

# POLO'S PALATIAL PINNACLE

*As far as show houses go, Ryk Neethling's sumptuous abode at Val De Vie Wine and Polo Estate is the jewel in the crown*

Words Genevieve Fisher  
Photographs Fiona Barclay-Smith

When looking out onto Val De Vie's main polo field from the patio of the clubhouse and bar, you'll find the vistas of the Helderberg and Simonsberg mountains breathtaking, but it is the home situated directly in front of the field that will make you gasp in awe. It looks like a small Provençal palace, and you can't help but wonder who lives there.

That it is home to celebrity Ryk Neethling makes it all the more romantic, and comparisons to a fairy tale would not be out of place: handsome Prince Charming pottering around his luxurious abode. But there is more to the story than that.

The home is a show house, built and developed by Guardian Development Projects, a property development company headed up by Managing Director Leonhard Jonas. The company offers turnkey project management on the estate, and Ryk is both a shareholder and its marketing director. The property also houses Leonhard's office, and aside from working together, he and Ryk are good mates. 'Ryk and I met about three years ago and have become good

friends. I believe that people should do business with people that they like and trust,' says Leonhard. On this project though, Ryk's role was that of tenant, and he let Leonhard and his team work their magic on this dream home. 'This house was Leonhard's vision from concept to completion, I'm just the lucky one that gets to live in it,' says Ryk with a grin on his face.

While this set-up may seem like the life fit for a prince, being marketing director for Guardian Development Projects as well as Val De Vie Estate and being a local celebrity leave Ryk with very little time to play. 'I hardly spend any time at the house during the week,' he says. 'In the day I'm not here; my office is at the clubhouse and I fly to Johannesburg every week for a couple of days, so I love coming back here. The lifestyle this home and the estate offer is second to none: the surrounds are incredible, I never have to worry about security as there is always someone here, and the estate itself is very secure. It's paradise.'

Leonhard's vision was to build and develop a show house for Guardian Development Projects where property owners at Val De Vie could see what the

company could offer in terms of building their dream home. 'We wanted to create the ultimate show house experience at the top end of the residential market. We built an iconic property for Val de Vie, setting the benchmark not only in structural integrity, but also creating a beautiful, functional home with world-class finishes,' says Leonhard.

The 550m<sup>2</sup>, five-bedroom home oozes luxury and successfully fulfils Leonhard's vision of an exemplary home. It was designed according to the Provençal aesthetic guidelines of Val De Vie, but with a modern twist. The attention to detail is impeccable. With its voluminous spaces, neutral yet textured interiors and top-notch finishes, the show house makes you believe someone important lives here.

According to Ryk, no expense has been spared, and he is overwhelmed by the end result and what his friend has achieved. 'It's not your typical show house because every last detail has been considered and the finishes are world class. There aren't many people doing what we're doing, because of the exclusive nature of our projects, which this home is testament to.'

**Opposite** Guardian Development Projects understands the emotive nature of building a dream home. It provides that vital independent and professional service of planning, leading, organising and controlling the management of projects and programmes, from inception to reality. The private residential market is typified by the quest for unique designs and exclusive luxury, which are often beyond the client's desired budget. Guardian Development Projects offers real solutions to maintaining a budget without compromising on the look and feel of the home. Its turnkey offerings include complete project management, delivery support and design services through all phases of the development process. It evaluates the brief in terms of time, cost and quality to devise a procurement solution to suit individual needs. Guardian Development Projects offers consistently high standards of service on appointments ranging from modest homes to luxury residences.

Guardian Development Projects, +27 (0)21 863 1139



Jeeves Heated Towel Rails, 086 153 3837



Siemens Domestic Appliances (WK Kitchens), +27 (0)21 550 9900

This spread, top left Ryk selected the Classic C heated towel rail from Jeeves for an uninterrupted supply of warm, dry towels. Manufactured locally from mirror-polished stainless steel with Automatic Heating Technology (AHT) for convenience, the Classic C rail ensures that Ryk enjoys electricity savings, thanks to the reduced need for washing and tumble-drying damp bath towels. Top right Siemens home appliances teamed up with WK Kitchens to create a unique, elegant kitchen. The Siemens range demonstrates the latest trend of integrated appliances: excellent cooking facilities with the latest induction cooking surface, a high-speed microwave and an easy-to-use coffee machine combine to give the homeowner German engineering at its best. Bottom right Over the last decade, Waterstone has been the go-to supplier for developers, contractors and homeowners looking for quality sanitaryware. Waterstone's product range includes Geberit, Duravit, Hansgrohe, Jeeves and Victoria & Albert, to name a few. Bottom centre Natural Stone Warehouse supplied all the tiles used throughout the home, giving each room a unique ambience. One of its most recent innovations, exclusive to Natural Stone Warehouse, is the seamless marble flooring used throughout the living areas.

Part of what makes it such a show-stopper is undoubtedly its location, which Leonhard says is his favourite feature of the home: 'Situated next to vineyards, the house overlooks a 300m Polo lawn, stables and the Polo Pavilion with the Simonsberg Mountains as a backdrop. The views are truly breathtaking and change every day. Val deVie is surrounded by seven mountain ranges, and this property has a 360° view. What more can I say?'

