



The Villager

Jan / Feb • 2026



**ESTATE OFFICE OPEN
31 JANUARY 2026**

Why solar makes sense in Estates

Namibia: Where time holds its breath

Why renting can be a smart financial move

BREAK-TIME HITS A BIT DIFFERENT

Enrol with Evolve Online School.
Grades R-12(AS)



ADTECH
GROUP

jeb
assessment matters

 Cambridge Assessment
International Education
Cambridge International School

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.

Publisher/Editor

Nico Maritz
nico@eiapublishing.co.za

Editorial contribution

Nicole Hermanson and Karyn Richards

Marketing & National Sales Manager

Martin Fourie 072 835 8405
martin@eiapublishing.co.za
Office: 012 997 2712

Senior Sales Executive

Gerdie Murphy 082 556 9863
gerdie@eiapublishing.co.za

Production Co-ordinator

Chris Grant
chris@eiapublishing.co.za

Graphic Design

Diane van Noort
d2vn@mweb.co.za

ESTATES IN AFRICA (PTY) LTD HEAD OFFICE:

32 Fricker Road, Illovo, Johannesburg
www.eiapublishing.co.za

Deadline for Advertising in the February 2026 edition:
23 January 2026



Photo by Aamir Suhail on unsplash

Contents

Message from the Estate Office	3
Emergency Numbers	4
Important Contact Numbers	5
Financials	8
Driven to Evolve	10
Why Solar makes sense in Estates	12
Smalls and Irene Service Providers	14
Borrowed Light – André de Ruyter on the cost of delay, cautious optimism and the race for rational power	15
Namibia: Where time holds its breath	18
Autism & ADHD in Girls: The quiet ones we keep missing	20
Why renting can be a smart financial move	22
Wildlife artist in bronze – Bernie van der Vyver	24



NEWLY LAUNCHED SAXON SPA STEYN CITY



Enjoy signature treatments and packages, bespoke massages, facials, and therapies with our exclusive product collection.

Complete your escape with an overnight stay at Steyn City Hotel by Saxon and experience the luxury of the prestigious Steyn City estate.

Win a signature treatment by scanning the below QR code and entering your details.



Contact Details:

T: 087 375 7777
E: spa@saxon.co.za
W: www.saxon.co.za

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge an outstanding professional and valued member of our community – Peter Varrie. We recently purchased a home through Peter, and the experience was exceptional. The process was seamless, completed in just over three weeks, and handled with professionalism and integrity throughout. Peter's attention to detail and balanced representation truly set him apart. We highly recommend him to anyone seeking a trustworthy, results-driven real estate professional.

- Candace Erasmus

Please get in touch with me for a complimentary market evaluation.

Peter Varrie | +27 82 457 7416
peter.varrie@pamgolding.co.za
Registered with the PPRA – Full Status FFC

Dear Residents,

As 2026 gets underway, we would like to wish all residents well for the year ahead.

With schools and tertiary institutions reopening, the estate settles back into its familiar rhythm. Early mornings, renewed routines and fresh beginnings return to our streets and shared spaces.

We extend our best wishes to all learners and students in our community, particularly those reaching important milestones this year. This includes our Grade 1 learners starting school for the first time, Grade 8 learners transitioning into high school, matriculants entering their final year, and students beginning or continuing their studies at universities and colleges. We wish you a focused, steady and rewarding year ahead.

Donations for security and garden services

Thank you to all residents who generously donated towards our garden workers and security staff at the end of 2025.

Your support was sincerely appreciated, and the staff expressed their gratitude for both the donations received and the positive sentiment shown towards them. We thank you for recognising their ongoing commitment and the role they play in maintaining the estate on a daily basis.



Important notice: ClickOn security panel call numbers

Residents are advised that the following telephone numbers are the official ClickOn Security Panel numbers from which security officers will contact residents:

South Gate: 060 528 8660

North Gate: 079 501 5031



Anna-Mart Steyn

Please save these numbers on your cell phone so that they are easily recognisable when security calls.

These numbers are for outgoing calls only and should not be used to contact security.

Security contact number for emergencies and assistance:

082 937 8391

Registration of domestics, gardeners, au pairs and drivers

The current registration for domestic workers, gardeners, au pairs and drivers will expire on 28 February 2026.

To ensure uninterrupted access, residents are requested to complete the annual registration process before this date.

Only the following documents will be accepted for registration:

- A valid South African ID document or card
 - A valid passport
- Registrations can be completed in one of the following ways:
- Online via the link below
 - Annual Registration of Domestic Worker / Gardener / Au Pair / Driver – Fill in form
 - In person at the Estate Office

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that estate access records remain accurate and up to date.



Board of Directors

The current Board of Directors serving the estate is as follows:

- **Christiaan Oldewage** – Chairperson and Finance
- **Elna Hirschfeld** – Vice Chairperson, Human Resources, Property Management and Aesthetics
- **Johalet Jonker** – Communication and Resident Relations
- **Howard Jones** – Infrastructure
- **Pierre Myburg** – Digital Infrastructure and Security
- **Dorah Modise** – Social Engagement and Recreation, Environmental Management
- **Anisa Kessery** – Legal and Governance

A short profile of each Director will be shared in the February residents' article, providing an opportunity to get to know the team in more detail.

We thank the Directors for their continued contribution and commitment to the estate, and residents for their ongoing support.

ClickOn visitor access codes

Following recent queries handled at the Estate Office, residents are reminded of the process for visitor access using the ClickOn system.

Residents are required to create a visitor access code on the ClickOn system and send it to the visitor before arrival.

Upon arrival at the gate, the visitor enters the code into the ClickOn panel. A new access code is automatically generated and printed on a slip, which is handed to the visitor.

This newly generated code must be



used to both enter and exit the estate.

Residents will receive a notification confirming the visitor's entry, including the new access code and the driver's details.

Please note that if a visitor arrives via Uber, the system will record the driver's details rather than the visitor's.

Any queries or concerns regarding visitor access codes should be directed to the Estate Office for investigation.

HOA rules: garden maintenance

Residents are reminded that the Estate Rules are in place to protect the comfort, appearance and well-being of the community.

Regular inspections are conducted to ensure compliance, and any instances of non-compliance will be followed up on accordingly. Your cooperation is appreciated as we work together to maintain the estate's overall standard.



In terms of garden maintenance:

4.5.1 GARDEN

4.5.1.1. Each member must maintain his stand in a clean, tidy and sightly condition to the satisfaction of the HOA.



4.5.1.2. Members must maintain a high standard of garden frontage and pavement management. Individual stands must be maintained and each member is responsible for such.

