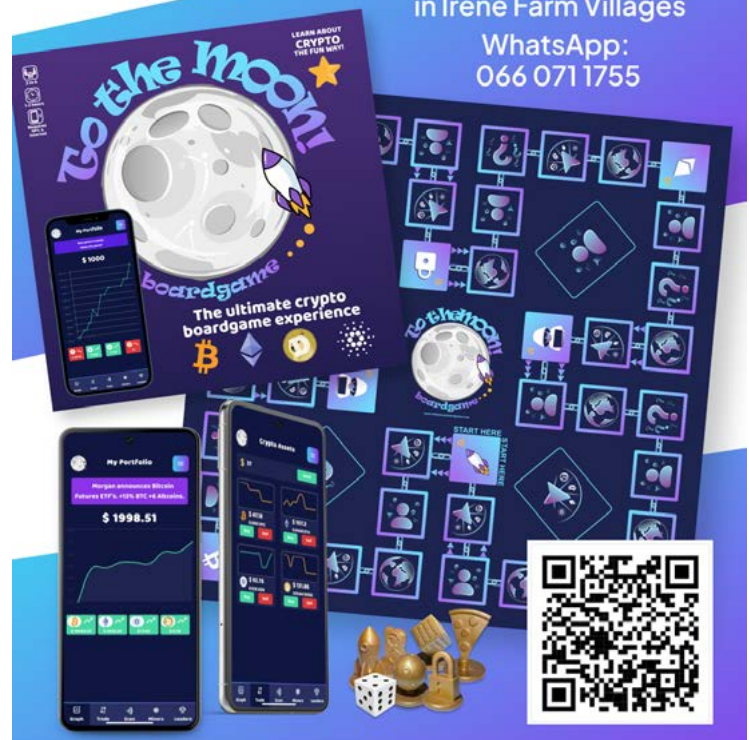
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The Girl with the Suitcase

BY LESLEY PEARSE

When Mary meets a glamorous stranger named Elizabeth, she realises their lives couldn't be more different. Elizabeth is beautiful and charming, about to set off on a dazzling adventure to Ireland, where she's inherited a grand house. Mary, shy and meek, has nothing to look forward to but the dreary life of a maid in Hampstead.

But when an air raid forces them to take shelter underground, Mary's life is suddenly changed forever. After waking up in the hospital, injured but alive, the nurse mistakes her for Elizabeth and hands over her suitcase with Elizabeth's money and tickets to Ireland inside.

This is Mary's chance to escape the hardship of her life and start afresh.

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The Warrior

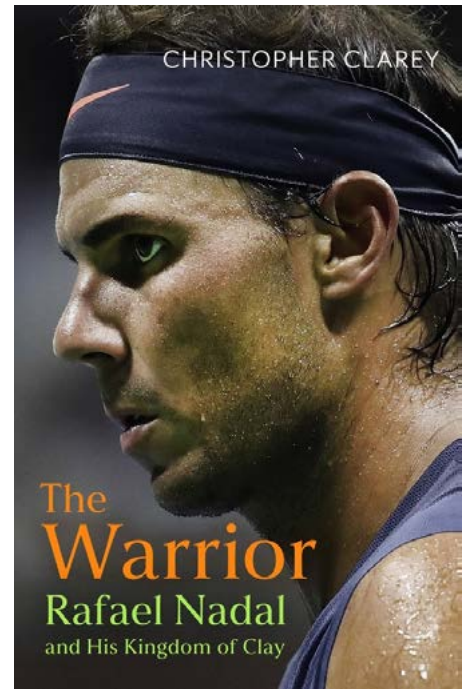
BY CHRISTOPHER CLAREY

An intimate, original biography of tennis legend Rafael Nadal, and the first to cover his entire career.

After his award-winning look at Roger Federer, Christopher Clarey, one of the world's pre-eminent tennis writers, focuses his lens on Nadal, the Spanish force of nature. When he arrived on the scene in 2005, the record for men's singles titles at the French Open stood at six. Nadal more than doubled that total to a mind-blowing fourteen titles: one of the greatest sporting achievements in history.

Nadal won big and won often on all of tennis's surfaces: securing two Wimbledon titles on grass and six on the US Open and Australian Open hard courts. But clay, the grittiest of the game's playgrounds, is where it all came together best for his whipping forehand and warrior mindset.

Clarey, who has covered Nadal since he was seventeen, draws on



interviews over twenty years with Nadal, his team and rivals like Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic. Brimming with behind-the-scenes insight, *The Warrior* tells the story of a global sporting icon, interlacing man and place in a unique, must-read account of the evolution of excellence.