Ryk agrees with Leonhard. However, his favourite part of the house is the outdoor deck, especially in the evening, when he can relax with a glass of the estate's wine in hand and watch a polo match. 'Being in such close proximity to the polo field has sparked residents to bet who will be the first to knock out a window out with a polo ball!' Ryk laughs.

The home has been designed in two levels, and when entering the front door, you are struck by the amount of space and light from the double-volume living areas and their large windows. To accentuate these ideal architectural features, Leonhard's wife, Nicolette Jonas, was brought on board to oversee the interior finishes. Her biggest challenge was creating five alternate floor finishes in an attempt to differentiate the various areas of the home from each other yet still retain an element of coherence throughout. Nicolette says, 'I wanted to create a natural and neutral look throughout the house, using a lot of linens and weathered oak furniture and combining them with mirror and glass to create a sense of glamour. I decided to use a lot of textures because I wanted the neutral pallet to be the main aesthetic. Using different textures in the same tones makes it exciting to the eye and touch yet still retains a calming feeling.'

The main living area features oversized couches and a custom-made sculptural fireplace with a large handmade mirror above it. But the three gargantuan spiral crystal chandeliers are what really stand out. Each one is 2,7m long, and every piece of triangular crystal was individually hung. The effect is mesmerising, especially during the day when it catches the light flowing in from the large windows.

The kitchen is Nicolette's favourite room and upon entering, you can see why. It has a rustic charm, but with an overtly contemporary edge. The large, eight-sweater Pierre Cronje timber dining table provides the focal point,



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Forest Flooring, +27 (0)11 466 0701

and the rest of kitchen is swathed in interesting wood finishes. As bachelors go, Ryk admits to not really using the kitchen much, except for his Siemens coffee machine. 'It is my favourite gadget in the house, probably because I use it the most. I'm a caffeine junkie,' he admits.

The first floor is reached by a marble staircase and is where three of the four bedrooms and landing lounge are. The main bedroom is reminiscent of a French boudoir but is surprisingly clutter free and contemporary. No Bohemian here, just neutral tones of silver, white and grey, but with clean, elegant and romantic touches. Nicolette says the ornate mirror bed informed the rest of the finishes for this room, including the complementary crystal chandeliers and Nicolette's favourite soft furnishing in the home, the richly textured headboard by Extreme Elegance.

A standout feature not visible to the eyes is the home automation system that allows Ryk to control every electronic and electrical application in the home via remote. This includes the lighting, the AV system, the security system, pool and garden functionalities as well as curtains and blinds, among others, to allow homeowners to control any aspect of their property, whether they're at home or away. 'Our objective was to create a "blueprint" for technology infrastructure in homes situated in Val De Vie. Home automation is very sophisticated in design and engineering but should always be practical in operation,' he says. The technological interface of this home is designed in such a way that as soon as new developments in home automation are released into the market, this system can easily adapt to them. So, idyllic location, glamorous finishes and high-end appliances aside, this isn't just a home fit for a prince, but also one that obeys. ☺

**Professionals List**

- Caesarstone (Kitchen Surfaces), +27 (0)83 608 5810, info@interslab.co.za, caesarstone.co.za**
- De Villiers & Hulme (Structural Engineers), +27 (0)21 417 2180, andre@dvh.co.za, dvh.co.za**
- Duravit (Sanitaryware), +27 (0)11 722 9060, info@za.duravit.com, duravit.com**
- Forest Flooring (Timber Flooring), +27 (0)11 466 0701, info@forestflooring.co.za, forestflooring.co.za**
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- Jeeves (Heated Towel Rails), 086 153 3837, info@jeeves.co.za, jeeves.co.za**
- K. Light Import (Lighting), +27 (0)21 552 4370, info@klight.co.za, klight.co.za**
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- Natural Stone Warehouse (Tiles), +27 (0)21 506 1300, larsn@naturalstonewarehouse.com, naturalstonewarehouse.com**
- Waterstone (Sanitaryware), +27 (0)21 975 9000, info@waterstone.co.za, waterstone.co.za**
- Siemens Domestic Appliances (WK Kitchens), +27 (0)21 550 9900, annelize.louw@bshg.com, siemensappliances.co.za**

**This spread, top left** L. Cannata & Sons marble and granite processor is the proud supplier of the natural stone detailed staircase, copings, full-height bathroom wall slabs and engineered stone kitchen tops. **Top centre** This drop-in designer basin, part of Philippe Starck's Starck 2 range for Duravit, is a suitable match for this chic home. The range is inspired by the flowing movement of water. **Top right** The Caesarstone Almond Rocco quartz surfaces used in this amazing kitchen serve not only as highly durable work surfaces, but also make a substantial contribution to the overall ambience. **Bottom centre** Forest Flooring has been importing and installing quality timber floors since 1999 and provides turnkey flooring solutions. It also manufactures its own finishing strips and other bespoke products. **Bottom left** Focusing on the design and detailing of structural elements, De Villiers & Hulme was founded in 1983 and has grown into a well-respected firm of consulting engineers who are active in a wide variety of interests.

## PRIME PROPERTY

**This page** K. Light Import strives to lead the field by breaking away from conventional lighting concepts and introducing fittings that are not only unique, but are also true conversation pieces. It brings the latest models of beautiful, exclusive, quality light fittings to the South African decorating industry. Its growing range of imported light fittings represents the most unique and stylish products available globally, catering to a wide spectrum of lighting enthusiasts.

**K. Light Import, +27 (0)21 552 4370**

