Top 20 reasons to be in South Africa

180 reasons to go to

AUS Australia
CHN China
GER Germany
GBR Great Britain
ITA Italy
MEX Mexico
KOR South Korea
SUI Switzerland
USA USA

*designinteriorsfashionartlifestyle
SOUTH AFRICA

With a successful World Cup on its CV, South Africa has a spring in its step. There’s a can-do attitude that is seeing once-edgy neighbourhoods transformed, infrastructure laid down and national spaces created.

WRITERS: DAVID KAUFMAN, ELLIE SITHOLE, GREG ROM, SEAN D’OYLE, TANELL POTAMOS, DIANE VATINO

STANDING TALL
Cape Town’s new Green Point stadium, as seen from the rooftop terrace of the Cape Royale Luxury Hotel and Residence.

Fashion: ZAERG (1120) shorts, ZAERG (1110) shirt, ZAERG (1177) blazer, ZAERG (1177) belt, ZAERG (1177) shoes. From a selection by Prene.

www.anestudies.com
Left, Circa gallery in Johannesburg’s Parktown North arts district is an eco-friendly pole-clad structure designed by StudioMas. ‘Circa is truly organic in design and use,’ says owner Mark Read. ‘And it only cost us four times our initial budget.’

Right, Mona Mokoena in his Gallery Momo, also located in Parktown North. It is housed in a traditional bungalow transformed into a large, clean-lined, glass-fronted structure by architect Sarah Calburn. Founded by curator Monna Mokoena in 2003, the innovative Gallery Momo (like Circa, located in Johannesburg’s Parktown North) has emerged as one of South Africa’s leading proponents of contemporary African art. ‘When I started Gallery Momo, contemporary South African artists simply did not have representation,’ Mokoena recalls. ‘It was very conservative; it was all landscapes and animals.’ In contrast, Mokoena’s artists are diverse in medium and message, from Sharlene Khan’s satirical ink-jet prints to Mary Sibande’s colour-rich commentaries on post-Apartheid female imagery. Along with an artist-in-residence programme, Gallery Momo also hosts important exhibitions from visiting artists, fashion designers and architects, including a recent show anchored around David Adjaye’s ‘Urban Africa’ project. Having firmly established Gallery Momo in Johannesburg, Mokoena is now looking beyond South Africa. Satellite sites are in the planning stages throughout the continent, with Lagos his first destination. ‘There is a huge recovery in Nigeria,’ says Mokoena. ‘It really is the next frontier.’ www.gallerymomo.com
Support system
The architects building bridges and rebuilding South Africa

PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE TANCHEL

Few understand the challenges and opportunities of contemporary South Africa better than its architects. Urban planning and improvements in infrastructure and transport links are priorities for a country still facing massive social and economic problems. Developments are happening, if not at the pace many would like.

The new Gautrain project (01) – a $3bn new train linking Pretoria and Johannesburg via the OR Tambo airport – is starting to have a real regenerative effect, with StudioM (www.studiommasa.co.za), also designer of Johannesburg’s Circa gallery (01), working on urban development plans to ensure that its new Sandton and Rosebank stations do more than just local property prices.

Another practice leading the urban transformation of Johannesburg is South Architects (www.2610south.co.za), set up by husband-and-wife team Thobekile Deckler and Anne Graupner in 2004. The firm, which takes its name from the city’s geographical coordinates, has produced works stretching from housing projects in Soweto to large-scale development plans for the entire city. What defines Deckler and Graupner’s work is that they don’t come up with top-down grand visions, but rather ‘look at what is already working and how ordinary people have constructed their environments’. The pair see their work as built on a ‘pragmatic, passion-driven vision and a love for cities, the local and particular’.

