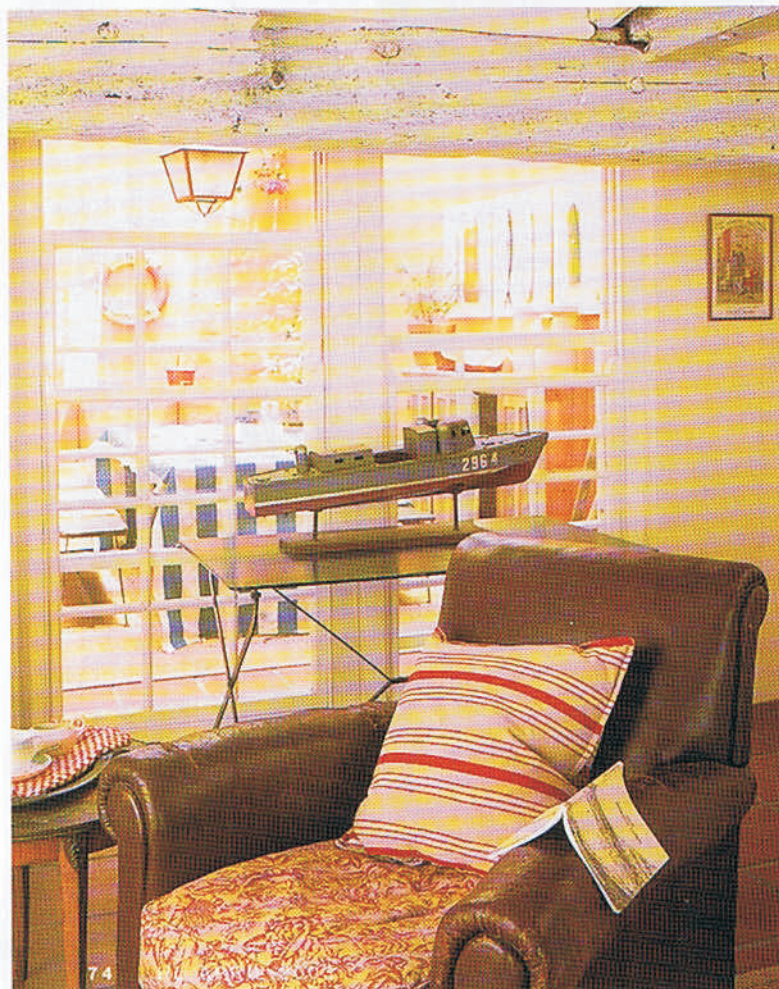




Left The enclosed courtyard, with its *latte* ceiling, adds another room to the house and provides shelter from the Cape's notorious wind and rain. The idea for the water feature, where water is piped into old firemen's buckets hanging above a rectangular pool, comes from a French decor magazine. The lifebuoy, from Llandudno in Wales, was found at The Trading Post 021-712-5424. The wood-and-wrought iron dining table, from Morgan Associates 021-762-5833, teams up with wooden benches and is covered in a French flea market find and two rare cuisine kitchen cloths. Big clay pots with ficus trees complete the pretty picture. Left below Leather adds a masculine touch to the romantic feel, and this lounge chair was a gift from Salomé to Willem.



One of Salomé's favourite finds was the old Union Jack that hangs at the end of the passage and cheerfully greets visitors. 'It's the first thing you see when you open the front door - I love it.' The flag was a birthday present for Willem, and Salomé used it to wrap another gift, the stately replica of a naval vessel that has pride of place on a Hope table in the living room.

The couple bought the house a year ago. They were looking for a weekend getaway close to the sea, and the character-filled three-bedroomed house - just down the road from Boulders Beach - fitted the bill perfectly. 'The house had charm, but it needed some work,' says Salomé, who approached the project with her unique combination of *joie de vivre* and a keen decorator's eye.

The first thing she did was paint the 'perfectly proportioned house' inside and out. A colour on the outside she dubs 'Moroccan terracotta', defined with just the right amount of white, is matched with powder blue on the front door and the double-door shutters that flank it on either side. Inside, the walls are a neutral canvas, with Moroccan terracotta making another appearance in the enclosed courtyard that doubles as a dining room.

One of Salomé's biggest challenges was deciding what to do with the structurally essential but rather dark wooden lintel beams. 'They were originally from the old floating jetty in Cape Town harbour, and unpainted. I felt that they made the house very heavy. While on holiday in England, we visited a Weymouth restaurant that had similar beams - but they'd been painted. Suddenly I knew exactly what to do with ours.' She painted them grey, then white, in the rustic French tradition.

Salomé's passion for all things French is obvious. It can be seen in everything from her favourite spot for reading the Sunday papers - the antique French day bed in the lounge with its original mattress and French quilt and