

"I started renovating old houses in Simon's Town a few years ago and my first project was an old cowshed. I'd hardly stripped out the modern bits when someone arrived and offered to buy it."

John's renovations and restorations have proven so popular that he's worked on seven houses in Simon's Town, including his own. Unable to source stocks of old doors and windows that he required for his many projects in this country, he decided to visit Zanzibar and bring back a couple of doors. That trip produced 22 doors, four beds, a few old benches and gargoyles, as well as paintings which he exhibited at a gallery on the first floor of a wonderful old building he had renovated on the Kalk Bay main road.

"I then obtained a permit to import architectural antiquities from around the world," he says. "Anything over 100 years old."

A fortunate meeting with an antique dealer in Key West in the United States gave him an introduction to three Indian dealers from whom he now imports.

"I was on holiday in the States when I met this dealer who was about to retire," John explains. "I told him about my plans for buying old architectural pieces, and also that I designed and built water features. I helped him design a water feature in his own garden and he was so thrilled with it that he shared all his contacts in India with me."

"He'd travelled the world for 35 years so these contacts were invaluable and enabled me to establish my own business here."

"I've brought in three container loads so far, but in order to give people exactly what they are looking for, I have photographed and catalogued thousands and thousands of pieces. All are numbered and sized and I get updates of new stock every three weeks. People can come to me with their plans, architects and designers and choose what they want. I can obtain doors, windows, balconies, gazebos, columns and staircases."

"When I can I like to get whole sets of windows and doors rather than single items."

"Of course, you can use standard pine or meranti doors and windows but for a minimal extra cost you can obtain old pieces that will add a bit of soul and history to your home."

"The majority of pieces are made from teak, which contains its own natural oil and is one of the most durable woods. It ages beautifully and can be painted or limewashed."

John has a yard at the back of his Simon's Town property where you can browse among old beams and doors, and if you climb the stairs to his studio, you can sift through his photographs to choose just the right piece for your home. ▲

John Barrett, **Earth Temple Design**
Consultancy (021) 788 3952



TOP LEFT Solid teak windows with louvred shutters.

TOP RIGHT Less ornate but very stylish pair of doors.

ABOVE AND BELOW Some of the unusual and interesting architectural antiques John imports.

RIGHT A gazebo constructed from old pieces of salvaged teak.



LAYOUT BY HEATHER MACKESSACK