The socio-spatial problems of South African cities certainly need massive doses of passion and pragmatism. But the country also needs symbolic acts and shared places. Freedom Park is such a project. The 32,000 sq m office building, which took up over a decade to build, South African architects, Thobekile Deckler and Anne Graupner (in partnership with StudioMorojele and Anne Graupner of MMA Architects at 2610 South Architects); Jeremy Rose of Mashabane Rose Associates (www.mashabane.co.za), working closely with Rose and Morojele. He is the kind of young African architect who might once have left to practise elsewhere. Brandt was all set to move to London to take up the offer of a research MA at Goldsmiths University, but decided his time was better spent exactly where he was.

For a directory of our South African architects, visit www.Wallpaper.com

15 ALICE LANE, JO’BURG

‘The developer wanted an iconic building,’ says Paragon Architects’ Anthony Orlowitz. And that’s just what he got. With its two 18-storey blocks, the new 24,000 sq m office building on 15 Alice Lane is a showstopper. In Johannesburg’s Sandton business district, the $3bn new train line linking Pretoria and Johannesburg via the OR Tambo airport is starting to have a real regenerative effect.

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**DELUXE COFFEEWORKS**

Opened at the end of last year, Deluxe Coffeeworks is a small but perfectly formed Cape Town coffee shop and roasting house. In coffee-making terms, it is doing something revolutionary: producing very fine coffee, but charging not much at all for its roasts. Big latte, frothy cappuccino or short espresso — whatever you order, a coffee here will only come in at ZAR10 ($1.40). We mention this not because we have turned bargain hunter, but as proof of what a unique and noble enterprise this seems. A very smart update of the classic 1950s coffee bar, the shop is situated on Church Street, in the heart of Cape Town’s city centre. It serves as a ‘walk-in factory’ where owners Carl Wessel and Judd Francis work as baristas, but also roast on-site for wholesale orders. They supply a range of businesses, including Woodstock’s Superette and Gardens’ Cookshop, and also provide invaluable barista training to ensure their product is consistent, even when poured elsewhere. www.deluxecoffeeworks.com

**TAMMY FRAZER**

Tammy Frazer might be the granddaughter of Graham Wuff, founder of the Oil of Olay brand, but her charmingly local and small-scale scent operation is everything her grandad’s mega-corporation is not. Stacked in London’s Harrods, Frazer’s nine organic scents are composed to evoke a particular place and time. The Capetonian, who also offers a bespoke service, has just launched a ‘Parfum Solide’ range, thus reviving an 18th-century tradition of infusing fragrance in wax... Haute parfum, from ZAR2,000 ($285); Parfum Solide, from ZAR300 ($42), www.frazerparfum.com

**GAUTRAIN**

Completed on time — and on budget — the first phase of the ZAR2bn ($3bn) Gautrain project was South Africa’s real surprise summer hit. Linking the major destinations of Gauteng Province (home to Johannesburg and Pretoria), this high-speed, mass transit system — which, when completed, will boast ten stations and 80km of tracks — is intended to boost the region’s economy by integrating its airport with its disparate metropolitan population centres. Although two-thirds of the project is still being built (and should meet the end-of-2011 deadline), Gautrain’s four most important hubs are already in operation — most notably the station at Sandton, the city’s new business district and the most important corporate quarter in the entire continent.
www.gautrain.co.za

**VENICE BIENNALE**

NOERO WOLFF

Established in 1985, Cape Town’s Noero Wolff Architects is now one of South Africa’s most admired practices. Its directors, Jo Noero and Heinrich Wolff, were invited to Venice by Biennale curator Kazuyo Sejima (of Japanese firm SANAA), who admired their buildings’ functionality within their respective communities. For the Venice show, the Lubetkin Prize-winning practice chose to focus on its education projects, presenting three of its most recent schools in Cape Town — including the 2007 Inkwenkwezi Secondary School in Du Noon township.
www.noerowolff.com
DESIGNING SOUTH AFRICA

