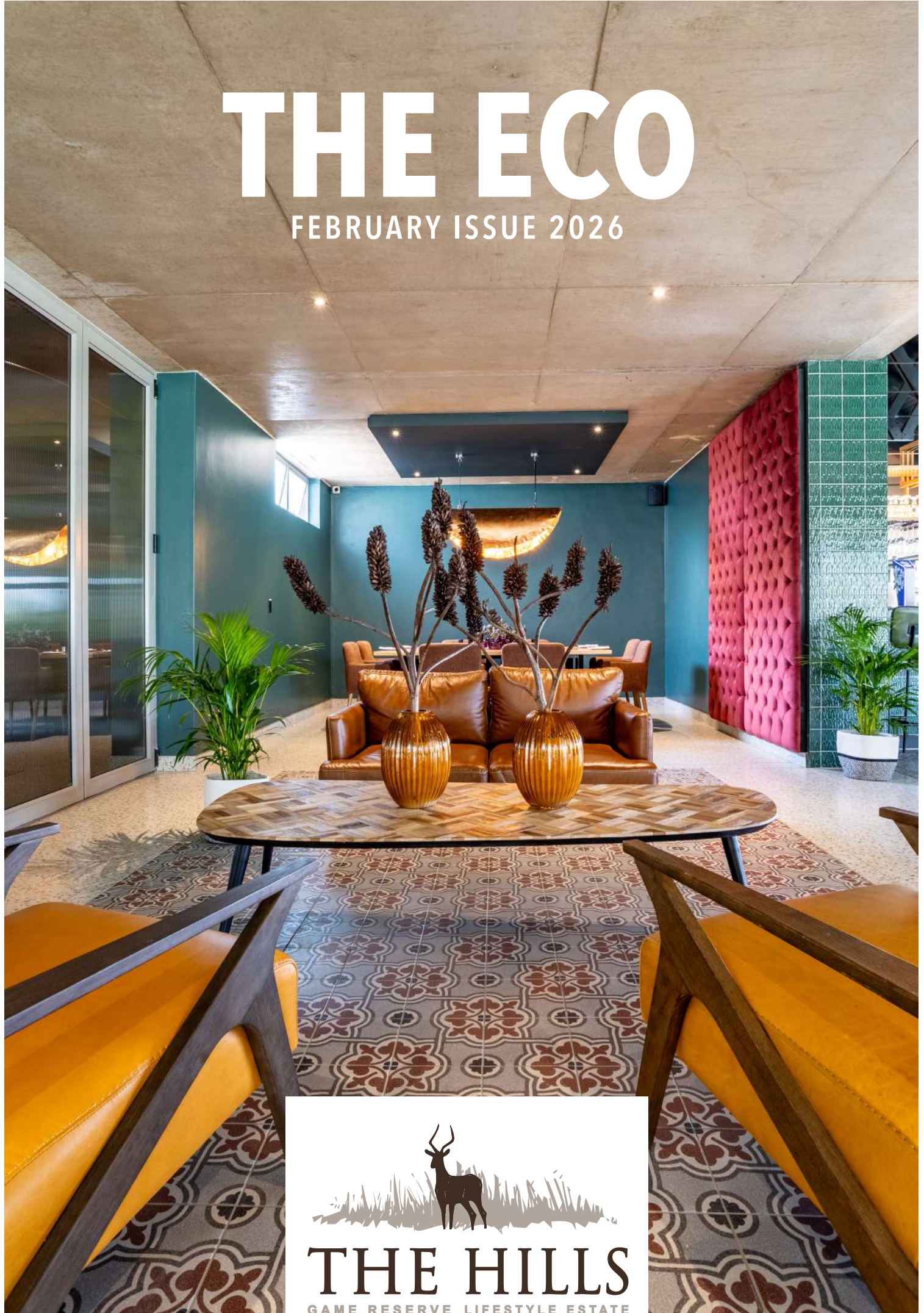


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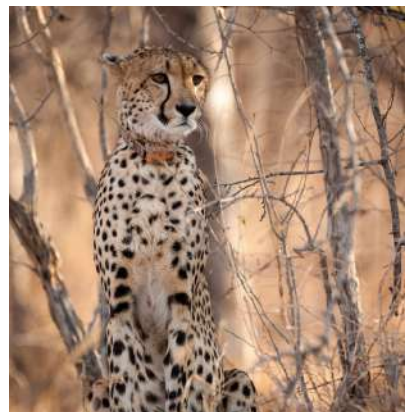
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LETTER FROM *Management*

Dear Residents,

As we welcome 2026, our wonderful estate is buzzing with anticipation for the year ahead, filled with growth and exciting developments. There's much to share, so let's dive into what's new and what's on the horizon!