4.5.1.3. No member may permit the growth of noxious weeds or vegetation upon his stand or on any other part of the Property.

4.5.1.4. Members are responsible for maintaining trees, plants and shrubs planted on their pavements by the HOA.

The HOA staff will commence with the regular inspections relating to gardens from

Monday the 19th of January.

Garden inspections will commence from Monday, 19 January.

Estate office open on Saturday

The Estate Office will be open on Saturday, 31 January, from 08:00 to 12:30, for registrations and administrative enquiries.



As the year begins, we thank residents for their continued cooperation and contribution to making the estate a safe, orderly and welcoming place to live.

We look forward to working together throughout 2026 to maintain the standards and shared values of our community.

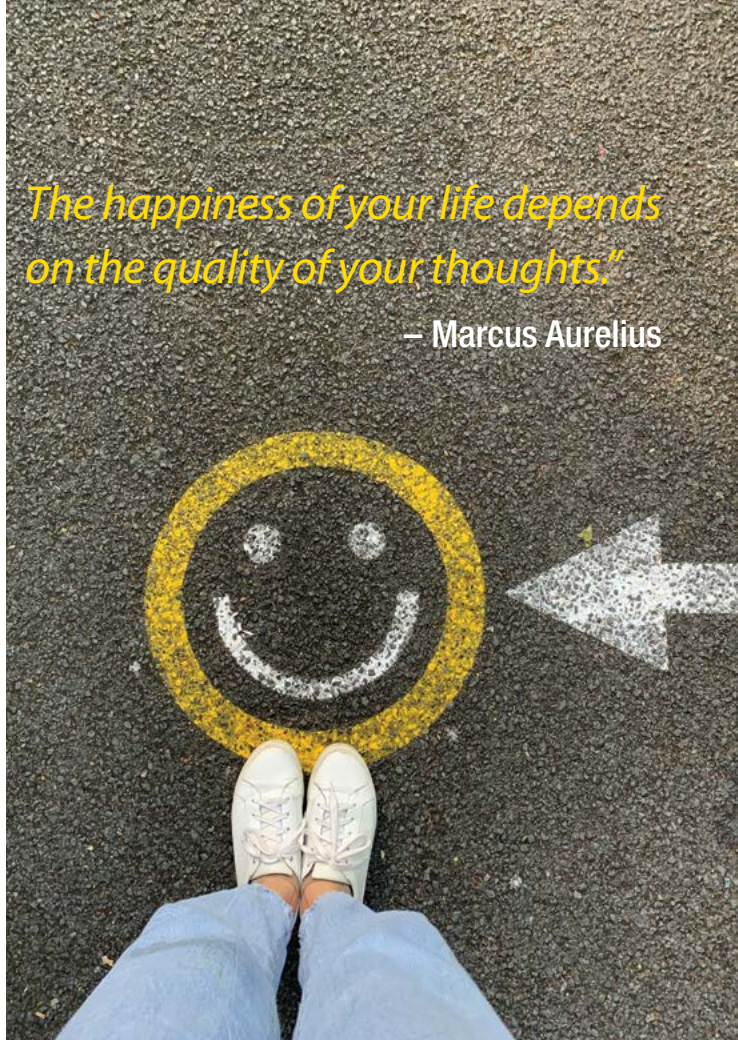
Kind regards

Anna-Mart

Estate Manager

The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts."

– Marcus Aurelius



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	

Intercare Irene Medical & Dental Centre

Diabetes in children.
Do you know the symptoms?
Book a check-up for your child.

Tel: 012 685 5500

Book Online



Southdowns Shopping Centre
Corner John Vorster Drive &
Karee Street
Irene



www.intercare.co.za

[p](#) [in](#) [@](#) [f](#) [v](#)

We Are Serving

**your favourite caffè of happiness at
Southdowns Shopping Centre.**





PORSCHE

Pre-owned? More like pre-loved.

PORSCHE APPROVED. REIGNITED BY PASSION.

In order to provide you with an exceptional ownership experience, we guarantee:

- Vehicles are offered with a Pre-owned Plan Maintenance Agreement® at no cost, subject to terms and conditions
- Each vehicle is checked using a comprehensive 111-point checklist
- Any repairs carried out are in line with the strict Porsche quality criteria
- Vehicles meet the Porsche safety and reliability standards
- Includes 24 hour Porsche Roadside Assist



Porsche Centre Johannesburg

Corner Witkoppen and
Wroxham Road,
Paulshof
Telephone 011 540 5000
www.porschejohannesburg.com

Porsche Centre Cape Town

Cnr Century Avenue and
Summer Greens Drive,
Century City
Telephone 021 555 6800
www.porshecaptown.com

Porsche Centre Umhlanga

49 Meridian Drive,
Umhlanga Ridge Town Centre,
Umhlanga Ridge
Telephone 031 514 3000
www.porscheumhlanga.com

Porsche Centre Pretoria

452 Botterklapper Street,
Off Lynnwood Road,
The Willows
Telephone 012 816 7600
www.porshepretoria.com



2013 – 911 Carrera S PDK

Including Maintenance Plan,
81,000 km, Platinum Silver Metallic, Black Leather,
R1 195 000



2018 – 911 Carrera S PDK

Including Maintenance Plan,
40,000 km, Rhodium Silver Metallic,
Black Partial Leather, R1 735 000



2025 – 911 Carrera T Manual

Including Maintenance Plan,
3,800 km, Jet Black Metallic,
Sport-Tex Interior Package, R2 945 000



2024 – 911 Carrera GTS PDK (Aerokit)

Including Maintenance Plan,
1,900 km, Carmine Red, Black Leather,
R3 350 000



2017 – Panamera Turbo PDK

Including Maintenance Plan,
77,100 km, Jet Black Metallic,
Saddle & Luxor Beige Leather, R1 475 000



2021 – Macan PDK

Including Maintenance Plan,
16,400 km, White, Black Leather,
R1 225 000



2025 – Cayenne Coupé Tiptronic

Including Maintenance Plan,
2,000 km, Carrara White Metallic,
Black Partial Leather, R2 225 000



2024 – Cayenne S Tiptronic

Including Maintenance Plan,
19,100 km, Algarve Blue Metallic,
Black & Beige Leather, R2 395 000



2022 – Cayenne Turbo GT

Including Maintenance Plan,
35,300 km, Artic Grey,
GT Interior Package in Neodyme, R3 445 000



IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Summary Operational Income Statement – YTD December 2025

