
In Wild Rivers Estate in Limpopo, a winged indigene – formed of local wood, rock, and soil – rises from the ground. At the confluence of the Olifants and Blyde rivers, the Bushveld Dragon is situated on a rocky terrain with canyon mountain views. Since 1998, award-winning firm Eco Design Architects and Consultants has been at the forefront of green building in South Africa. Using transformative methods, lead architect Andy Horn has created a sustainable structure from carefully blended soils, rock, and a little cow dung that, together, successfully withstand rain and heat.

The dragon's heat, spurred on by the region's climate, is controlled by naturally cooling rammed earth walls, earthen floors, and planted roofs. High-volume living spaces draw heat upwards, and the house faces towards the South, away from the harsh sun. The eco-friendly materials chosen in response to heat are regenerative: moving away from cement and steel to earthy substances promoting nurturing, cyclical processes.

Location: Wild Rivers Estate, Limpopo
Size: 255 m²



BUSHVELD DRAGON

The Bushveld Dragon Shows That a
Home Can Be a Creature of the Earth

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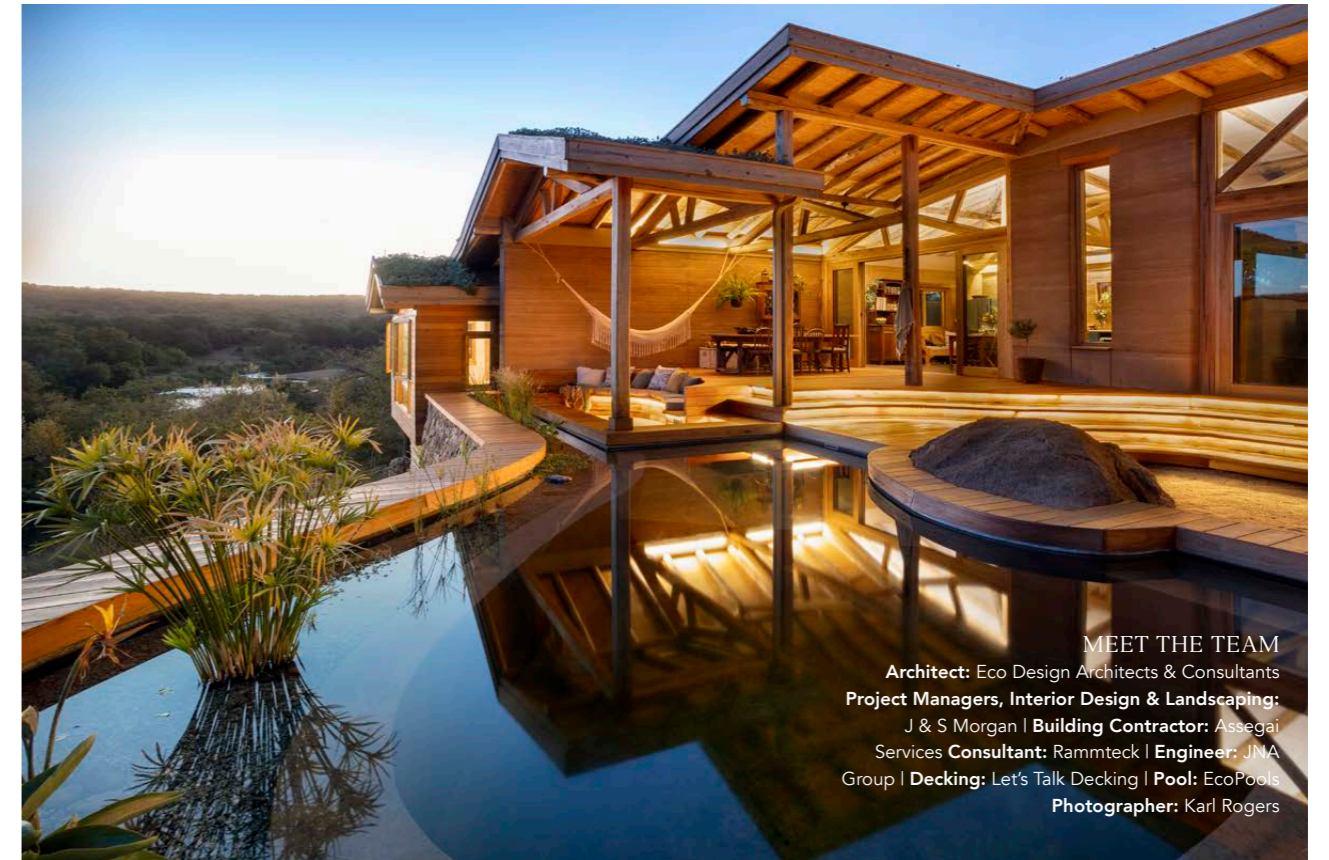
Fairytale oasis

Here, Horned Rockdweller dragonflies feel at home. They've been resting on the rammed earth walls from the day these were built: Nature's signal that it accepts the building as its own. In collaboration with the JNA Group, specialists in timber construction, the team ensured that the roof structure comprised durable, aesthetic materials. Boron-treated eucalyptus timber posts and trusses support the pole roof rafters, a structure that has defied torrential rains and flooding. A semi-succulent *Plectranthus* species, avoided by baboons that are common to the area, thrives in this terrain. Interspersed with naturally occurring grasses, it creates a fairytale-like forest covering the compost-and-soil roof.

Adjacent to the living area, the bio pool is a sanctuary for relaxation, situated between two naturally occurring boulders in the riverine wilderness. Serving the dual functions of evaporative cooling and relaxation, EcoPools developed a strategic plan to keep the feature environmentally friendly. Plants and gravel are deployed to filtrate the water rather than conventional salt or chlorinated systems.



Period pieces situate the home in an ancient time. Heavy Zanzibari doors and dark timber cupboards are 19th-century accents complementing contemporary details. The interior space is positioned towards south-facing views of the Blyde River Canyon Mountain range and its river, both of them descending their timeless magic right on the doorstep of the home.



MEET THE TEAM
Architect: Eco Design Architects & Consultants
Project Managers, Interior Design & Landscaping:
J & S Morgan | Building Contractor: Assegai
Services Consultant: Rammteck | Engineer: JNA
Group | Decking: Let's Talk Decking | Pool: EcoPools
Photographer: Karl Rogers



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Andy Horn, Director



@ecodesignarchitects
www.ecodesignarchitects.co.za

Of the earth

Inspired by the philosophy of architect and designer Frank Lloyd Wright, Eco Design Architects believes that a successful building beautifies the landscape. As the main living space rises to meet the views, it forms a U-shaped courtyard with bedrooms on either side, sheltered by the dragon's wings. The resulting verandah is stabilised by rammed earth walls to the west. Its structural lines accentuate the perspective, intensifying the connection between inside and outside, between contemporary and earthy architectures.



SUPPLIERS

Paint: ProNature | **Lighting:** LumenEssence | **Textiles:** Ecu
Timber Fans: Bright Star Lighting