Amara's Opening

We're thrilled to announce that Amara, the new restaurant nestled within The Hills, is officially open! This exciting addition has been warmly embraced with a soft launch, allowing guests to savour its offerings while the staff settles into the dynamic ambiance of the estate. Keep an eye out for an upcoming grand opening celebration, we can't wait to celebrate together!

Revamped Play Park

In tandem with Amara's debut, the play park just outside the restaurant is undergoing a revamp. It's all about providing the little ones with an enjoyable space while parents indulge in leisure at the restaurant. We're all eagerly awaiting its completion. Introducing the Capture Boma In our commitment to wildlife welfare, a new project is underway: the installation of a capture boma in the game

reserve. This initiative will aid our dedicated vets and wildlife manager in capturing animals more gently and examining them in a controlled environment.

Invasive Plant Management

We're also making strides in preserving our estate's natural beauty by controlling unwanted invasive plants. Thanks to the efforts several devoted residents and our HOA team, this project is well on its way to success, ensuring our game reserve remains a perfect habitat for our animals.

Upcoming Projects on the Horizon

This year, we have several projects in the pipeline that promise to enhance our estate:

- **Picnic Area by the Dam:** A new picnic spot is in the works by the dam, designed for residents to relish the tranquillity of the setting while enjoying picturesque views of the water and surrounding game reserve.
- **Hillstead North Garden Makeover:** A dramatic garden transformation is planned just outside Hillstead North, and we look forward to seeing the results.

Movement Control Reminder

As a reminder to all residents, please ensure you complete the Movement Control Form and email it to admin@thehillsgamereserve.co.za at least 48 hours prior to any moving in or out of the estate. This includes deliveries and even small furniture removals. If you're renting out your stand or unit, please keep your agents informed about this important requirement.

Property Aesthetics Notice

We urge all residents to inspect their properties to ensure they meet the estate's standards. Check for any cracking, water damage, or issues with roof flashing/barge boards. Our Aesthetics Officer is actively conducting inspections and reaching out with notices. To prevent any confrontations, we encourage a proactive approach to maintaining the beauty of your homes.

As we embark on this new year, we're excited about all that lies ahead for our community. Here's to a fantastic 2026 filled with growth, joy, and shared experiences at The Hills!

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WHY RESOLUTIONS FAIL?

Because real change isn't about January promises. It's about small, honest habits that stick.

As the year unfolds, many of us carry quiet intentions with us. To live a little healthier. To slow down. To be more present. To finally make time for the things that matter most.

Yet, despite the best intentions, most New Year's resolutions fade before the first quarter is over. Not because we lack discipline or motivation, but because we often expect too much, too quickly.

Recent research highlighted by the BBC points to a simple truth: **meaningful change doesn't come from dramatic promises.**

It comes from small, consistent actions that fit naturally into everyday life.

The problem with big promises

We tend to approach change with an all-or-nothing mindset. A new year arrives and suddenly we expect ourselves to wake up earlier, eat perfectly, exercise daily and overhaul our routines overnight.

It's an appealing idea, but an unrealistic one.

When goals are too ambitious, they become overwhelming. And when we fall behind, even slightly, we often abandon them altogether. What begins with motivation ends in frustration.

True progress, however, works differently.

Consistency over intensity

What research shows, and what experience confirms, is that consistency matters far more than intensity. A short daily walk is more powerful than an ambitious fitness plan that lasts two weeks. Choosing better habits most of the time is more effective than striving for perfection.

Small actions, repeated regularly, create momentum. Momentum builds confidence. And confidence is what sustains change over time.

This approach is especially relevant in busy households and professional lives, where balance matters more than rigid routines.

“Real change doesn’t come from doing everything at once. It comes from doing small things consistently.”

Making goals that fit your life

Another key insight is the importance of personal relevance. The most successful goals are not borrowed from trends or social media, but shaped around real lifestyles.