	December 2025		Year to Date		YTD Variance	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Value	%
Operational Income						
Levy Income	1 504 303	1 504 303	14 979 633	14 979 630	3	0,0%
Other Income	81 031	40 500	656 100	405 000	251 100	62,0%
	1 585 335	1 544 803	15 635 733	15 384 630	251 103	1,6%
Operational Expenditure						
Professional /Administration	122 089	143 986	1 402 861	1 447 460	44 599	3,1%
Accounting and Auditing	50 614	57 117	590 858	571 170	(19 688)	-3,4%
Insurance, Legal and Admin	71 474	86 869	812 003	876 290	64 287	7,3%
General Office	21 248	33 067	290 592	329 080	38 488	11,7%
Office Administration	21 248	33 067	290 592	329 080	38 488	11,7%
Operational Expenses	535 039	541 594	3 168 611	3 511 444	342 833	9,8%
Municipal Charges	107 841	76 123	751 135	746 734	(4 401)	-0,6%
General Operations	110 477	39 271	433 325	392 710	(40 615)	-10,3%
Salaries & Wages	316 721	426 200	1 984 150	2 372 000	387 850	16,4%
Security	563 304	605 259	6 269 853	6 052 590	(217 263)	-3,6%
Security Operations	88 879	108 565	1 293 339	1 085 650	(207 689)	-19,1%
Guarding Services	474 426	496 694	4 889 596	4 966 940	77 344	1,6%
Insurance Claims and Excess	0	0	86 918	0	(86 918)	100,0%
Repairs & Maintenance	220 005	275 123	2 585 073	2 751 230	166 157	6,0%
Repairs & Maintenance	219 425	268 811	2 569 765	2 688 110	118 345	4,4%
Park Maintenance Contract	580	6 312	15 308	63 120	47 812	75,7%
	1 461 684	1 599 029	13 716 989	14 091 804	374 815	2,7%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	123 650	(54 226)	1 918 743	1 292 826		
Non-Recurring Income	59 893	0	303 527	0	303 527	100,0%
Estate Penalties	1 975	0	63 450	0	63 450	100,0%
Speed Infringements (Net)	18 563	0	187 753	0	187 753	100,0%
Other Revenue	39 355	0	52 324	0	52 324	100,0%
Non-Recurring Expenses	35 156	0	331 487	1 570 000	1 238 513	78,9%
Net Positive/ (Negative)	24 736	0	(27 959)	(1 570 000)	(934 986)	
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	148 386	(54 226)	1 890 784	(277 174)		

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



FOR TEENS THAT
MARCH TO THEIR
OWN BEAT

OPEN DAY

SATURDAY, 31 JANUARY
09H00 - 11H00

Grades 8 - 12 | www.abbotts.co.za

 **abbotts**
HIGH SCHOOL

CENTURION | NORTHCLIFF | JHB SOUTH | PRETORIA EAST | RONDEBOSCH



DRIVEN TO EVOLVE

To think that Changan is “just another” Chinese entrant into the local South African automotive landscape, could not be further from the truth. Changan arrives in South Africa with the quiet confidence of a brand that’s already been real-world tested and proven on a massive global scale. This is a manufacturer with serious staying power and enviable momentum.

In December 2025, Changan marked a significant milestone with the production of its 30 millionth vehicle, underscoring the depth of its engineering track record and the sheer breadth of its real-world ownership base.

But Changan’s story in South Africa isn’t only about global numbers, it’s about genuine local intent. The brand’s promise is simple and sharply relevant: to bring the cars of tomorrow to all South Africans today - delivering on value, safety, and next-level technology without pushing innovation into an unattainable territory. Changan leans into the reality of a market where buyers want their vehicles to make sense for real life, while still expecting modern connectivity, intelligent features, and

smart safety as standard.

A practical foundation backs Changan’s promise to South Africa because an incredible drive means nothing without support, after the sale. Changan’s local plan is built around a growing national dealer network, each fully equipped for sales, service, support, and parts supply.

Then there’s Changan Journey, the brand’s after-sales promise designed to make ownership feel less like a leap of faith and more like a guided, considered experience. It integrates customer-focused support, extensive vehicle warranties, service plans, and 24-hour roadside assistance, turning peace of mind into a guaranteed, non-negotiable benefit from day one.

To reinforce parts availability and reduce downtime, Changan has also established a major parts warehouse in Kempton Park, Johannesburg, built for fast national distribution.

But it’s the vehicle range where the brand’s capability really comes to life. Changan’s South African line-up is intentionally broad, covering models that offer everyday accessibility, family SUV flexibility, and exciting electric progress. Changan has launched the

Hunter Diesel range, the Hunter REEV (the world’s first range-extender electric bakkie), and the show-stopping all-electric Deepal S07.

Changan’s philosophy for South Africa is “Driven to Evolve.” It’s a promise that connects its heritage to its future, now localized and tailor-made for all South Africans. It speaks to a brand that refuses to stand still, constantly refining how vehicles are designed, built, and experienced. From intelligent safety systems and next-generation connectivity to electrified and range-extended cars, Changan’s evolution is deliberate and human-centred. The focus is not innovation for its own sake, but progress that improves everyday driving, adds real value, and keeps pace with how people live and move today.

For South Africans, Driven to Evolve also signals a long-term commitment: an investment in local infrastructure, after-sales support, and the vehicles of tomorrow that are genuinely accessible and attainable for everyone today.

www.changanmotors.co.za



CHANGAN

SINCE 1862



SINCE 1862

SPACE FOR LIFE'S BIGGEST ADVENTURES

CS75 PRO



For those who never stand still and demand a spacious SUV built for life at full pace. Meet the powerful and intelligent CHANGAN CS75 Pro.

Available with both 5- and 7-seats.

FROM
R5 651 pm

Explore More &
Book Your Test
Drive Today.



DISCLAIMER

Features and specifications & claimed figures are subject to change & are market dependant on grade & equipment. Please consult your local changan dealership for more information. 10% deposit, 40% balloon, 10,68% interest rate over 72 months.

DRIVEN TO EVOLVE

changanmotors.co.za



WHY SOLAR MAKES SENSE IN ESTATES

1. Homes here are already built for it

Clean roof lines, predictable layouts, and generous sun exposure make estate homes ideal candidates for solar. There's less shade, fewer odd roof angles, and more consistency — all of which means better performance and easier installation.

2. It keeps everyday life running as it should

Remote work, security systems, appliances, Wi-Fi, kids' homework, online meetings, streaming — everything depends on stable power. Solar smooths out those moments when the grid dips or flickers.

In an estate setting, that sense of stability has a ripple effect: fewer disruptions, calmer evenings, and a community that keeps operating even when the wider grid doesn't.

3. Solar strengthens property value

In high-demand neighbourhoods, buyers are increasingly looking for homes that offer lower running costs and less reliance on the grid. A solar-equipped home is instantly more appealing, not just for savings but for peace of mind.