Much as for the Olympics, staging a World Cup has to mean more than a quick feelgood fix. Billions are invested in infrastructure and venues, but they are often forgotten once the athletes and fans have returned home. In the wake of this year’s World Cup, however, design-minded group Designing South Africa (DSA) is taking a critical look at what exactly the tournament has left behind. Working with architects, academics and global design experts, DSA has spent the past year creating a detailed compendium of the sports facilities, hotels and virtually everything else built for the event. “We’re trying to determine the lessons learned and the legacies left by the World Cup,” explains DSA director Zahira Asmal. “What are the benefits of the games both for South Africa and for the entire global design community?” DSA’s evaluation of just how the World Cup’s new fixtures and fittings are actually benefiting South Africans should be published early next year; the report will then morph into a book and an international exhibition.

DSA hopes it will help cities such as Rio de Janeiro (which will host both the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics) plan major events. “This knowledge can easily translate to Rio in the short term, and worldwide in the long-term,” says Asmal. “We believe that creativity and design are the keys to freeing any economy.”

designingsouthafrica.com

10 GODSWINDOW

Nestled in the remote Swellendam Mountains of the Western Cape, Godswindow’s modernist aesthetic sets it apart from the surrounding Cape Dutch vernacular. Designed by Georg van Gass and offering stunning views as well as a cellar stocked with a collection of rare wine, the low-impact guest house can accommodate a maximum of three couples. www.godswindow.co.za

11 POD

Designed by Greg Wright Architects, this intimate 15-room retreat in Cape Town’s Camps Bay is a beautifully understated work in glass, steel and African timber. Guest lounges on each floor encourage sociability, while the three suites each boast their own splash pools and private decks. Rooms come with spectacular views of the Atlantic seaboard or the Twelve Apostles mountains. www.pod.co.za

12 DELAIREGRAFF LODGE

Owned by diamond magnate Laurence Graff, this collection of ten lodges enjoys a plum site on the Delaire Wine Estate in Stellenbosch, which already boasted an excellent restaurant, spa and winery. The lodges were devised by architect Pierre Borie and designer David Collins, and showcase Graff’s vast collection of South African art. www.delaire.co.za

Wallpaper
Rising up

With daunting deficiencies in wealth and education, and endemic unemployment, South Africa is facing numerous challenges. But where the government has proven unable to kickstart urban regeneration, a new wave of young property developers — including Adam Levy, Justin Rhoden and Cameron Murray, and Jonathan Liebmann — has entered the fray, working one of the central points of urban planning: where the artists go, others will follow.

We have a very difficult history, admits South African property developer Adam Levy. “The government has to contend with very high unemployment. But that doesn’t mean that everything else should stall in its place.” By tearing up its past, Levy means South Africa’s city centres.

With Levy, 37, in transforming his ‘found’ Braamfontein, into Johannesburg design district, the same one where fellow developer Liebmann has similar ambitions, Levy established a creative-industry foothold in the city’s CBD with his Arts on Main complex, while Justin Rhoden and Cameron Murray spearheaded the transformation of Woodstock into Cape Town’s arts district. There’s little red tape here, says Rhoden, as he saw while deciding the site for his Superette café. “There were 27 guys buying it, amazing to think about.”

He was in talks with a property developer. “It was sold to a group of people who believe in the city,” he says. “The Superette café now houses a shop with skyline tickets by Bradley Steenbergen. Superette is next to Cameron Murray’s Whisthershow gallery (above, www.whisthershow.com) represents top young South African artists. The neighbouring Market at is held in the 19th-century Old Biscuit Mill (www.housedesignmuseum.co.za). The Superette café (www.superette.co.za) is a hot lunch spot; tickets to its Supper-Club events are coveted.

Best of Woodstock

Justus Rhoden and Cameron Murray’s Whisthershow gallery (above, www.whisthershow.com) represents top young South African artists. The neighbouring Market is held in the 19th-century Old Biscuit Mill (www.housedesignmuseum.co.za). The Superette café (www.superette.co.za) is a hot lunch spot; tickets to its Supper-Club events are coveted.

