

Creative drive surfaces in an industrial-smart Hout Bay lookout

STORY NATALIE BORUVKA PHOTOS ANGIE LÁZARO

**MAIN PIC** The heart of Dieter Losskarn's home holds his motor marvel, an original New York checkerboard taxi cab he's held a dream of owning ever since (as a child) he saw 'the chubby car with the friendly eyes and wide smile' in Hollywood movies. An advert on the internet took him out on somewhat of a limb to the States to purchase this 1976 model. In the back seat that Dieter describes as 'acres of Americana', Al Pacino evidently sat for a scene in *Carlito's Way*. After a road trip of more than 15 000 kilometres across America it arrived in Cape Town and underwent a complete overhaul. Known as the Cab of Good Hope, it is the only one of its kind in South Africa and can be hired for promotions and film shoots (lossis.com).



# CAR THE DRAL

**BELOW** Blue LEDs light the treads of an industrial staircase (comprising junkyard finds) and a Bullerjan stove is both a practical and sculptural feature (bullerjan.com).

**BELOW RIGHT** The taxi model in the entrance light shaft was custom-made by Sibusiso Mbhele, an autistic artist from KZN redrocktribal.co.za

'IF YOU LIKE MY HOUSE then you should like me as well,' Dieter Losskarn announces, adding, with cautious humility, 'well, at least a little!' Unreserved and honest, playful and stylish, the structure and its accompanying space at once reveals the smart creativity and fun-loving spirit of the German expatriate whose love of adventure inadvertently saw him move continents 18 years ago. At the time a photo-journalist heading up the travel section at a large Stuttgart publishing house, Dieter was invited by Lufthansa to cover their fly-and-ride programme which involved a flight to Joburg with his motorbike and a return trip from Cape Town. The trip ended up being five weeks and his Triumph Tiger clocked 6 000 kilometres. Needless to say he was hooked. 'I felt very confident about the future of South Africa and,' he continues, with as much tangible fervent loyalty as to be expected from any proud Mother City patriot, 'who doesn't want to live forever in a place like Cape Town?'

The site of Dieter's third build in Hout Bay – still his favourite place in South Africa – was met with alarm by friends and colleagues. The question much-repeated was: where is your view? Relaying the concept that 'had been in his head for a long time' to architects Kestrel Studios, the in-absentia views were ultimately revealed through exploitation of the natural elevation of the site and the strategic placement of walls of aluminium-framed glass doors.

While the home literally opens up to panoramic vistas of the surrounding mountains and the bay, Dieter's prized area – and the heart of his passion – is contained within the confines of his basement. 'The whole house speaks of my love of cars and so you see I don't have a garage but rather what I like to call a "carthedral"!'. In an expanse of mirror-polished epoxy the colour of crème brûlée, the boy indulges in his toy: a marvellous, bright yellow New York checkerboard taxi cab. Where the four-and-a-half metre high raw concrete walls are not punctured by dramatic horizontal shafts of light, they provide exhibition space for the enamel signs and licence plates that, as a travel and motoring journalist, Dieter has collected in places as remote as Alaska and the Yukon Territory.

Concrete arches give a street cafe feel to the raised 'car viewing' area, where Dieter indulges in his four-wheel eye candy. A large Bullerjan stove – a striking German patent developed in Canadian saw mills to burn surplus wood – unconventionally gushes heat sideways, making the entire volume an appealing retreat – even in winter. The steel staircase, an art piece in itself, sports illuminated treads in third grade bulletproof glass and a junkyard-found truck gearbox provides a talking point support. Dieter's passion-enthused creativity manifests in a number of so-called 'carchitecture'





The red outdoor table is a glass-topped, built-in light shaft that offers views into the garage basement below. Wamsler stove, faitsch-products.com.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** Dieter's 'carchitecture' coffee table was made from a 1953 Ford front end bought for R400 in Prince Albert. Painting 'Vuvuzela Rising' from the Hout Bay Gallery. Aluminium folding doors open up for glorious views on wind-still days. Dining room table, Le Grange and kudu leather sofa, Van den Bergh Furniture. Walls in Plascon's 'Stone Wall'. Messed-up chair from Delos

items throughout the home, including a 1958 Ford front-end fitted to the main bedroom wall as a console, its LED lights casting a mysterious 'Christine-like' glow at night. That the raconteur is as industrious and practical as he is creative and imaginative is illustrated in his black LED-lit pool. Rimmed in stainless steel mosaic, it veils a 16 000 litre rainwater tank that (even in the summer months) reduces the monthly water bill to zero.

A nearby Yucca ensures memories of his birth town, Würzburg, are never far from mind. Sprouting from the cobbled courtyard sandwiched between the two wings of the house, the species for which he has a special affection reminds him of the battles with cowboy and Indian figurines that were regular childhood play beneath the Yucca pot plants his parents had in their Bavarian apartment. 'Now,' he says, beaming with mischievous pride, 'I am playing under a proper one.' **TB**

**Dieter Losskarn** lossis.com; **Kestrel Studios** kestrelstudios.co.za; **peterstroth.co.za** for concrete works





As with much of the home, the kitchen was conceptualised by Dieter and is a compact, utilitarian space in keeping with the raw, industrial character of the home. Hanging kitchen rack, The Chef's Warehouse



Entrance to the bathroom is through an antique double Indian door from Private Collections. The handmade copper bath which involved 200 man hours of work is from Railway House, Kalk Bay. The glass-roofed shower offers night views of the Southern Cross. Chandelier from Delos.



**LEFT** A 1958 Ford front end mounted to the wall has LED illuminated headlamps. The 1900 Koch's barber/dentist chair is the perfect reading spot with views over the bay.

**ABOVE** Architects Kestrel Studios were responsible for manifesting Dieter's vision of 'a modern, light, airy house that would open up to expansive views of Hout Bay and its surrounds'. The Yucca tree is a special reminder of Dieter's childhood and had to be airlifted into position.

# DESIGNER SWAG

Dieter Losskarn has made his home a playful contemporary platform for an all-consuming passion: cars. With admirable creative ingenuity, this imagination is captured through decorative and practical items he makes using the car parts he has a penchant for collecting on his travels. Curious collectibles and other car-related paraphernalia further embellish a 'gallery' approach that takes easy residence within the raw industrial framework.



Model of Dieter's original New York checkerboard taxi cab by Sibusiso Mbhele [redrocktribal.co.za](http://redrocktribal.co.za)

Wall-mounted console made from a 1958 Ford front-end part found in Prince Albert for R450



Alternative art: various old enamel signs collected over time

The bedside lamp was made using a rusty Shell oil supply can [recreate.za.net](http://recreate.za.net)