Price: R485.00

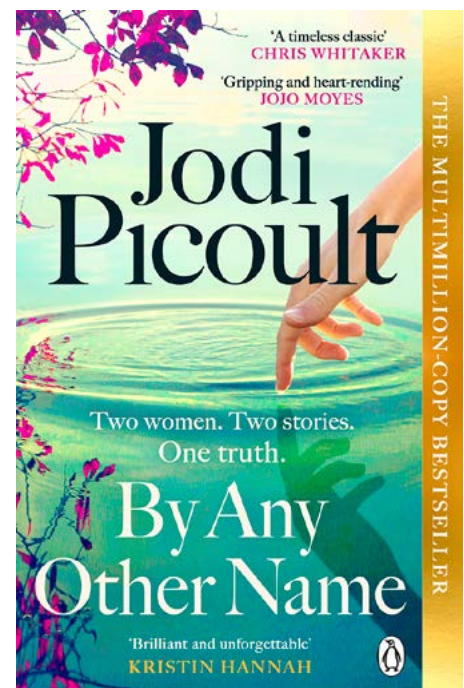
By Any Other Name

BY JODI PICOULT

Emilia Bassano is allowed no voice of her own but finds a way to secretly bring her work to the stage. Yet by paying a man for the use of his name, she will write her own out of history. His name? William Shakespeare.

Present-day Manhattan. Young playwright Melina Green is determined to see one of her shows make the stage, but it appears a woman's voice is still worth less than a man's. So inspired by the life of her ancestor Emilia Bassano, she takes a lesson from history and submits a play under a male pseudonym...

Women have long been written out of history, but have they held the pen all along?



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SUCCESSFUL ONLINE HOME SCHOOLING

Online home schooling offers a wealth of opportunities for learning, but it also comes with specific requirements. With the constant barrage of digital distractions, maintaining focus can be a daunting task. However, there is a secret ingredient that can transform the online home schooling experience: presence. Being fully engaged, attentive and intentional in learning is the key to unlocking success, according to an education expert.

"Presence matters for several reasons. When students are fully present, they absorb and retain information more effectively. Active participation in discussions elevates understanding from superficial to profound, fostering a deeper connection with the material and leading to better academic outcomes," says Jo-Anne Buchner, Cambridge International Principal of Evolve Online School, a brand of Africa's leading private education provider, ADvTECH.

She adds that presence acts as a shield against stress, enhancing motivation and creating a structured yet engaging approach to learning. This environment encourages creativity and innovation, which are crucial for long-term success.

Cultivating presence also teaches students discipline and accountability - essential skills for academic and personal growth. It improves time management and study habits, equipping students with the tools they need to navigate complex learning environments. To achieve this, setting up a distraction-free space is vital. Creating a dedicated learning area with a stable internet connection, free from distractions like phones and TVs, becomes a fortress of focus where students can concentrate without interruptions.

She says parents should encourage their children to actively engage

in virtual classes. Practical tips for maintaining engagement and presence include the following:

- **Look at the camera:** When you're speaking or listening, try to look directly at the camera. It helps the teacher know you're paying attention.
- **Show interest:** Use facial expressions as appropriate and make eye contact.
- **Sit up straight:** Keep your back straight and sit comfortably in your chair. It helps you stay focused.
- **Keep your environment tidy:** Make sure the background is clean and neat. It is less distracting for yourself, the teacher, and peers in the class.
- **Dress neatly:** Prepare for your day as you would if you had gone to a physical school. Don't be tempted to stay in your pyjamas all day.
- **Use headphones:** If you have headphones, wear them to help you hear better and block out other noises.
- **Stay away from distractions:** Try not to play with toys or look at other screens during class. Stay focused on what the teacher is saying.
- **Be ready to share:** If you have something to say, be ready to share it. Raise your hand or use the chat to let the teacher know you want to speak.

"Staying mentally present during lessons maximises learning, and designating specific study hours makes study time a focused and meaningful experience. Regularly assessing what strategies help maintain focus and adjusting study routines accordingly is also important. Flexibility is key to finding the right balance and maintaining engagement," Buchner says.

She says the long-term benefits of cultivating presence in online home schooling are profound. "It leads to higher academic achievement, improved social and emotional skills, increased confidence and motivation, and a lifelong love for learning. By minimising distractions and staying focused, students can transform their learning experience from mundane to magical."

ABOUT ADvTECH

The ADvTECH Group, a JSE-listed company, is Africa's leading private education provider and a continental leader in quality education, training, skills development and placement services. ADvTECH's Schools division comprises ten brands with 119 schools across South Africa and internationally, including Botswana, Kenya and Ethiopia.

Information supplied by Meropa on behalf of ADvTECH Group.
Photos: Freepik



"Presence matters for several reasons. When students are fully present, they absorb and retain information more effectively. Active participation in discussions elevates understanding from superficial to profound, fostering a deeper connection with the material and leading to better academic outcomes."

JO-ANNE BUCHNER,



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