Many estate agents note that solar has shifted from a "nice-to-have" to something buyers actively expect.

4. It fits the lifestyle estate residents already choose

Many families in estates already prioritise sustainability — from indigenous gardens to mindful water use. Solar aligns naturally with that.

It also reinforces what estate living is meant to offer: independence, comfort, and a more predictable rhythm to daily life.

5. The more households switch, the stronger the estate becomes

Widespread solar adoption reduces strain on internal electrical systems and helps estates stay resilient during grid fluctuations.

It also subtly shapes the identity of the community — a neighbourhood that plans ahead, invests wisely and embraces smarter living.

What Homeowners Should Check First

A quick checklist if you're considering the switch:

- Review your estate's architectural guidelines
- Use accredited installers who meet SANS requirements
- Confirm any municipal or grid-connection rules
- In sectional-title areas, get body corporate approval

Reputable installers usually guide homeowners through these steps.

A Good Fit for the Future

With some of the world's best solar potential, South Africans are well placed to make the most of the sun. And estate communities — with strong governance, consistent building styles and families seeking a stable, comfortable lifestyle — are perfectly positioned to lead that transition.

For residents of Dainfern and similar estates, solar isn't only about lowering bills or outsmarting the next round of load-shedding. It's about improving quality of life, protecting property value, and choosing a future where the power stays where it belongs: in your hands.

We may not fully trust the grid yet — but when the sun shows up so reliably every day, it makes sense to let it do some of the work.

Africa's Largest Selection of Patio Furniture & Accessories

Patio WAREHOUSE

www.patiowarehouse.co.za



WHATSAPP US

Pretoria - 012 749 3120 | Centurion - 012 657 9400 | Randburg - 011 801 0820 | Cape Town - 021 526 7240
Somerset West - 021 840 4160 | Umhlanga - 031 566 8550 | George - 044 010 0102

SERVICES:

Succulents & Aloes! Brighten your garden with vibrant, water-wise succulents! Contact Lourens: 079 529 7827

My Pet Care Pet Sitting: Quality pet sitting visits to your house, where your pets can be cared for in the comfort of their own home! For more information, send a WA to 071 016 0913 or 082 448 5844.

DOMESTIC WORKER

SHIELLAH is available for work on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. She is honest, hardworking, and dependable, with excellent housekeeping skills and comfortable around pets. With over 5 years of hands-on experience, she is also CPR and First Aid certified. References can be provided upon request. To contact Shiellah, please reach out to Christelle at 071 169 0388.

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.

THERMAL HEALTH & WELLNESS: Thermal Imaging, ED treatment, massage, lymph drainage, joint injury treatment, health coaching. www.diti.co.za 082 441 6850 info@diti.co.za

EDUCATION SERVICES:

LEARN ENGLISH: AMBASSADOR English Language School Beginner to Advanced & IELTS courses. In-Person & Online Group Classes & Private Lessons. WhatsApp +27 787 210 541 or www.amEnglishSchool.co.za

LITTLE EINSTEINS PLAYSCHOOL: Exceptional pre-school in the Cornwall Hill Country Estate. Grade 0000 - Grade 0. Small groups, individual attention, homely environment. Highly Qualified Educators. Feeder School: Cornwall Hill College. Contact Sharon Rosema 082 904 8157. <https://littleeinstein.co.za>. Extra Afrikaans lessons Grade 1-10. Tutoring: Grade 1-4.

HOME SERVICES:

"LET'S FIX IT" HANDYMAN:

Contact Wayne @ 082 785 3446.

LOCKSMITH: Brad's Lock and Key Anything to do with keys or doors sorted. Also custom gates fitted and gate/ garage motors. Tel 011 802 4114 / 082 854 9898 bradslock5@gmail.com bradsgates.co.za

PEST CONTROL, CLEANING AND HYGIENE: With over 46 years of experience in the industry, we specialize in providing solutions tailored to meet the unique needs of both individuals and businesses. Pest: 012 656 1341; Clean: 012 654 5534

PLUMBING: The leading name in plumbing and maintenance, now offering municipal water backup and rainwater harvesting solutions. 012 654 2513 / 071 875 0218

GAS SUPPLY SERVICES:

FALCON GAS: 073 818 3532. Try our exceptional service for your LPG cylinder refill / new cylinder supply. We comply with all Estate Safety & Security regulations. *FREE delivery to home or business within The Irene Farm Village Estate. Email: falcongassa@etgworld.com

DO GAS: SANS 10087 applies to all domestic gas installations. Non-compliance negatively affects your safety and home insurance. Contact DoGAS for a free assessment to ensure your compliance. Tel +27 65 724 5178 / contact.dogas@gmail.com



MissFit BOXING Studio
Exclusive Womens Fitness

FIT FOR A QUEEN®
FITNESS FOR WOMEN BY WOMEN

IMPROVED CONFIDENCE | STRESS RELIEF

EXCLUSIVE WOMENS Fitness

VARIETY OF PROGRAMMING | COMMUNITY

TIME TO HIT THE REFRESH BUTTON

RYNEVELD CORNER, 31 JIM FOUCHE RD, PIERRE VAN RYNEVELD PARK

MissFit VAN RYNEVELD
Exclusive Womens Fitness

066 270 2393
066 270 2393

BOOK A FREE TRIAL NOW!

SCAN ME

WWW.MISSFITBOXING.COM



Club Car

Performance **perfected.**

www.clubcarsa.co.za



BORROWED LIGHT

André de Ruyter on the cost of delay, cautious optimism and the race for rational power

BY JUSTIN RENDER FOR ENGINEERIT

South Africans know the quiet too well. That strange calm between blackouts, when fridges hum again and the Wi-Fi stays connected. We're all cautiously optimistic, but ready for the lights to go out again. And when they do, we'll improvise – because that's what South Africans do.

With this peaceful silence, however, many of us remain in the dark about the structural changes that could keep the lights on in the long-term. André de Ruyter understands that silence. He has lived inside the engine room of it as Eskom's former Chief Executive and an agent of change behind the scenes. He has seen the circuitry of hope and fatigue from within.

Today, De Ruyter is an itinerant scholar,

having given up senior management to educate, sharing a measured, analytical and fundamentally hopeful case for renewable energy.

The economics of common sense

"Replace uncompetitive generation with the cheapest form currently available — and that is renewable energy plus storage," says De Ruyter. "Beyond the indisputable environmental benefits — a value-added plus — on a more level basis, it just makes sense."

For De Ruyter, the energy debate has been over-complicated by ideology. The numbers already speak. Utility-scale solar energy could be established in about one to three years, while wind energy may take around three years.



André de Ruyter

However, a new nuclear-powered solution may take fifteen years and new coal at least a decade — that is, if anyone were still willing to finance or insure it.

"If you have an imminent shortfall, sure, gas can be part of the portfolio," he concedes, "but we must understand that AI data centres have pushed demand for gas turbines to current lead times of seven years. And exposing a large part of your electricity cost base to the vagaries of imported natural gas, with the risk of changes in exchange rates, may create even more upward pressure on electricity cost."

Pragmatically, speed saves costs. Renewable projects deliver megawatts while slower options are still clearing permits. De Ruyter suggests that the result is simple arithmetic: a cheaper, faster path to energy security.

Competition is an energy question

Tariffs rise while household budgets don't, and the compound effect is pushing citizens to act before the state does.

"With the current inflation trajectory, rooftop solar and batteries are one of the best investments you can make," De

Ruyter notes, "And both businesses and families who can afford the transition are taking the plunge."

This isn't rebellion, he insists, but rational adaptation. Old coal plants gulp water and leak money, but renewables free both.

"Older power stations use an incredible amount of water," he explains. "Freeing that water up could drive immense growth in agriculture — one of our most labour-intensive and economically essential sectors."

Economic competitiveness, tariff stability and job creation all hinge on the same pivot: cleaner, faster, decentralised power.

Private energy, public good

"The private sector has repeatedly shown itself ready, willing and able to invest in new generation capacity," he says.

Indeed, in just eighteen months, private developers and households installed somewhere between 6,000 and 7,500 MW of rooftop solar — the equivalent of one and a half Medupis quietly materialising above the country's roofs.

That silent revolution has stabilised

the grid more effectively than many realise. While the state wrestles with macro-projects, citizens are rewiring the nation one inverter at a time.

Designing the next grid

If generation is decentralising, the grid must evolve to match.

De Ruyter postulates, *"Continue the implementation of the independent transmission system operator — the JSE of electricity — where buyers and sellers can engage in longer-term contracts or day-ahead trading. In Germany, prices are set every few minutes; that's how dynamic a market can be. There's no reason we can't move that way."*

As De Ruyter notes, in Germany's "Day-ahead market," wholesale prices on the Electricity Exchange are set for every 15-minute interval of the following day, reflecting actual supply and demand dynamics. This transparent electricity marketplace invites efficiency, competition and innovation. So, logically, as De Ruyter puts it, "Why would we not do that?"

The borrowed-light moment

The recent reprieve from load-



shedding has many breathing easier. Still, the arithmetic behind the calm may tell a different story. With approximately R25 billion in diesel burned in 2024 to fill the gaps, the question is whether this is sustainable, given that most of the coal fleet is around forty-five years old and poorly maintained.

De Ruyter surmises there could be a possible loadshedding relapse between 2028 and 2032, depending on how quickly replacement capacity comes online. The maths again: unless renewables and storage keep scaling, today's silence is temporary.

Portfolio, not purity

"To be clear," says De Ruyter, "I'm not speaking out against coal or nuclear. Power stability isn't a one-trick pony. Let's run the numbers, look at the data, and as quickly as possible migrate to the portfolio that ticks all the objectives."

"We should aim for diversity, resilience and cost discipline – not doctrine. Coal retains a limited legacy role; nuclear may return in small doses once finances allow, but renewables and storage form the spine of any credible future mix."

The physics of change

"When a technology reaches end-of-life, there's always resistance," he says. "Consider a carriage driver's dilemma when the first internal combustion engines arrived. He may have thought that making a better carriage was the answer. But no matter how you look at it, carriages were set to become obsolete."

"Ultimately, we may complain about new innovations, but we have to make them work for us before we make ourselves obsolete. Technological transitions don't wait for ideological approval. They happen when cost curves and performance cross. South Africa's crossing point is already behind us."

A lesson in rational optimism

"Electricity isn't magic; it's pretty straightforward if you look at the big picture," says De Ruyter

Perhaps that's the simplest energy policy ever written. Logically,

renewables are cheaper, faster and water-light; storage is following the same curve solar once did. Markets, when trusted, tend to reward efficiency.

De Ruyter's optimism is based on the alignment of physics and economics. The old clichéd light at the end of the tunnel is still available if we learn to generate it ourselves.

The choice ahead

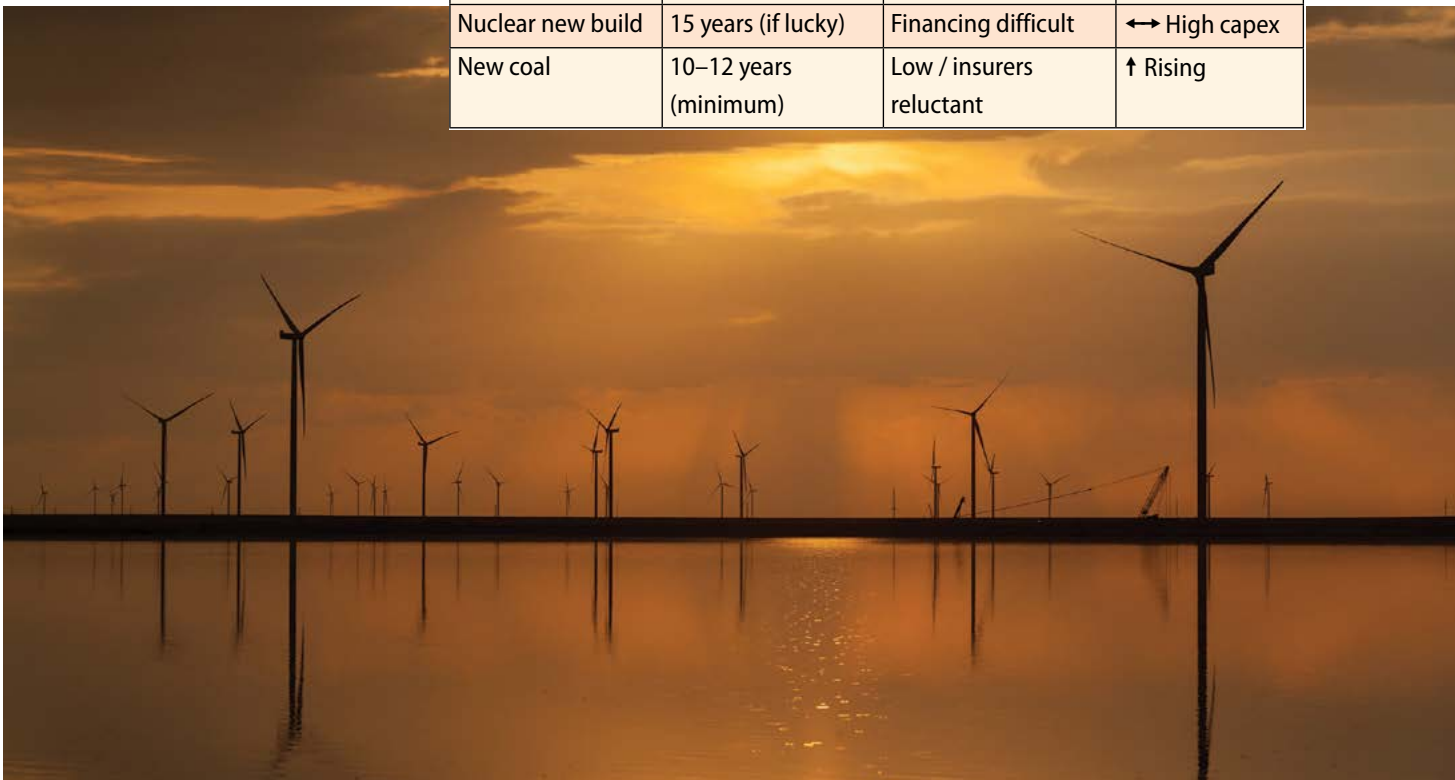
South Africa's grid doesn't need miracles but discipline. The technologies exist, the investors are waiting, and the blueprint is drawn. What remains is to act at the speed of reason.

"Let's make the rationally objective decision that gives us the lowest-cost electricity going forward," De Ruyter concludes.

Borrowed light bought us time. What we do with that time will decide whether the next silence feels like relief – or the edge of another collapse.

BUILD-TIME REALITY CHECK

Technology	Typical build time	Financing outlook	Cost trend
Solar PV (utility scale)	2 years	Strong private appetite	↓ Rapidly falling
Wind power	3 years	High interest, steady	↓ Falling
Nuclear new build	15 years (if lucky)	Financing difficult	↔ High capex
New coal	10–12 years (minimum)	Low / insurers reluctant	↑ Rising



NAMIBIA: WHERE TIME HOLDS ITS BREATH



There are few places left in the world where silence feels sacred. Namibia is one of them.

It begins with the light — that endless, honeyed wash that turns rock into gold and shadow into story. Out here, distances deceive you. Dunes appear close enough to touch, then shift with every breath of wind. The horizon moves, the earth breathes, and for a while you forget you're standing on the same planet that invented rush hour.

The Desert That Dreams

The Namib Desert is often mistaken for the Sahara in photographs — a confusion that flatters both. The Namib is older, perhaps the oldest desert on Earth, its rust-coloured dunes shaped by wind and time into something almost sculptural. The locals call it the “vast place,” and it is. But vast doesn't mean empty. If you stand quietly, you'll hear the sand move — a low, humming sigh as the wind reshapes the landscape grain by grain.

At dawn, the light catches the dunes like molten copper; at dusk, they cool into velvet shadow. I stood once at the edge of Sossusvlei as the sun slipped below the horizon, and the silence pressed in — deep and physical, the kind that fills you rather than frightens you.

Drive through **Namib-Naukluft National Park** and you begin to understand why this country can't be rushed. The road stretches forward like a suggestion, bordered by nothing and everything — thornbush, salt pans, mirage. The air smells of dust and distance. Ostriches cross as if

late for something, springboks appear and vanish, and the whole landscape feels half-dreamed, half-remembered.

Where Water Cuts Through Stone

Far south, the **Fish River Canyon** opens suddenly — a quiet thunder in the land. It's one of the largest canyons in the world, but there's nothing grandiose about it. The silence is steady, the scale unshowy. Standing on the rim, you sense how ancient this earth is — and how little it asks of you beyond respect.

The air is dry enough to taste. The wind has its own rhythm. Somewhere below, a single river thread twists between shadows. Photographs don't capture it; they only flatten what is, in truth, a living thing.

Land of Tribes and Memory

Head north, and Namibia changes tone. The ochre plains give way to scrub and smoke, and the light sharpens again. This is **Kaokoland**, home to the proud **Himba people**, who still live much as their ancestors did — herding cattle, tending fires, and covering their skin with a deep red mixture of ochre and butterfat.

Visiting a Himba village feels less like looking back in time and more like standing still in it. There's rhythm in their way of life, a kind of quiet choreography: women grinding ochre, children laughing somewhere unseen, the faint smell of woodsmoke and wild herbs curling through the air.

Further east, in **Damaraland**, the ground itself tells stories. The rock engravings at **Twyfelfontein** — giraffes, hunters, spirals — have watched over this valley for thousands of years. They speak of survival, celebration, and faith, carved into stone by the San long before the idea of Namibia existed.

Nearby, at the **Damara Living Museum**, that heritage continues in motion. Women guide you through bush plants — food, medicine, perfume — while men demonstrate fire-lighting, carving, and the art of patient creation. It's not performance; it's preservation. A small, steady act of keeping identity alive.

Rivers, Waterfalls, and Hidden Villages

Follow the sound of water and you'll find **Epupa Falls**, where the Kunene River tumbles over a series of rocky ledges near the Angolan border. "Epupa" means foam, and it fits — the spray rises like breath against the sky. Children play along the banks, the Himba women weave beads in the shade, and the whole place hums with a kind of gentle continuity.

Further east, the **Mbunza Living Museum** near Rundu sits beside a quiet lake. Here, the Kavango people share their traditional crafts and stories. There's laughter, leather, and the smell of Mangetti nut oil on the breeze. It's small and human, but deeply moving — proof that culture, like the river itself, keeps finding a way to flow.



The Kingdom of Dust and Light

And then there's **Etosha** — vast, white, and shimmering. The great pan stretches endlessly, alive with mirages and movement. When rain comes, it becomes a mirror. Elephants move like slow grey tides, zebra stripe the horizon, and flamingos rise in pale clouds.



There's something transcendent about watching wildlife in such a stark place — as if the animals themselves have learned to become part of the light. You realise, after a while, that Namibia's beauty isn't only visual. It's structural. It sits in the bones of the land, and if you're still enough, you can feel it hum beneath your feet.

A Journey Measured in Stillness

Namibia isn't a country you visit. It's a country you listen to.

It teaches patience — to wait for colour to shift, for wind to change, for silence to speak. You arrive thinking you're chasing beauty, but you leave knowing you've been taught reverence.

As my plane lifted off from Windhoek, the landscape unrolled below me — red dunes, pale salt, green veins of river — and I realised I wasn't leaving anything behind. I was simply taking a quieter version of myself home.



Autism & ADHD in Girls: **THE QUIET ONES WE KEEP MISSING**

If you have a daughter who walks through the front door after school and immediately dissolves into tears, or shuts herself in her room, or clings to you without knowing why — you're not imagining it. This is one of the clearest patterns in autistic and ADHD girls. They don't usually fall apart in front of their teacher or their classmates. They hold it together until they reach the one place where they can finally let their body drop.

And that moment — the crash — tells you more than any school report ever will.

The "Good Girl" Everyone Sees

At school, many neurodivergent girls are described with the same glowing phrases: well-behaved, polite, helpful, mature. They're the child teachers rely on, the one who never causes trouble, the one who quietly gets on with things.

But "good" can be a mask, not a measurement.

While everyone else sees a girl who copes beautifully, home becomes the place where her overwhelm finally speaks. The tears, the irritability, the clinginess, the sudden silence — these aren't signs of weakness. They're signs of effort. Signs that she has spent an entire day trying to fit into a world that feels too loud, too



busy, too unpredictable.

Masking: The Skill Nobody Teaches, But So Many Girls Learn

Masking is something girls fall into instinctively. They're often highly observant, so they learn early on to study what other children do and copy it. They watch how their classmates laugh, how they join games, how they answer questions, how they greet the teacher. And slowly, they build a little script for themselves.

It's not deception. It's survival.

And it works — until the moment it doesn't. Because masking uses a tremendous amount of energy. It's mentally and emotionally exhausting, and it often leaves these girls completely wiped out by the end of the day. Parents see the raw version of the child the school never sees — because home is the only place where she feels safe enough to let go.

You can often recognise masking in the tiny things: the girl who seems cheerful all day but cries in the car; the girl who looks social but tells you friendships feel confusing; the girl who follows instructions perfectly at school, then shuts down over simple homework because her brain has nothing left to give.

Why So Many Girls Go Undetected

One of the biggest reasons girls get missed is that people expect autism and ADHD to look big and obvious. They expect disruption, hyperactivity, or intense, unusual interests. But girls often present quietly. Their interests look normal — animals, reading, baking, crafting — but they dive into them with a depth and intensity that's easy to overlook.

They don't often show distress



outwardly. Instead, they internalise. Worry becomes their default setting. A tree slipping in the wind can set their stomach turning. A raised eyebrow from the teacher can linger for days. They're not being dramatic — they're carrying far more emotional information than most people realise.

Friendships can be especially tricky. On the surface, they might look social. But many girls feel like they're guessing at invisible rules, or trying desperately to keep up with the emotional shifts of peer groups. They may feel lost even while smiling. They may cling tightly to one friend, or become the helper, the peacemaker, the girl who takes on everyone else's feelings just to stay included.

And often, they do well enough academically to stay just under the radar. Not because school is easy — but because they're afraid of failing, afraid of being seen as "too much", afraid of letting anyone down.

For Parents: How to Support Her Softly and Steadily

What helps most is recognising that school takes more out of her than it takes out of other children. Not because she's less capable — but because every social cue, every sound, every instruction, every group interaction requires more energy.

So the first thing she needs when she gets home is a soft landing. Sometimes that looks like a quiet room, a snack, a warm bath, or just being left alone for a little while. Sometimes it looks like curling up next to you on the couch and doing absolutely nothing. Sometimes it's tears that come out of nowhere. Let them come. It's release, not misbehaviour.

Let home be the place where she doesn't have to perform. You don't need to rush to fix anything. You don't need to ask her to explain herself. Just giving her permission to be tired and telling her she is safe is often enough to let her body reset.

You can also help by gently naming

the things she doesn't yet have words for. "It felt too loud today," or "That was a lot for your body," or "It makes sense that you're tired — school was full of people and instructions and noise." These simple reflections help her understand her own experience with kindness instead of shame.

And if school says she's perfectly fine? Trust what you see at home. Teachers see a snapshot. You see the whole child.

The Friendship Layer

Girls often tie their sense of worth to their friendships. For neurodivergent girls, friendships can be incredibly rewarding but also incredibly draining. They may become the child who comforts everyone but has no one who truly understands her. Or they may attach themselves intensely to one friend and feel lost when that dynamic shifts — which it inevitably does in childhood.

Helping her navigate this gently — by explaining emotional boundaries, giving her language to ask for space, and teaching her that not everyone's feelings are her responsibility — can make an enormous difference. She's not being clingy or dramatic. She's trying to find her place in a system that feels confusing.

The Quiet Work of Believing Her

Perhaps the most important support you can give her is simply believing what she tells you — even when it contradicts what adults outside the home see. If she says it was too loud, too fast, too confusing, or too much, trust that she's telling you the truth of her body and brain.

Children rarely have the words for overwhelm. They show us through behaviour. And behaviour is always communication.

What Happens When We Truly See Her

When a girl grows up being seen — properly, gently, without judgement — she doesn't have to carry the same load into adolescence and adulthood that so many undiagnosed girls end up carrying. She grows up with an understanding of her needs instead of a fear that she's somehow failing. She learns that rest is not a weakness, sensitivity is not a flaw, and asking for space is not "being difficult".

She begins to grow into herself, not away from herself.

And that shift — that single moment of recognition — can change the entire shape of her childhood.



WHY RENTING CAN BE A SMART FINANCIAL MOVE

Owning property is still a deeply held goal for many South Africans. A home represents stability, legacy and long-term financial security. But the path to ownership doesn't need to be direct, and in some cases, it may not be the destination at all.

Renting is increasingly seen as a strategic financial decision. Whether you're working towards a deposit or exploring more flexible ways to grow your wealth, renting can offer the space, stability and financial control needed to build your future on your own terms.

Control and predictability

Buying a home comes with major upfront expenses. Beyond the deposit, buyers must also cover legal fees, transfer duty, bond registration and bank charges. Together, these can add up to hundreds of thousands of rands. And once the sale is final, the bills continue: rates, levies, insurance, maintenance and security, all of which must be factored into your monthly budget.

Renters, by contrast, generally pay a single, predictable monthly amount (in some cases, electricity, refuse and/or water and sewerage are separate, for the tenant's account). They are also protected from the volatility of rising bond repayments and are better able to plan ahead with fairly consistent monthly costs, and in most cases, major repairs and maintenance are the landlord's responsibility.

In South Africa, renting can also allow people to invest in education, launch businesses and live in areas closer to work, schools or public transport, which they may not be able to afford just yet. It also gives you time to improve your credit score, reduce debt, research neighbourhoods and refine your

understanding of what you really want before you buy.

Renting offers far greater flexibility than ownership: if your job changes, your needs shift, or your circumstances evolve, moving on from a rental is far less complicated than selling a property.

A 2025 article in Forbes outlines four key considerations when weighing up whether to rent or buy. One of the clearest advantages of renting, it says, is the ability to save aggressively or remain mobile while avoiding the commitment of a long-term bond. The article also highlights the value of keeping your capital liquid in an unpredictable economy.

Stay focused on your long-term goal

The 2025 Emerging Trends in Real Estate report from PwC notes that affordability and lifestyle flexibility are key drivers for younger households choosing to rent. With interest rates still elevated, many South Africans are waiting before entering the property market. Renting can help make this possible by freeing up income to put towards a deposit and other costs. But this only works if the tenant avoids overcommitting.

A common mistake is signing a lease at the highest rent you can afford, simply for short-term comfort or lifestyle. Doing this undermines one of the key advantages of renting – the ability to save. If your rental takes up your full budget, there's little room to set money aside for a deposit, emergencies or other goals. Rather approach savings with the same commitment you would apply to a bond.

A better strategy is to rent below your affordability threshold. If you aim to buy a R1.5 million home, the bond repayment for that would be around R15 000 per month. If you are disciplined

and rent for R10 000, you can save the R5 000 difference towards your deposit; every year, you'd be putting away R60 000 and would have your deposit in just over two years – not counting interest or investment growth if your savings are in an interest-bearing account.

Renting can allow you to invest instead of buy

While many tenants intend to buy their dream home one day, others believe that renting offers the opportunity to grow wealth through diversified investments, particularly in shares, ETFs or unit trusts.

A home loan is one of the biggest debts most of us will ever take on. Although it may be productive debt tied to a physical asset, it still represents a major concentration of your wealth in one place. That carries risk.

Some investors argue that your money may be better put to work elsewhere. The long-term growth potential of equities, especially when held over the average term of a home loan, can be significant. Investing early, even modestly, creates the opportunity to benefit from compounding returns.

This doesn't mean buying property is the wrong decision, but it reinforces the idea that renting, when combined with smart financial planning, can be a strategic phase in wealth creation.

Whether your goal is a home or a stronger investment portfolio, what matters is how intentionally you use this time. Either way, renting gives you options. It offers more freedom and less commitment, more liquidity and less risk, more financial control and less pressure.

Renting is not just about where you live now – it's about where you're going next.

Issued by Paddington Station PR on behalf of Just Property Group.



DEFENDER TROPHY EDITION



WILDLIFE ARTIST IN BRONZE

Bernie van der Vyver's Enduring Connection to Nature

On a quiet farm in Bethal, a young boy once spent his days sketching animals and studying their movement – not knowing that those early drawings would one day evolve into timeless bronze masterpieces. That boy was Bernie van der Vyver, now one of South Africa's most admired wildlife sculptors, whose work captures the raw beauty, dignity, and endurance of the African wilderness.

"Growing up on a farm in Bethal was really special," Bernie recalls. "Animals and nature always surrounded me. I loved collecting pictures of all kinds of creatures. Studying their forms and movements, I started drawing them. This was how I first got into art. Being around so much wildlife sparked my love for nature and art."

From Clay to Bronze

Like many artists, Bernie's creative journey began with simple tools – pencils, paper, and clay – long before he discovered the power of bronze. Everything changed when he encountered the work of South African masters Coert Steynberg and Jo Roos. "Their sculptures were unlike anything I'd seen," he says. "They made their subjects in bronze look alive – as if they could move at any moment."

It wasn't just the lifelike realism that drew him in. It was the permanence. "Bronze doesn't fade or crumble," he explains. "It keeps its beauty for generations. That endurance appealed to me deeply – I wanted my art to stand the test of time."

A pivotal moment came at an exhibition in Knysna, where Bernie realised bronze would become his lifelong medium. "Seeing all that bronze artistry together – so detailed and lasting – made me want to create pieces that people could treasure for years to come."

A Life in the Wild

For Bernie, art begins with observation. He still spends time in national parks and reserves, photographing animals and studying the tiniest details – the tension of muscle, the curve of a horn, the flicker of awareness in a lion's eyes. "Those field trips are my classroom," he says. "I'm always learning from nature."

His sculptures have since travelled far beyond South Africa, finding homes in collections across Europe and the United States. Each one tells a story – of grace, survival, and reverence for the creatures that define Africa's wild heart.



The Artist and His Audience

Much of Bernie's work is commissioned. He works closely with clients to ensure each piece reflects both their vision and his interpretation. "Every sculpture is a collaboration," he says. "It's about creating something meaningful – a fusion of what they want to express and what I see in the subject."

This partnership with patrons has made his art not just admired but lived with. His bronzes aren't static décor; they are living presences – guardians of memory and emotion, caught mid-motion.

A Tribute in Bronze

Bernie's latest commission takes him beyond the animal kingdom and into human history: a San bushman poised in a traditional hunting stance, bow in hand. "The San people are known for their respectful hunting ways," he says. "It's an honour to represent that. I've been studying their traditions carefully so I can portray them accurately and respectfully. This isn't just a sculpture – it's a tribute."



The Enduring Spirit of Bronze

From a boy moulding clay on a farm to a master sculptor shaping bronze, Bernie van der Vyver's journey is one of quiet persistence and profound respect – for nature, for his craft, and for the stories that art can preserve.

His sculptures don't just capture form; they capture spirit. Among his most moving recent works is Craig – a life-sized bronze tribute to one of Kenya's legendary tuskers, an elephant whose wisdom and presence have inspired

conservationists across the world. Bernie's Craig stands as a reminder of the deep connection between humans and the wild, and of the responsibility we carry to protect it.

Through his hands, the African wilderness becomes eternal – each piece a reminder that beauty, when forged with care and intention, can outlast us all.

Follow Bernie's work or connect with him at facebook.com/bernie.vandervyver.





ELEVATE YOUR ESCAPE

Step outside and into the world of Best Deck. Our exclusive range of premium composite wood products transforms your outdoor spaces into timeless sanctuaries of elegance and ease. Whether it's a spacious entertainment deck, sophisticated cladding, architectural pergolas or refined fluted panels, every Best Deck installation is engineered for comfort, built for resilience and designed to impress.

Fade-free, crack-resistant and guaranteed for up to 25 years, our Diamond Range composite wood combines lasting value with effortless style. It's the smart way to extend your home's living space while enhancing its aesthetic and real-world value.

BEST DECK. FOR LIFE.

Explore our full range online or visit our Midrand showroom.

bestdeck.co.za • Riversands Outlet Park, Midrand
010 500 2897 • info@bestdeck.co.za

Photography by Nic Baleta for SA Homeowner Magazine ©