Arts On Main picks

The Arts on Main complex (left, www.artsonmain.co.za) includes the studio of artist William Kentridge as well as Goodman Gallery Project Space (www.goodman-gallery.co.za). There’s room too for fashion brand Weave Coffee (www.blogcoffee.co.za), by Laurens van der Lugt and Davida Lopes, while Love Post (www.lovepost.co.za) supplies the shop with skyline tickets by Bradley Steenbergen.

Drama-friendly hot spots

Go-Up gallery (www.go-up.co.za) is curated by Rhoden and Muzio, designers Druker and Muzio and branding team Opus. Designer Sian Ebert and architect Adam Hooton’s Wiltshireamp (www.wiltshireamp.com) is a leading light of local design. The historic Alexander Theatre, townscape.co.za was renovated in 2007 by developer Adam Levy (top left).
FAIR COPPER
Hapo Museum (the name means 'dream in the local Xhosa language) is built predominantly of copper panels, the metal being rooted in South Africa's history as a mining centre.

18 Hapo Museum ▲
Historical monuments are tricky business in South Africa, where even the most benign cultural totems can be steeped in painful and political symbolism. Which is why Freedom Park — a memorial to South African victims of war and freedom struggles — looked to Africa itself for inspiration. Developed in phases over a decade, the park, located near Pretoria, is an assemblage of national architectural icons, including the recently completed Hapo (pictured), a new museum chronicling 8.6 billion years of South African history. Designed by local firm MashabaRose Architects, it uses traditional design and native materials to evoke the country's new pan-racial society. 'We wanted something that feels uniquely South African, while telling the story of the making of the new South Africa itself,’ explains Jeremy Rose, whose firm also built Johannesburg's Apartheid Museum. Rose chose copper as a key material for the structure, a metal deeply rooted in South Africa's history as a major mining centre. Lining the roofs and walls, the metal is both long-lasting and gains a green-hued patina as it ages. Rose's firm also developed a rock and boulder garden as a contemporary interpretation of a traditional healing place. 'The buildings are ones that will come to assume the shape of the landscape around them,' Rose says. 'This is important for a place like Freedom Park, which is charged with unpacking the entire history of the nation.'
www.freedompark.co.za

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20 KURT PIO ▲
Capetonian Kurt Pio has found a happy niche as a painter of landscapes and botanical art (see his work at the revamped Cécile & Boyd store in Durban, www.cecileandboyds.co.za). But he also wears another hat. One he made himself. Pio studied millinery at London's Central Saint Martins, and his simple felt headwear, with a touch of Pierre Cardin's 1960s futurism about it, has made him a favourite with South African designers, including fellow Capetonian David West (b). "I used to make hats for parties," Pio says, "from paper, wire and cardboard, but they'd only last one night. That was the main reason I wanted to learn true millinery techniques." Pio believes the city's creative community is arriving at something uniquely Capetonian. 'Art and design is growing rapidly here. There are more platforms to express yourself,' Cape Town is creating a fresh identity for itself.'
Hats, ZAR50 (US$6) each, by Kurt Pio, kurtpioartworkonsloane.com

For more on South Africa's Top 20, go to Wallpaper.com

19 David West ▲
David West burst on the South African fashion scene back in 1998 — when he was still at college in Cape Town — as a fresh talent who might have the equipment for global stardom. He was soon exporting to Japan and generally making quite a big noise. But in 2003, after a bad case of overexpansion, West closed his label and joined the South African retailer Truworths as a designer. Last year, older, wiser and with a better grasp of the industry's mechanics, West relaunched his label. His men's line, though less adventurous than his women's wear, is a smart take on contemporary commercial menswear. West has just hooked up with Cape Town design collective Dekker and Misses to open a shared retail space in the city.
Jacket, ZAR650 ($80); shirt, ZAR690 ($90), both by David West, www.davidwest.co.za