What works for one person may not work for another. A parent, a professional, and a retiree will all have different rhythms and demands. The most effective goals are the ones that feel achievable within your own day-to-day reality.

Rather than asking, “**What should I be doing?**”, a better question is, “**What would make my life feel more balanced?**”

Sometimes the answer is as simple as more rest. More movement. Better boundaries. Or making space for moments of calm.

Progress, not perfection

Perhaps the most reassuring message is this: **setbacks are normal**.

Missing a day, falling behind or changing course does not mean failure. It simply means you are human. The ability to return to a goal without guilt is what determines long-term success.

Progress is rarely visible in dramatic leaps. It happens quietly, over time, through choices that slowly become habits.

And those habits shape the way we live.

A gentler way forward

As the year continues, it may help to reframe what success looks like. Instead of chasing transformation, aim for consistency. Instead of pressure, choose intention.

Small changes, made consistently, create lasting results.

And often, the most meaningful progress is the kind that feels effortless, because it fits naturally into the life you are already living. The best goals are not dramatic. They are gentle. Sustainable. Kind.

**Because real growth
isn’t loud.
It’s consistent.**



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THE NEW LUXURY

Inside the interior design shift shaping homes for 2026

If the last decade of interior design was about clean lines, cool tones, and picture-perfect minimalism, 2026 marks a very different chapter. According to insights shared by SA Decor, the future of interiors is warmer, slower, and far more personal.

Homes are no longer styled to impress at first glance. They are designed to be felt, lived in, and remembered.

This shift reflects how people want to live now. After years of fast trends and showroom-style interiors, homeowners are craving spaces that feel grounding, authentic, and comforting.

A move toward warmth and ease

One of the strongest themes shaping 2026

interiors is warmth. Not only in colour, but in emotion. Cool greys and stark whites are giving way to softer palettes inspired by nature. Think sandy beiges, sun-warmed stone, muted clay, caramel woods, and gentle earth tones.

These colours instantly make a space feel more inviting. They soften large open-plan homes and create a sense of calm without feeling heavy or dated. When paired with natural light, they bring a quiet elegance that feels timeless rather than trendy.

Lighting follows the same philosophy. Harsh overhead lights are replaced with layered illumination. Table lamps, wall lights, and subtle ambient glows help rooms transition smoothly from day to night. The result is a home that feels welcoming at any hour.

“Luxury in 2026 is not loud. It’s warm, calm, and deeply comforting.”

Craftsmanship over convenience

Another defining shift is a renewed appreciation for craftsmanship. Perfectly uniform finishes are making space for handmade, textured, and slightly imperfect elements. These details bring soul into a home.

Handcrafted furniture, artisanal tiles, woven textiles, and custom joinery are becoming design essentials rather than indulgences. Limewashed walls, raw wood finishes, and tactile surfaces add depth and character that mass-produced decor simply cannot replicate.

This approach also encourages more intentional buying. Instead of filling a space quickly, homeowners are choosing fewer pieces with meaning. Each item tells a story and contributes to the overall feel of the home.

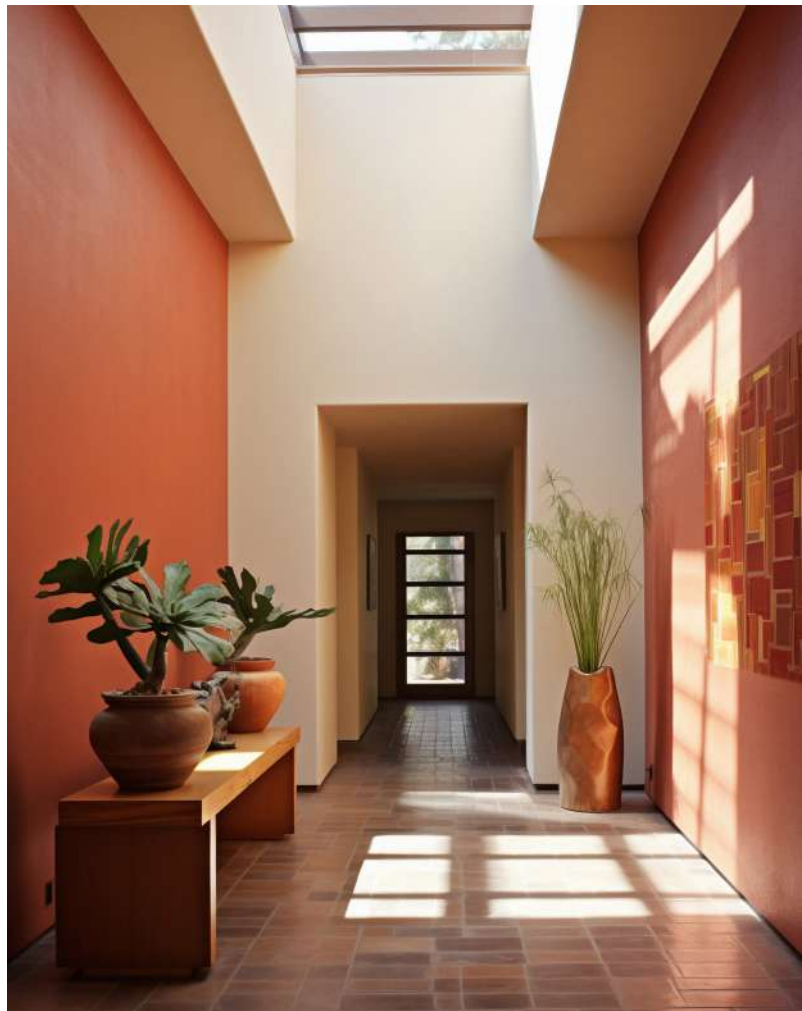
In luxury estates, this trend translates beautifully. Thoughtfully crafted interiors enhance architectural features and elevate a property without overwhelming it.

Homes designed around real life

Perhaps the most important trend highlighted is the rise of personal spaces. Homes are no longer styled to mirror catalogues or social media feeds. They are shaped around the people who live in them.

In 2026, personal expression is encouraged. Family heirlooms sit comfortably next to contemporary pieces. Art is chosen for emotional value rather than price tags. Books, travel finds, and meaningful objects are displayed proudly.

Rooms are also becoming more purposeful. Reading corners, hobby rooms, quiet workspaces, and retreat-like bedrooms reflect how people actually live. These spaces add depth to a home and create moments of pause within busy lives.



Texture becomes the new statement

Instead of bold patterns or dramatic contrasts, texture takes centre stage. Bouclé sofas, linen curtains, stone surfaces, soft rugs, and natural timber add layers without clutter.

Texture creates visual interest while maintaining a calm, cohesive aesthetic. It allows neutral spaces to feel rich and layered rather than flat. This tactile approach is especially powerful in large homes, where texture helps anchor open spaces and make them feel more intimate.

Luxury is no longer defined by shine or excess. It is felt through touch, comfort, and quality.

Calm spaces that still feel alive

While warmth and personality are central, interiors are not becoming busy or chaotic. The emphasis remains on balance. Storage is considered. Layouts are intentional. Every piece has a purpose.

This results in homes that feel peaceful but never sterile. Spaces breathe. They invite you in rather than overwhelm you.

For estate living, this balance is key. Homes that feel calm, personal, and timeless not only enhance daily living but also hold long-term value.

“The most desirable homes are the ones that feel instantly lived in, not staged.”

Looking ahead

Interior design in 2026 is less about following rules and more about following instinct. Warmth, craftsmanship, and personal expression are shaping homes that feel deeply human.

In a world that moves fast, these interiors invite us to slow down. To connect. And to truly feel at home.





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Rethinking STATEMENT GRASSES

Why indigenous alternatives are the smarter choice for South African gardens

Soft plumes, flowing forms and that effortless, high-end look. It is easy to see why statement grasses like Fountain Grass and Pampas Grass have become favourites in South African gardens and estates. They photograph beautifully, move gently in the wind and add instant impact to outdoor spaces.

But beneath the visual appeal lies a serious issue many homeowners are unaware of.

The commonly planted Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) is a declared Category 1b invasive species in most parts of South Africa. Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), with its dramatic white plumes, carries the same classification in many regions. According to the Agricultural Research Council, Category 1b plants must be controlled or removed as they pose a threat to natural ecosystems.



In other words, these popular garden features are legally and environmentally problematic.

“Beauty in a garden should never come at the expense of the landscape beyond the fence.”

Why Fountain and Pampas Grass are a concern

Both Fountain Grass and Pampas Grass spread aggressively through large volumes of seed that are easily carried by wind and water. Once established outside cultivated areas, they outcompete indigenous plants, reduce biodiversity and are extremely difficult to eradicate.

Pampas Grass is particularly concerning due to its size and density. It forms thick clumps that crowd out other vegetation and increase fire risk, especially in dry seasons. What starts as a striking focal point can quickly become an environmental liability.

In estate environments, where gardens sit close to natural open spaces, the impact is even greater.

Indigenous grasses that offer the same impact

Fortunately, South Africa is rich in indigenous, water-wise grasses that provide the same elegant movement, arching shapes and feathery textures without the invasive consequences.

Many indigenous species deliver soft plumes, upright structure or flowing forms that suit both modern and natural landscape designs. They are adapted to local conditions, meaning they thrive with less water, fewer chemicals and minimal long-term maintenance.

Used thoughtfully, these grasses can frame entrances, soften boundary walls, line walkways or act as sculptural focal points, all while supporting local birdlife and insects.

A water-wise and future-focused choice

With water scarcity and sustainability top of mind, indigenous grasses make practical sense. Once established, they require far less irrigation and cope better with heat and seasonal changes. Their resilience means gardens remain attractive throughout the year without constant intervention.

For homeowners and estates alike, this results in lower maintenance costs and landscapes that age gracefully instead of becoming a problem to manage.

Making the switch responsibly

If Fountain Grass or Pampas Grass is already planted, removal should be done carefully to prevent seed spread. Replacing them with suitable indigenous alternatives is best done with advice from professionals familiar with local species and conditions.

The reward is a garden that delivers the same visual drama, but in a way that respects the environment.

“True luxury landscaping is about making choices that belong here.”

By choosing indigenous grasses over invasive favourites, homeowners create gardens that are elegant, compliant and deeply rooted in South African soil. It is a small change that makes a lasting difference.

Three Indigenous Grasses That Truly Belong

1. Common Rush (*Juncus effusus*)

Best for architectural structure



Common Rush brings a strong, upright form to gardens. While it does not produce feathery plumes, its clean lines and sculptural presence make it a favourite in contemporary estate landscaping. It works particularly well near water features or in areas with occasional damp soil.

- Indigenous to South Africa
- Low maintenance and non-invasive
- Ideal for modern, minimalist designs

2. Ngongoni Three-Awn Grass (*Aristida junciformis*)

Best for natural movement and texture



Ngongoni Three-Awn Grass offers fine texture and gentle movement. Its delicate seed heads catch the light and sway softly in the breeze, creating an elegant, understated fountain effect. It is especially suited to gardens that blend formal spaces with natural planting.

- Extremely drought-tolerant
- Indigenous and hardy
- Supports local biodiversity

3. Cape Thatching Reed (*Thamnochortus insignis*)

Best replacement for Pampas Grass



For homeowners looking for height and drama, Cape Thatching Reed is the standout choice. Its tall, upright growth provides structure and visual impact without becoming invasive. Used as a feature plant or natural screen, it delivers presence with purpose.

- Strong vertical form
- Water-wise once established
- Ideal for statement planting

Important: All planting should comply with the applicable estate landscaping and environmental guidelines.

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The First Getaway of the Year

Why the March school break is the perfect time to escape close to home

The March school break arrives at a moment when travel feels intentional rather than impulsive. The rush of the year has eased, routines are established, and there is finally space to pause. Running from **28 March to 7 April 2026**, the Term 1 break aligns perfectly with the arrival of autumn, a season that quietly transforms the way we travel.

Autumn invites a slower pace. Days are cooler, evenings are made for lingering, and destinations feel less crowded and more authentic. It is a time to choose places that restore rather than exhaust, where a short drive delivers the feeling of a true escape. For those based in Pretoria, some of South Africa's most rewarding destinations are closer than expected, offering a change of scenery without the need for extensive planning or long journeys.

“Autumn travel is less about ticking boxes and more about choosing places that allow you to truly switch off.”



Clarens

Clarens has long been synonymous with autumn, and it is easy to see why. Nestled at the foothills of the Maluti Mountains, this Free State village seems to slow naturally with the season. Trees turn shades of gold and copper, mornings begin with a chill in the air, and the village hums with a gentle, unhurried energy.

Autumn days in Clarens are best spent wandering. Art galleries, small boutiques and local cafés encourage browsing without an agenda. A drive through Golden Gate Highlands National Park reveals dramatic sandstone cliffs and wide-open landscapes that feel particularly striking in the softer light of autumn. Evenings are quiet and cosy, centred around fireplaces and long dinners. Clarens is ideal for travellers who value atmosphere, simplicity and the luxury of doing very little.

Dullstroom

If there is one destination that captures the essence of autumn, it is Dullstroom. Known for its high-altitude setting and misty mornings, this Mpumalanga town offers a refreshing contrast to the heat of summer. By late March, the air is crisp and clear, creating perfect conditions for outdoor activities without the intensity of peak season.

Fly fishing, gentle hikes and scenic cycling routes define the days, while the village itself provides warmth and comfort through its restaurants, pubs and intimate accommodation. Dullstroom appeals to those who enjoy being outdoors but also appreciate returning to a warm meal and a quiet evening. It is a destination that feels restorative rather than busy, making it ideal for a long weekend or a midweek escape during the school break.



Jozini

Jozini is a little further from Pretoria, but it is the kind of destination that rewards the journey. Set in northern KwaZulu-Natal near the borders of eSwatini and Mozambique, this part of the country feels expansive and unhurried, offering a sense of escape that is hard to replicate closer to home.

Autumn arrives gently here. Days remain warm, skies are clear, and the pace of life slows to match the landscape. Time is spent on the water at Jozini Dam, fishing, boating or simply watching the light shift across wide horizons. Accommodation is typically generous in space and privacy, making it ideal for families or groups who want to disconnect fully and settle into the rhythm of bushveld living.

Jozini is not a quick weekend dash. It is a deliberate getaway, perfect for those who see travel as part of the experience rather than a means to an end.

Kruger National Park

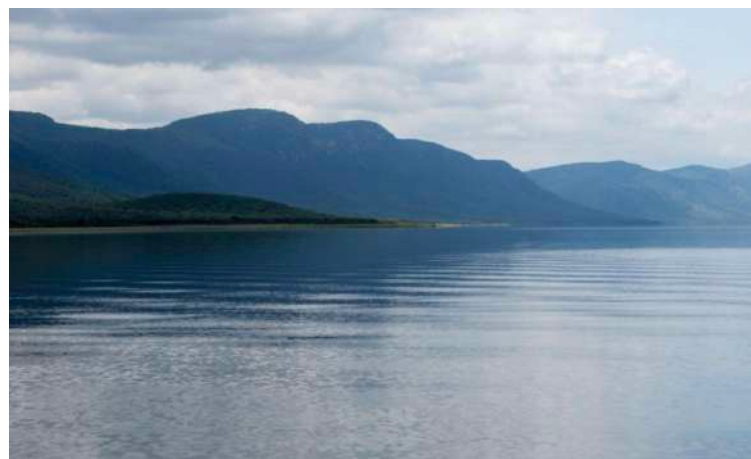
Autumn is widely regarded as one of the best times to experience the Kruger National Park. As the bush begins to thin and water sources become more concentrated, wildlife sightings improve, while the temperatures become far more comfortable for long game drives.

The park feels calmer during this period, allowing for a more immersive experience. Early mornings are cool and quiet, afternoons are unhurried, and evenings bring a sense of stillness that is hard to replicate elsewhere. Whether opting for a self-drive adventure or a stay at a private lodge, a Kruger getaway during the March break offers a reset that lingers long after the journey ends.

A season worth claiming

The first getaway of the year sets the tone

for everything that follows. Autumn travel encourages presence, simplicity and thoughtful choices. These destinations remind us that you do not need to go far to feel completely removed from everyday life. With a bit of early planning, the March school break becomes more than a pause. It becomes a chance to reconnect, recharge and ease into the year with intention.



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Love, Actually...

Lives at Home

Valentine's Month often arrives dressed in grand gestures. Flowers, reservations, perfectly timed surprises. Yet the deepest expressions of love are rarely dramatic. They live quietly inside our homes, woven into habits so familiar we forget to name them.

Love, at its most enduring, has a language. Not one spoken aloud, but one felt. It reveals itself in the ordinary rhythms of daily life, especially within the walls we share.

At home, love often sounds like the kettle being switched on before sunrise. It looks like a light left on for someone arriving late. It feels like the calm that settles when the front door closes and the outside world fades.

This language is subtle, but it is fluent.

In many homes, care is expressed through routine. Someone who always locks the doors at night. Someone who remembers how the other takes their coffee. Someone who notices when the house feels heavy and opens the windows anyway. These acts may seem small, but they are intentional. They say, "I am thinking of you," without needing to speak.

Shared spaces become the vocabulary. Kitchens host conversations that begin with groceries and end with life decisions. Living rooms absorb laughter, silence, and the occasional difficult discussion. Patios witness evenings where nothing much happens, yet everything feels right. These are not moments you plan for. They simply arrive, and if you are paying attention, they stay with you.

Love at home is also expressed through presence. Sitting together without distraction. Walking side by side, not

necessarily talking. Working in the garden, hands busy, minds resting. In a world that constantly demands reaction, choosing to be still together becomes a powerful form of care.

There is an intimacy in the ordinary. Folding laundry together. Preparing meals without rushing. Sharing the last bit of something without asking. These gestures hold meaning because they are consistent. They are not reserved for special occasions. They are repeated, quietly reinforcing connection.

Homes that support this language tend to be intentional. Not perfect or styled, but lived in. Spaces that invite pause rather than performance. A reading chair that waits patiently. A table that carries the marks of many meals. A garden that grows slowly, season by season. These environments do not rush love. They allow it to unfold naturally.

“Love lives in the ordinary moments we choose to notice.”

It is also important to acknowledge that the language of love at home is not always loud or romantic. Sometimes it shows up as patience. As forgiveness after a long day. As understanding when words fall short. Real connection often requires space, gentleness, and time.

February offers a gentle reminder to listen more closely. To notice what is already present rather than searching for something new. Romance does not have to be created. In many homes, it already exists in quiet abundance.

For some, this month may not look like roses or candles. It may look like choosing calm. Choosing rest. Choosing to create a home that feels safe, warm, and grounding. That, too, is love.

As Valentine’s Month unfolds, perhaps the invitation is not to do more, but to see more. To recognise the everyday actions that say everything. The routines that hold us. The spaces that quietly support connection.

Because love does not always announce itself. Sometimes, it simply lives at home.

Love looks like...

- Coffee made before the alarm
- Doors locked at night
- Walking side by side, no rush
- Sharing the last bite
- Sitting together, saying nothing



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INTERNAL & EXTERNAL PARASITES IN DOGS, CATS, & CHICKENS – PART 1

BY DR VICKY LOUW (BVSC)



Why prevention matters for the health of your animals (and your family)

Parasites are one of the most common health problems affecting pets and poultry. They are often small and difficult to see, but they can cause serious illness if left untreated. Both internal parasites (worms and protozoa) and external parasites (fleas, ticks, mites, and lice) affect dogs, cats, and chickens, and may go unnoticed in the early stages.

Understanding these parasites is the first step in protecting your animals. In part one we will discuss the internal parasites first.

Internal parasites:

Internal parasites usually live in the intestines, but some migrate through organs such as the lungs, heart, liver, and even the bloodstream.

Common internal parasites in dogs and cats:

- **Roundworms** – very common, especially in puppies and kittens.
- **Hookworms** – feed on blood and can cause anaemia.
- **Tapeworms** – often transmitted by fleas or raw prey.
- **Whipworms** – cause chronic diarrhoea and weight loss
- **Protozoa** (e.g. Giardia, Coccidia) – microscopic parasites causing diarrhoea.

Signs may include:

- Diarrhoea or soft stools.
- Vomiting.
- Weight loss or poor growth.
- Pot-bellied appearance (especially in puppies/kittens).
- Dull coat, weakness, or anaemia.
- Scooting or visible worms in stool or around the anus.

Common internal parasites in chickens:

- **Roundworms and hairworms** – the most common intestinal worms.
- **Tapeworms** – spread via insects and intermediate hosts.
- **Gapeworm** – affects the respiratory tract.

Signs in chickens may include:

- Weight loss despite eating.
- Drop in egg production.
- Diarrhoea or dirty vents.
- Weakness, pale combs.
- Gasping or stretching the neck (with gapeworm).



Why are internal parasites a problem:

Internal parasites are dangerous because they live inside the body, where they quietly cause harm. They steal nutrients, damage the gut and other organs, and some feed on blood — leading to weight loss, poor growth, diarrhoea, anaemia, and weakness. Many animals show no early signs, so heavy infestations can build up before anyone notices.

Several common internal parasites are also zoonotic, posing a recognised public-health risk, especially to children.

Parasite eggs survive for long periods in the environment, causing constant reinfection.

This is why routine deworming and regular faecal testing are essential, even for animals that look healthy.

Prevention is far better than cure:

Good parasite control should be routine, not reactive.

- Regular deworming based on age, lifestyle, and species.
- Prompt investigation of diarrhoea, weight loss.
- Routine checks around your cat or dog's perineal area and your chicken's vent, to look for signs of diarrhoea.
- Cleaning and disinfecting bedding and living areas/coop.
- Controlling fleas in the environment (yes, fleas can transmit worms).
- Isolating and checking new animals before introducing them into the home or flock.

Internal parasites are extremely common in dogs, cats, and chickens, but they are highly manageable with the right preventative care. Regular veterinary check-ups, routine faecal testing, and consistent parasite prevention protect not only your animals, but your household as well.

If you're unsure which parasite treatments are best for your pets or poultry, chat to us — we're passionate about protecting your animals and fighting the squirmies.



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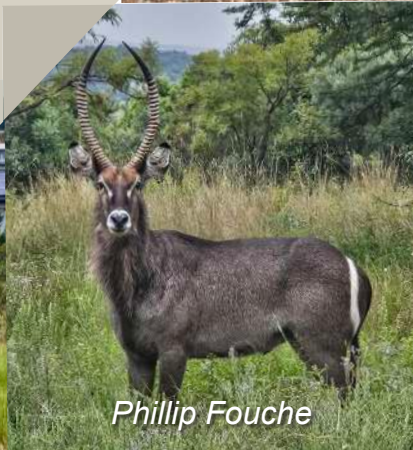
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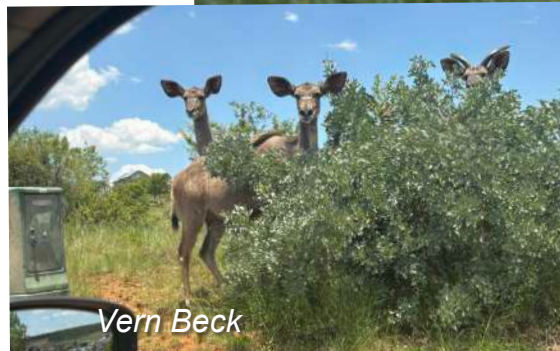
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Vern Beck

Submit your photo to tobia@k-studio.co.za or whatsapp 082 962 8255

Every day, beauty whispers to us—birdsong in the dawn, gentle creatures on velvet hooves, sunrise blushing, and sunset sighing. Let's share these moments together.



From the Gym Manager

2026: A New Chapter for Fitness at The Hills

As we step into 2026, Nourish Wellness would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the HOA, the Board, and the residents of The Hills Estate for the continued trust and support following the extension of our management contract at The Hills Fitness Centre. This ongoing partnership allows us to continue serving the estate community with purpose, passion, and a shared commitment to wellness.

With this renewed mandate, 2026 marks an exciting new chapter - one defined by fresh energy, expanded programming, and a deeper focus on connection, movement, and lifestyle.

New Classes, New Energy

In response to growing participation and valuable resident feedback, The Hills Fitness Centre is introducing a refreshed group class lineup for 2026. These programmes are designed to cater to all fitness levels while keeping training engaging, effective, and sustainable.

Residents can look forward to:

- New strength and conditioning formats focused on functional, everyday movement

- High-energy group training sessions combining cardio, strength, and teamwork
- World class Personal Training sessions from our trusted coaches.
- Mobility, recovery, and wellness-focused classes supporting longevity and balance
- Enhanced favourite HIIT and Step circuit-style training for those who enjoy a fast-paced challenge

Each class is professionally programmed to ensure inclusivity, progression, and safe training - whether residents are beginning their fitness journey or advancing their performance goals.

Monthly Fitness & Wellness Events

A major highlight for 2026 is the introduction of monthly fitness and wellness events, transforming the Fitness Centre into an even more vibrant social hub within the estate.

Throughout the year, residents can expect:

- Fitness challenges and themed training days
- Community workout mornings and open sessions
- