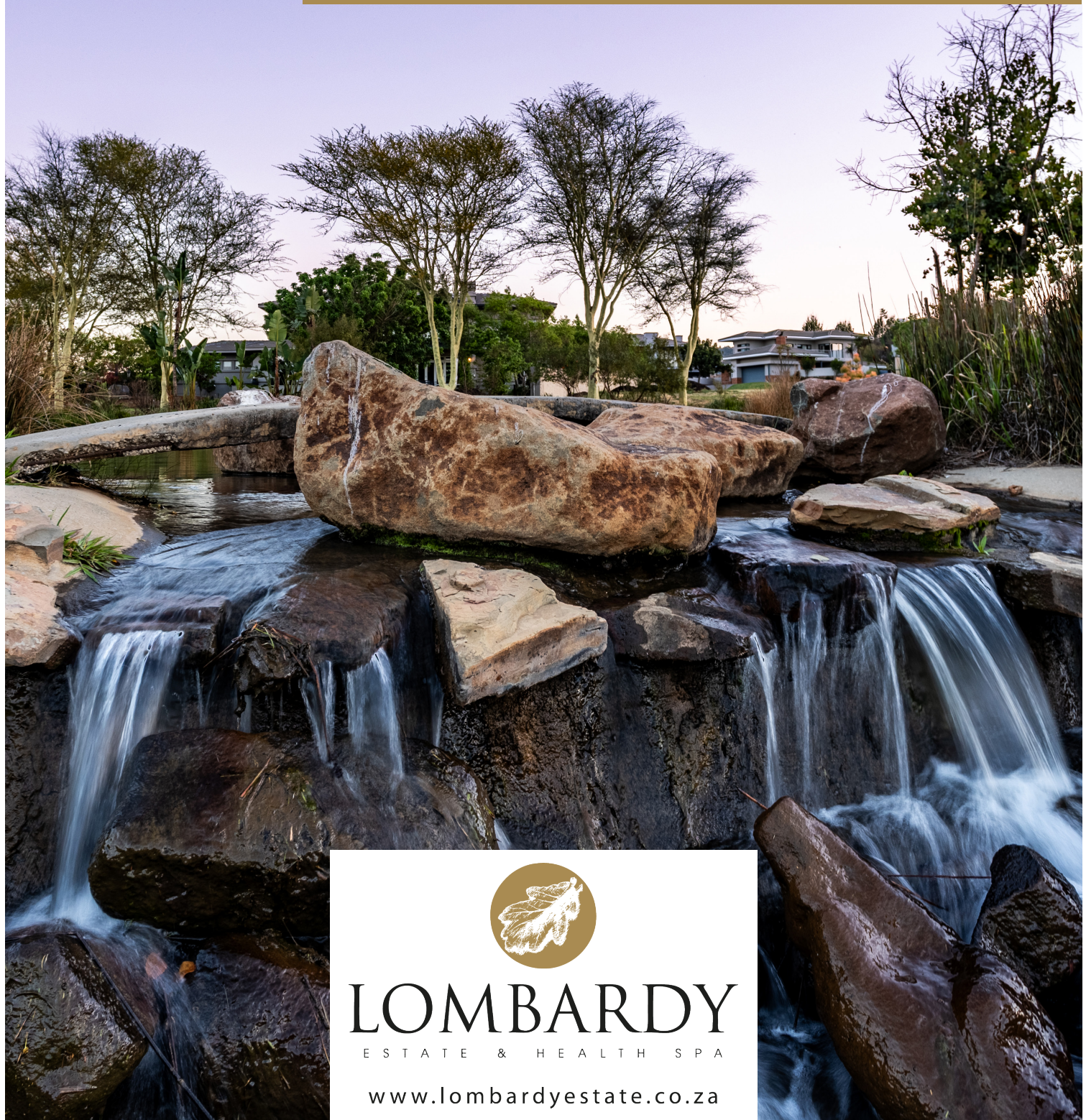


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APRIL ISSUE 2026



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LOMBARDY
ESTATE & HEALTH SPA

Disclaimer: This e-Magazine is produced especially for residents/owners of Lombardy Estate & Health spa to provide updates and useful information. It is produced by K-Studio on behalf of Lombardy Estate & Health spa HOA. Although every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of content, The Lombardy Estate & Health spa HOA and/or the Publisher, cannot be held liable for any inaccurate information, and may not agree with all opinions expressed in this publication.



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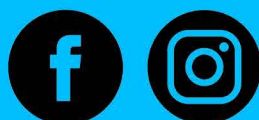
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Letter from the MANAGER

Dear Residents,

As we move into the softer rhythm of autumn, there's a noticeable shift across the estate — cooler mornings, warmer tones, and a welcome change of pace after the energy of the summer months. It's a season that invites us to slow down, reconnect, and enjoy the spaces we share.

With Easter approaching, we look forward to a time of celebration and community.

Our upcoming Easter event at the clubhouse promises to bring a sense of joy and togetherness, particularly for our younger residents, and we encourage families to take part in what is set to be a memorable day.

This period also brings increased activity within the estate, and with that, a gentle reminder of the importance of safety and consideration for one another — whether on our roads, in shared spaces, or during community gatherings.

In this edition, we've included a few seasonal touches to enjoy at home, including a simple Easter favourite you can make in your own kitchen

Wishing you and your families a peaceful and enjoyable start to the new season.

Kind regards,

Carli
Van der Westhuizen

HOA Manager
Lombardy Estate

A Gentle Reminder

To All Residents

We have recently received a number of concerns relating to day-to-day conduct within the estate, including:

- Vehicles parking in roadways and causing obstruction.
- Children riding bicycles without due regard for their own safety and that of motorists.
- Damage to irrigation systems from vehicles driving over sprayers.
- Ongoing disturbances caused by barking dogs.

While these may seem like small, isolated matters, collectively they impact the comfort, safety, and shared enjoyment of our community.

We kindly ask all residents to be mindful and considerate in their daily interactions — whether on our roads, in our common areas, or within close proximity to neighbours.

A simple guiding principle:

Treat others as you would like to be treated.

Let's all do our part to maintain the standard of living we value within Lombardy.



Community Safety

Stay Vigilant On Our Roads

Recent reports have highlighted a concerning increase in vehicle spiking incidents in and around Pretoria. The following routes have been identified as high-risk areas:

- R21 just after the N1 “Flying Saucer” interchange
- N4 eastbound between Silverlakes and Donkerhoek
- N4 east towards Bronkhorstspuit
- N4 between Solomon Mahlangu and Watermeyer off-ramps
- N4 between Bronkhorstspuit and Balmoral off-ramps
- N4 west from Akasia to Brits
- N4 towards Rustenburg between the R80 Mabopane Freeway and Brits Plaza tollgate
- N1 from Midrand to Carousel Plaza
- N1 near Carousel Plaza and the Maubane area
- N1 between Sefako Makgatho Drive and the Wallmansthal on-ramp
- R80 Mabopane Freeway
- R80 from Eskia Mphahlele Drive to Soshanguve
- Wallmansthal on-ramp
- Ben Schoeman Road from Midrand to Kgosi Mampuru Correctional Centre
- R566
- Garsfontein Road
- De Villebois Mareuil Drive

Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and take practical precautions when travelling:

- Avoid driving at night where possible, particularly on quieter or poorly lit roads
- Keep a safe following distance to allow

time to react to hazards

- Be cautious of objects in the road and avoid stopping in unsafe areas
- Ensure your vehicle is in good condition, especially tyres
- If you suspect a spiking incident, do not stop immediately — drive to the nearest safe, well-lit area or security point
- Keep emergency contact numbers easily accessible

A heightened awareness and proactive approach to personal safety can make a meaningful difference.



A Rare Resident:

The Cape Porcupine

Early risers and keen observers may be lucky enough to spot one of Lombardy's more elusive residents — the Cape porcupine — occasionally seen in the quiet hours of the morning near our wetland areas.

These fascinating nocturnal creatures are the largest rodents in southern Africa, known for their distinctive quills and slow, deliberate movements. Despite their somewhat formidable appearance, Cape porcupines are generally shy and non-aggressive, preferring to retreat and avoid human interaction.

A few interesting facts:

- Cape porcupines can grow up to 90cm in length and weigh over 20kg
- Their quills are not thrown, but can detach easily when touched as a defence mechanism
- They are mostly nocturnal and spend their days resting in burrows or natural shelters
- Porcupines often live in family groups and can mate for life
- They are herbivores, feeding on roots, bulbs, bark, and fallen fruit
- Their strong teeth allow them to gnaw on bones to obtain calcium

They play an important role in the ecosystem, contributing to soil turnover

and seed dispersal, and form part of the rich biodiversity that makes our estate such a unique place to live.

Residents are kindly reminded to admire these animals from a distance and avoid approaching or disturbing them.

Moments like these are a gentle reminder of the natural beauty that surrounds us — sometimes just beyond our doorstep.



11 April 2026



Easter

At Lombardy

Arranging a date for this year's Easter event has certainly been a challenge, navigating around public holidays and school closures — but we're pleased to confirm that a date has been secured.

Join us at the Clubhouse from 12:00 to 15:00 for a fun-filled afternoon for the little ones.

Children can look forward to:

- Fun games and activities
- Live entertainment shows
- A colouring and face painting corner
- And of course... an exciting Easter egg hunt!

We look forward to welcoming families for a joyful afternoon of laughter, treats, and community spirit.

See you there!



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Capture the Season

As the estate transforms with the rich colours of autumn, we invite residents to take part in our Autumn Photo Competition.

From golden leaves and soft morning light to quiet moments in your garden or scenic estate views — we're looking for photographs that capture the beauty and essence of the season.

How to enter:

- Submit your best autumn-inspired photos to gm@lombardystate.co.za
- Include your name and stand number in your submission
- Multiple entries are welcome

Closing Date:

- 18 May 2026

Selected photos will be featured in our upcoming magazine edition, showcasing the talent and perspective within our community. **We look forward to seeing Lombardy through your lens.**



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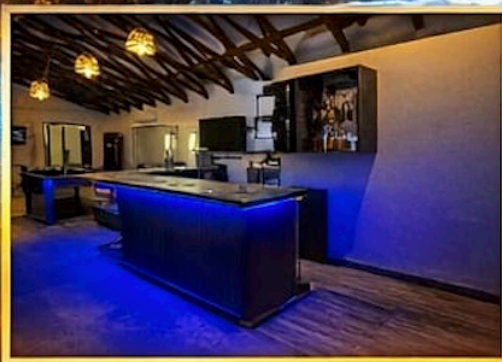
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Rethinking the Rooms You Use Every Day

Thoughtful ways to transform your home...

A home should do more than look beautiful. It should support the way you live, feel inviting and reflect your personality with ease. That is why more homeowners are moving away from formal interiors and towards spaces that feel warmer, more functional and more personal.

One of the strongest interior trends right now is layered, lived-in design. Instead of rooms that feel too polished, people are choosing texture, softness and practical flow. It is an approach that balances beauty with comfort and makes every room feel more usable.

If you are thinking about updating your home, start with the rooms you use most.

THE LIVING ROOM: WHERE COMFORT COMES TO LIFE

The living room is the space where a home's personality shows. It is the place where people relax, gather and unwind, so comfort should always lead the design.

Texture is one of the easiest ways to bring warmth into the space. Natural materials like wood, linen, cotton and rattan add depth and softness, while layered throws and upholstered seating make the room feel more inviting.

Layout matters too. Furniture should support connection and easy movement, helping the space feel welcoming and well balanced.



THE DINING ROOM: STYLE IN THE DETAILS

A dining room should feel welcoming and considered. One of the easiest ways to refresh it is to move away from furniture that matches too perfectly. Mixing finishes, tones or textures can make the space feel more natural and more refined.

Scale matters too. A rug should be large enough for chairs to stay on it even when pulled out, helping the room feel balanced and complete. To finish the space, keep the table styling simple and intentional. A vase, bowl or candlesticks can add interest without overwhelming the room.



THE KITCHEN: WHERE FUNCTION MEETS STYLE

Kitchens are central to how we cook, gather and connect, so they need to work well while still feeling refined.

Good design starts with flow. The fridge, sink and stove should support easy movement, while task and ambient lighting help the space feel both practical and inviting. A well-chosen backsplash adds character and durability, bringing style to a hardworking room.



THE BEDROOM: A SPACE TO UNWIND

A bedroom should feel like a retreat. Soft bedding, supportive pillows and a well-layered bed can instantly make the room feel more restful and refined. Colour matters too. Calmer, muted tones help create a peaceful atmosphere and make it easier to switch off.

The best bedrooms are not only beautiful. They are designed to support comfort, rest and everyday living.



OUR APPROACH

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Leaf it to Autumn

As the air cools and autumn settles in, your garden quietly shifts into preparation mode. While everything above ground may seem to slow down, below the surface there is a lot happening.

This is the season where strong roots are built, setting your garden up for a healthy winter and a vibrant spring. With a focus on indigenous planting and a few smart habits, your garden can thrive with less effort and more reward.

Why Autumn Sets the Tone

Autumn creates ideal conditions for root development. The soil is still warm from summer, while the cooler air reduces stress on plants. This combination allows roots to establish deeply and efficiently. Research consistently shows that plants established in autumn develop stronger root systems, which improves their resilience and growth in the following seasons.

“Strong roots are built in autumn, long before you see the results in spring.”

This is why what you do now matters. A little attention in autumn can make a noticeable difference in how your garden looks and performs later.

Go Indigenous for a Smarter Garden

Indigenous plants are naturally suited to South African conditions. They are adapted to local rainfall patterns, soil types, and temperature changes, which means they require less water and maintenance while being more resistant to pests and diseases.

Consider planting favourites like Aloe, Agapanthus, Spekboom, and Wild Rosemary. These plants are hardy, water-wise, and bring year-round structure and interest to your garden. Spekboom is especially valuable, known for its ability to improve soil quality and store carbon.

Choosing indigenous is not just practical, it is a long-term investment in a garden that works with nature.

Add Colour That Lasts All Year

If you would like to keep your garden looking vibrant through every season, there are several indigenous flowering plants that provide long-lasting or repeat blooms.

Plants like Gazania, *Bulbine frutescens*, *Scabiosa africana*, and *Felicia amelloides* (blue daisy) are excellent choices. These plants are known for extended flowering periods, often blooming for most of the year under the right conditions. They add pops of colour while still being hardy and water-wise, making them perfect for estate gardens that need to look good without constant upkeep.



Feed the Soil for Stronger Roots

Healthy soil supports everything in your garden. Autumn is the ideal time to add compost or organic fertiliser, improving soil structure and nutrient content. This helps roots grow deeper and stronger before winter dormancy.

Fertilisers with a higher potassium content are especially beneficial at this time of year, as potassium supports root strength and improves resistance to cold and disease. Studies in lawn and garden care confirm that autumn feeding helps plants store energy, leading to better growth in spring.

Lawn Care: Less is More

Your lawn also needs a seasonal adjustment. One of the biggest mistakes during autumn is cutting grass too short. Short grass weakens the plant, reduces its ability to photosynthesise, and makes it more vulnerable to cold stress.

Instead, keep your lawn slightly longer than in summer and reduce mowing to about every second week, depending on growth. This allows the grass to maintain strength and protects the soil underneath.

“A lawn cut too short today is a weaker lawn tomorrow.”

It is also important to keep the lawn free of heavy debris, but avoid excessive disturbance. A well-maintained autumn lawn will recover much faster and greener when spring returns.

Water Smarter as Temperatures Drop

As the weather cools, your garden naturally requires less water. Overwatering can lead to shallow roots and increase the risk of disease. Rather water deeply and less frequently to encourage roots to grow downwards.

Indigenous plants, once established, are particularly efficient and often need very little additional watering during autumn and winter.

Tidy Up With a Light Touch

Autumn is a good time to clean up your garden, but there is no need to strip it bare. Remove dead or diseased plants, trim where needed, and clear excess leaf build-up.

Leaving some organic matter behind can actually benefit your soil by acting as insulation and slowly breaking down into nutrients. A balanced approach keeps your garden neat while still supporting natural processes.

A Season to Set Your Garden Up for Success

Autumn is not a winding-down season, it is a preparation season. By focusing on indigenous planting, improving your soil, adjusting your lawn care, and planting long-lasting colour, you create a garden that is both beautiful and sustainable.

A little effort now means less work later and a garden that continues to thrive through every season.





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Autumn Pool Care

Safety, savings and smarter living
as the seasons change



As the days get shorter and the evenings cooler, many families assume pool season is “over.” Yet autumn is exactly when your pool needs the most attention and protection. Falling leaves, wind-blown debris and cooler nights can quickly turn a clear pool into a maintenance headache – and even when nobody is swimming, an uncovered pool still poses a safety risk for children and pets.

Designer Pool Covers has seen this pattern for years and recommends a different approach: treat autumn as your “smart season” – the moment you lock in safety, savings and easier maintenance for the months ahead.

Why Autumn Is the Moment to Cover Up

As temperatures drop, keep your pool covered when not in use, this is even

more important in autumn than in summer.

- Save water in windy, dry conditions**
 Autumn winds accelerate evaporation. A well-fitted cover can dramatically reduce water loss, which is critical in South Africa’s dry climate and during any restrictions.
- Keep leaves and debris out**
 This is the season when trees shed and gusts carry dust and litter straight into your pool. A cover keeps the mess on top, not in your water, cutting cleaning time and reducing strain on your pump and filter.
- Stabilise water quality**
 With less debris and less evaporation, your water chemistry remains more stable. Designer Pool Covers’ clients typically find they need fewer chemical top-ups going into winter.
- Maintain temperature and comfort**
 Even if you are only swimming on warmer autumn days, a thermal or solar cover helps retain heat overnight and reduces the chill from those cooler evenings.

Most importantly, a correctly specified safety cover creates a strong barrier over the water. Drowning is silent and can happen in seconds – and it is not limited to summer. For households with children, pets or frequent visitors, this layer of protection is non-negotiable.

Autumn Trends in 2026

Working with homeowners, architects and estate developers nationwide, Designer Pool Covers has identified three clear autumn trends this year:



- 1. Safety you can walk on – with style**
More clients are asking for solid, tensioned safety covers that can be walked on when properly installed and closed, providing a visually neat surface instead of an open, dark pool. Autumn is when many owners finally act on “we’ve been meaning to make this safer” and choose solutions that double as a design feature.
- 2. Automating the autumn close-up** As families spend more evenings indoors, automatic covers are becoming the go-to option. With the turn of a key or push of a button, the pool is closed in seconds – making it realistic to secure the pool every night without a second thought. This is especially popular on properties with lots of trees, where the daily leaf fall can be intense.
- 3. Designing for year-round efficiency**
Instead of “summer only” thinking, Designer Pool Covers is seeing more homeowners plan for 12-month performance. Thermal and safety covers are being specified together with heaters, pumps and landscaping so that the pool stays efficient and low-maintenance from autumn right through to spring.

To make the most of the season, here are a few practical steps:

- **Do an autumn “health check”**
Before leaf-fall peaks, check your water balance, inspect your pump and filter, and have any issues addressed. Adding a quality cover at this stage locks in that work instead of letting autumn undo it.
- **Match the cover to your lifestyle**
If your pool is still used on warm autumn weekends, an automatic or easy-to-roll manual system will make daily opening and closing effortless. If you largely stop swimming after April, a robust safety or thermal cover that can stay on for longer periods may be ideal.
- **Think safety first, then aesthetics**
For families with young children or pets, safety covers should be the starting point. From there, Designer Pool Covers can help you choose colours and finishes that complement your paving, deck and garden so the cover enhances your outdoor space.
- **Plan now for winter and next summer**
An autumn-installed cover protects your pool through winter, reduces green-pool

- surprises in spring and means your water is closer to “swim-ready” when the first warm days arrive.

Why Designer Pool Covers Is the Autumn Essential

Designer Pool Covers has built its reputation on combining safety, durability and design – and autumn is when all three matter most.

- Custom-made safety and thermal covers for most pool shapes and sizes
- Sleek automatic systems and practical manual options for every lifestyle
- A wide range of colours to coordinate with your outdoor finishes

- UV-resistant, high-quality materials designed for South African conditions
- Professional installation and guidance on seasonal care and use

Whether you want a luxurious automatic safety cover you can close at the touch of a button, or a robust manual solution to get you through leaf-fall season with minimal fuss, Designer Pool Covers can recommend, supply and install a system tailored to your pool.

This autumn, protecting your pool is about more than just convenience. It is about creating a home environment that is safe, efficient and beautifully maintained all year round – and that is exactly what Designer Pool Covers is here to deliver.



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Mothers are Magic

Celebrate Her Beautifully This Mother's Day

There is no single definition of a mother.

She may be the one who raised you, the one who stepped in when it mattered most, or the one who simply chose to love you like her own. She could be a grandmother, a stepmom, an aunt, a mentor, or a friend who became family.

And yet, no matter who she is, her impact is unmistakable.

Mothers have a way of shaping our lives quietly. Not always through big, visible moments, but through the everyday things we often take for granted. The check-ins, the encouragement, the sacrifices made without ever asking for recognition.

This Mother's Day is not about perfection or pressure. It is about pausing long enough to truly appreciate her.

To notice the things she does.

To say the words we sometimes assume she already knows.

To give back, even in the smallest way.

“It’s not about how much you do, but how deeply you show you care.”

For some, that might look like a slow morning together. For others, it could be a message, a visit, or simply time intentionally set aside. The beauty of Mother's Day is that it does not need to look the same for everyone.

What matters is that it feels real.

It is also a day to honour the women who carry the role in different ways. The ones who love fiercely without the title. The ones who show

up, guide, support, and nurture, often without ever being asked.

Because motherhood is not only a role. It is a presence.

A mother's love is not defined by titles, but by the way she shows up, again and again.

And perhaps the most important reminder of all is this: appreciation should not be reserved for one day of the year. But if Mother's Day gives us the opportunity to express what we often leave unsaid, then it is worth embracing.

So this year, keep it simple. Keep it sincere.

Say thank you.

Spend time.

Show her she matters.

Because at the heart of it all, that is what she has been doing for you all along.

A Little Something Extra for Mom

To make celebrating even more special, Indezi River Creamery has shared a selection of delicious recipes and simple serving ideas to help you spoil mom at home. From thoughtful breakfasts to beautifully put-together platters, it's all about adding a touch of love to the table.

That is why we have partnered with Indezi River Creamery and The Barnyard Theatre to give you the opportunity to truly spoil her this Mother's Day.

Competition

Enter our competition and stand a chance to win:

- 2 Barnyard Theatre tickets
- An Indezi River Creamery Party Platter

How to enter:

- Scan the QR code or [click here](#)
- Complete the quick entry form
- Entries close on **30 April 2026**.
- The winner will be announced via email or WhatsApp.



Mothers are Magic



Breakfast flapjacks with whipped cheese

The classic breakfast in bed. Now with an inspired topping that you can be properly proud of! [Recipe here.](#)

Simple cheeseboard with pizzazz

It's unbelievably easy to impress with a simple cheese board. The perfect lunch or sundowner dinner...

[Get inspired here.](#)

(Requires no actual cooking!)

Good-for-you smoothies

There are many ways to say "I love you." These kefir-based smoothies are just one. But they are beautiful, delicious, and exceptionally good-for-your-gut. [Some ideas here.](#)



There is a kind of magic that comes without a wand or a cape. It lives in the hands that can make something out of nothing, in the voice of someone who knows your thoughts, in the woman who holds it all together while making it all look effortless.

Mothers

Mothers - biological or spiritual, allocated, chosen or found - are the OG magicians.

Nothing says 'I appreciate you' like making something from scratch.

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Dive into SODWANA BAY

Where Adventure Meets the Ocean



Tucked along the coastline of KwaZulu-Natal, Sodwana Bay is one of South Africa's most breathtaking coastal gems. Known for its crystal-clear waters, warm Indian Ocean currents, and vibrant coral reefs, this destination is a dream for both adventure seekers and those simply looking to unwind by the sea.

Whether you are visiting for a weekend escape or planning a bucket-list diving experience, Sodwana Bay offers something truly unforgettable.

Why Sodwana Bay is So Special

Located within the world-renowned iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Sodwana Bay is one of the southernmost coral reef systems in the world. This means you get to experience tropical-style diving without leaving South Africa.

The reefs are alive with colour and movement. Think tropical fish, sea turtles, rays, and if you're lucky, even dolphins or whale sharks passing through. It's not just a dive, it's an underwater safari.

"Sodwana Bay isn't just a destination, it's an experience that stays with you long after you've surfaced."

Top Things to Do in Sodwana Bay

Even if diving isn't your main focus, there's plenty to keep you busy:

- **Beach Days:** Long stretches of unspoiled coastline, perfect for relaxing or swimming
- **Snorkelling:** A great option for families or beginners wanting a glimpse of marine life

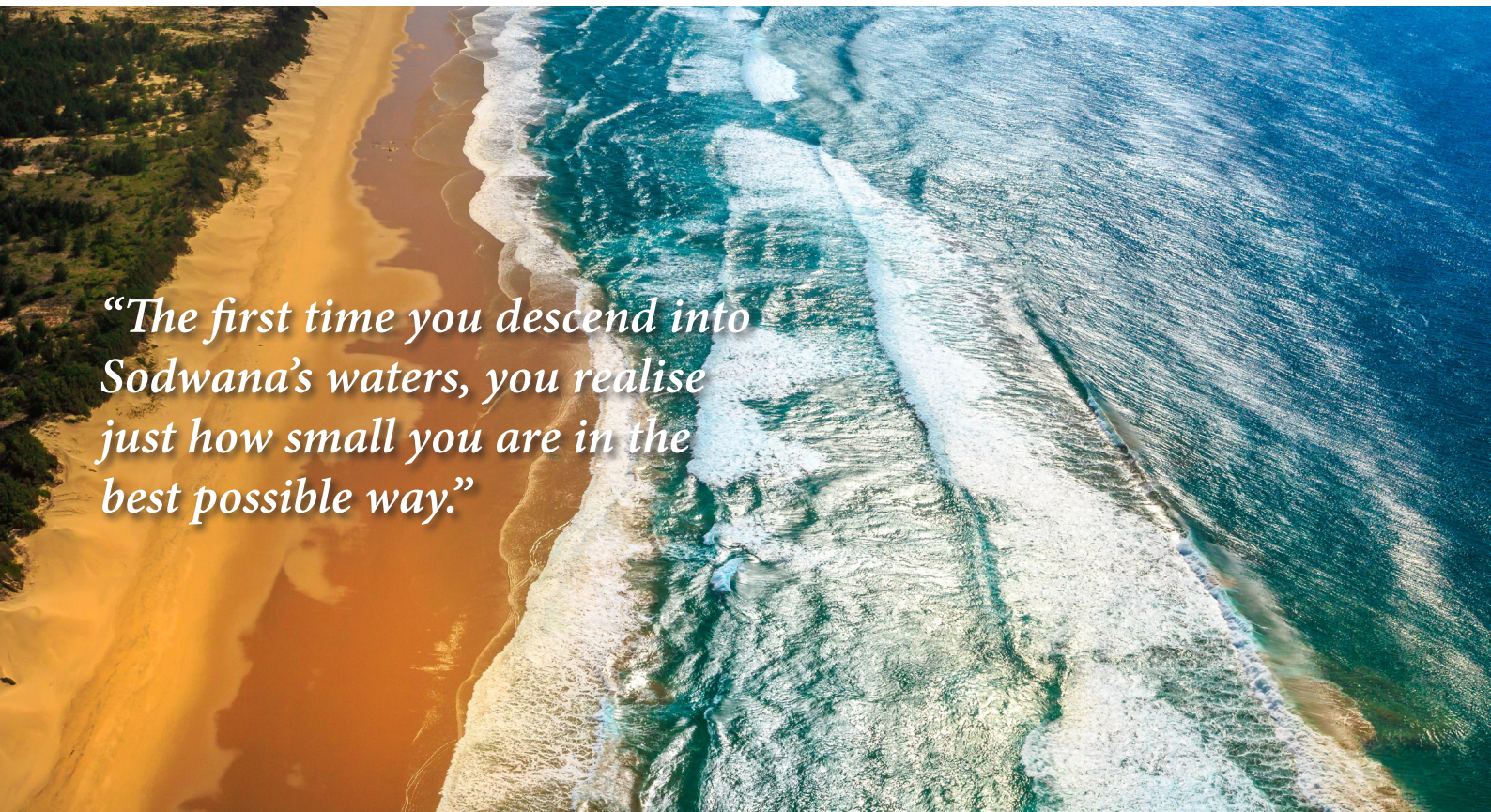
- **Deep-Sea Fishing:** Known as one of South Africa's top fishing spots
- **Turtle Tours (Seasonal):** Witness nesting turtles along the shoreline
- **Game Drives Nearby:** Combine your beach trip with bushveld adventures in surrounding reserves

Sodwana Bay is one of those rare places where bush, beach, and ocean all meet.

The Diving Experience

Diving here is suitable for both beginners and experienced divers. There are multiple reef sites, each offering something unique, from shallow reefs perfect for first-timers to deeper dives for the more advanced.

Expect warm waters, excellent visibility, and an incredible diversity of



"The first time you descend into Sodwana's waters, you realise just how small you are in the best possible way."

marine life. Most dives are boat launches directly from the beach, which adds a bit of excitement before you even reach the reef.

Helpful Diving Tips

If you are planning to dive in Sodwana Bay, a little

preparation goes a long way:

- **Book in Advance:** Dive trips are popular, especially during holidays
- **Go with Professionals:** Choose an experienced dive operator for safety and local knowledge
- **Check Your Certification:**

Ensure your diving certification is up to date

- **Stay Hydrated:** The coastal heat can be deceptive
- **Relax and Take It In:** Don't rush the experience, the magic is in the details

If you're new to diving, many operators offer introductory

dives, making it accessible even if you've never tried it before.

Make It More Than Just a Trip

What makes Sodwana Bay truly special is how it slows you down. There's no rush, no noise, just the rhythm of the ocean and the feeling of being completely present.

It's the kind of place where memories are made, whether you're watching the sunrise over the ocean, spotting marine life beneath the surface, or simply enjoying time with family and friends.

For a comfortable and convenient stay, Sodwana Bay Lodge offers a great base. Set within lush coastal forest, it's close to the beach and dive launch sites, making it ideal for both divers and holidaymakers. With a relaxed atmosphere, on-site dining, and easy access to activities, it allows you to fully unwind while staying close to all the action.

Thinking of diving into your next adventure?

Chat to a trusted local dive expert and turn your Sodwana Bay visit into an experience you'll never forget.





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3 Minute habit

That Changes Everything

It's easy to get caught up in the idea that big results require big effort. Early mornings, strict routines, complicated systems. Yet sometimes, the smallest habits are the ones that quietly shape the biggest changes.

There is one simple practice that stands out for how effective it is, without demanding much from you. It takes just a few minutes a day, requires no special tools, and yet has the power to sharpen your thinking, improve your decisions, and build a sense of control over your life. It's the habit of writing things down. Not pages and pages, just a few intentional lines each day.

“Small daily reflections create big long-term clarity.”

Why It Works So Well

What makes this habit so powerful is not the effort, but the consistency. When you write something down, you are forced to

process it. You move from reacting in the moment to actually understanding what happened and why. Over time, this builds sharper thinking and more intentional decision-making. After a few weeks, you begin to notice patterns in your behaviour. You see what drains your energy, what motivates you, and what keeps repeating. This awareness alone is often enough to shift behaviour naturally, without forcing change.

It Builds More Than You Think

Writing also improves memory and learning in a simple but effective way. Even a quick note like “today I realised this” helps ideas stick, allowing you to build on lessons instead of losing them. At the same time, this habit quietly builds discipline. Because it is so small, it is easy to stay consistent. There is no overwhelm, no pressure, just a daily moment of showing up for yourself, and over time, that consistency strengthens your ability to follow through in other areas of your life.

What It Actually Looks Like

In practice, it is incredibly simple. At the end of each day, **take a moment to write down one thing you did, one thing you learned, and one thing you would do differently.** That's it. No need for perfect wording or deep insights every day, just honest reflection. You can do it in a notebook, on your phone, or wherever it feels easiest. The format does not matter. What matters is that you pause long enough to notice your day.

“Clarity doesn’t come from doing more. It comes from noticing more.”

Why This Beats Flashier Habits

There is nothing wrong with ambitious routines like early mornings or structured schedules, but many of them rely heavily on motivation, and motivation is not always reliable. This habit is different. It relies on attention, something you can return to even on your busiest days. Instead of trying to control everything, it helps you understand what is already happening, and from that understanding, better choices naturally follow.

The Long-Term Payoff

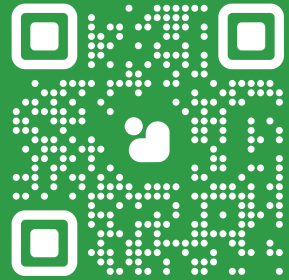
If you stick with it for a few months, you will have something surprisingly valuable: a clear record of how you think, how you improve, and how you make decisions. It's not loud or dramatic, but it works. And sometimes, the smallest habits are the ones that create the strongest foundations.



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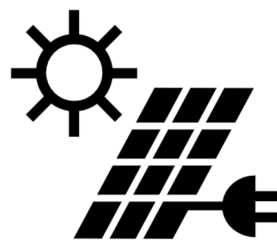
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What to study in the age of AI

Choosing your subjects can feel like a big decision, especially with so much talk about artificial intelligence changing the world of work.

Many learners are starting to wonder if certain careers might even disappear. The truth is, most careers are not going away, they are simply changing. What matters now is choosing subjects that give you flexibility and help you grow, rather than trying to predict the future perfectly.

What is really happening with AI?

Artificial intelligence is becoming part of everyday life, from writing and design to

analysing information. But it mainly replaces simple, repetitive tasks rather than entire careers. According to World Economic Forum, the jobs growing the fastest are those that combine technology with human skills like thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. This means learners should not be afraid of AI, but rather learn how to use it as a tool that can help them work smarter.

Are creative careers still a good choice?

Creative careers like graphic design, architecture, interior decorating, writing, and editing are still very relevant, but they are evolving. AI can help generate ideas and speed up work, but it cannot replace human understanding, taste, and decision-making. Research from McKinsey & Company shows that while AI can assist with creative tasks,

human judgment remains essential. A designer, for example, does not just create something that looks good, they solve problems and communicate ideas in a meaningful way.

“AI can help you create, but it can’t replace your ideas and understanding.”

What subjects should you consider?

Instead of choosing subjects based on fear, learners should focus on keeping their options open. Subjects like maths and science can lead to careers in engineering, medicine, and technology, while business and economics open doors to finance and entrepreneurship. Creative subjects like art and design remain valuable, especially when combined with technology. The key is not to limit yourself too early, but to choose a mix of subjects that allow for different opportunities later on.

Why combining skills is powerful

In today’s world, having more than one skill is a major advantage. People who can connect different fields are becoming more valuable than those who only focus on one area. For example, a designer who understands marketing, or a scientist who can analyse data, will have more opportunities. According to the OECD, jobs that require problem-solving, communication, and critical thinking are far less likely to be replaced by automation, which makes these combinations even more powerful.

Skills that will always matter

No matter what subjects you choose, certain skills will always help you succeed. These include problem-solving, creativity, understanding technology, communication, and working well with people. These are the abilities that make you stand out and remain valuable, even as technology continues to change the workplace.

“Your subjects matter, but your skills matter even more.”

Start building now

Learners do not have to wait until after school to start preparing for their future. Building small projects, learning new digital tools, and exploring interests can make a big difference. According to LinkedIn, employers are increasingly looking for people who can show what they can do, not just what they have studied. This means practical experience is becoming just as important as formal education.

You do not need to have everything figured out right now. Choosing subjects is about creating opportunities, not closing doors. Stay curious, challenge yourself, and be open to learning new things. It can also be a wise step to speak to professionals who can guide you, and even complete career assessments to help identify where your strengths lie. At the same time, do not ignore what you genuinely enjoy. The best path is often where your abilities and your interests meet. **The future will belong to those who can adapt, think for themselves, and keep growing, and that is something every learner can develop.**

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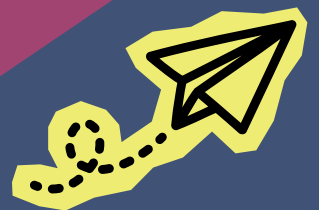
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INTERNAL & EXTERNAL PARASITES IN DOGS, CATS, & CHICKENS – PART 2

BY DR VICKY LOUW (BVSC)

Protecting Your Pets Starts with Prevention

Parasites remain one of the most frequent health challenges in both pets and poultry, often going unnoticed until problems arise. Despite their size, these organisms can have a serious impact on your animal's wellbeing if not managed early. Internal parasites, like worms and protozoa, as well as external pests such as fleas, ticks, mites, and lice, can affect dogs, cats, and chickens alike. In many cases, animals may appear perfectly healthy while an infestation is already developing beneath the surface.

Understanding how these parasites affect animals is an important first step in protecting their health. In part 2 we continue the discussion now focusing on external parasites.

External parasites (on the body):

External parasites irritate the skin, feed on blood, and can transmit serious diseases.

Common external parasites in dogs and cats

- **Fleas** – cause itching, allergies, skin infections, and transmit tapeworms
- **Ticks** – spread diseases such as biliary (tick fever/bosluiskoores), ehrlichia (tick-bite fever/bosluisbytkoores), and anaplasmosis
- **Mites** – microscopic external parasites that infest the skin or ears of dogs and cats, often resulting in itching, inflammation, and hair loss.
- **Lice** – less common, but can cause intense skin irritation.



Common external parasites in chickens

- **Red mites** – suck blood at night, hide in the coop
- **Northern fowl mites** – live on the bird
- **Lice** – feed on feathers and skin debris
- **Scaly leg mites** – burrow under leg scales

Why parasites are a serious problem?

While they are often small and easy to overlook, their impact on animal health can be substantial. One of the most immediate effects of external parasites across species is skin irritation and discomfort. Infested animals may show signs such as excessive scratching, biting, feather or hair loss, scabs, and inflamed skin. In some cases, animals develop allergic reactions, particularly to flea saliva, which can lead to severe itching and secondary skin infections.

External parasites can also cause more serious systemic health problems. Blood-feeding parasites such as fleas, ticks, and poultry mites can lead to anaemia, especially in young, small, or heavily infested animals. In chickens, heavy mite infestations may result in weakness, reduced egg production, and poor overall condition.

Another major concern is that many external parasites act as vectors for other diseases. Ticks, for example, can transmit a variety of infectious agents to dogs, cats and humans while

fleas can spread tapeworm infections when animals and even humans, yes you read correctly, accidentally ingest infected fleas during grooming or sleeping. **Summary of the effects of external parasites:**

- Dermatitis, skin irritation, skin infections
- Anaemia and weakness
- Poor growth and weight loss
- Organ damage
- Transmission of serious (and zoonotic) diseases
- Reduced egg production in poultry

Prevention is far better than cure:

Good parasite control should be routine, not reactive.

For dogs and cats:

Routine prevention: Most flea and tick preventatives should be given every 4-12 weeks, depending on the product used.

Regular checks: Especially after spending time outdoors or in areas with long grass.

Household treatment: If fleas are present, it is important to treat all pets in the household and the environment (bedding, carpets, and sleeping areas).

When parasites are detected: Treatment should begin immediately, and follow-up treatments should be given according to the product guidelines to break the parasite life cycle.

For chickens:

Inspection: Check birds and the coop at least once a week for signs of mites or lice. Routine preventative treatment: Treat the coop every 4–6 weeks, especially during warm months when parasites reproduce faster.

Deep cleaning: Perform a thorough clean and treatment every 2–3 months. This includes removing bedding, cleaning surfaces, and applying a coop-safe parasite treatment.

When parasites are present: If mites or lice are detected, treat both the birds and the coop immediately, and repeat treatment after 7–10 days to break the parasite life cycle.

Additional prevention tips

- Keep bedding clean and dry.
- Provide dust baths for chickens (sand/ash mix).
- Pay special attention to cracks, perches, and nesting boxes, where mites often hide.
- Quarantine new birds before introducing them to the flock.

Parasites are extremely common in dogs, cats, and chickens, but with the right preventative care they are very manageable. And if you are wary of just treating, please come and chat with us to select the most appropriate product for your pet's lifestyle and risk level.

Hot Cross Buns

A Family Favourite

There's nothing quite like the smell of freshly baked hot cross buns to welcome the Easter season.

Warm, spiced, and best enjoyed straight from the oven, this family favourite is perfect for slow autumn mornings.

Ingredients

- 500 g cake flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 20 g (2 sachets) dry yeast
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup white sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground nutmeg
- A pinch of cloves
- A pinch of salt
- 50 g unsalted butter, melted
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 250 ml cream or full cream milk
- 125 ml raisins

For the crosses:

- 5 tbsp flour
- 3–4 tbsp water

For the glaze:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

Spiced honey butter:

- 140–150 g butter, softened
- 3–4 tbsp honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cinnamon

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- 250 ml cream or full cream milk
- 125 ml raisins

For the crosses:



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EGG-STRA Sweet

DIY Easter Treat Boxes

By Micha von Zwiétring

There is something truly special about a handmade Easter surprise, especially when it is created with love and a touch of creativity. Instead of throwing away your empty egg cartons, why not turn them into charming little treat boxes? It is a simple, budget-friendly idea that feels far more personal than anything store-bought and adds that extra bit of magic to Easter morning.

“Sometimes the most meaningful gifts are the ones made by hand, not bought off a shelf.”

Recycling your egg cartons is not only a clever way to reduce waste, but it also gives you the perfect base for a creative project. These little boxes are ideal for kids, guests, or even as thoughtful gestures for neighbours. And the best part? Each one can be completely unique.

What you need

- 6-egg carton (cardboard, not plastic)
- Paint (acrylic works best)
- Shredded paper or tissue
- Sweets (mini eggs, chocolates, marshmallows)



- Glue (optional for decorations)
- Ribbon of your choice
- Scissors

Step-by-step (simple and clean)

1. Prep the carton

Start by trimming off any rough edges to neaten it up. If the lid feels a bit flimsy, reinforce it with a small piece of tape on the inside to make it sturdier.

2. Paint it

Choose your colours and paint the carton using two light coats rather than one thick layer. This gives a smoother finish and prevents the cardboard from becoming soggy. Make sure each coat dries properly before adding the next.

3. Add filler

Place a small amount of shredded paper or tissue into each compartment. This keeps your sweets in place and adds a soft, gift-like feel when opened.

4. Fill it

Now for the fun part. Add your selection of treats into each section. You can mix different sweets or keep each compartment themed with the same treats for a more uniform look.

5. Close and decorate

Close the carton and finish it off with a ribbon, string, or a cute sticker. A handwritten name tag can make it feel even more personal.

“It is not about how much you give, but how much thought you put into it.”

Ideas to make it look really good

- **Pastel theme:** Soft pink, blue, green, and lavender for a classic Easter look



- **Bunny face:** Draw simple eyes and whiskers on the lid
- **Chick theme:** Paint it yellow and add a tiny orange beak
- **Speckled eggs:** Flick paint lightly over the surface for a natural egg effect

This little DIY project is more than just a craft, it is a fun way to slow down, get creative, and make something special. You can do this with your mom, your friends, or your siblings, and everyone can decorate their own box in their own style. It makes Easter feel extra exciting because you created it yourself.



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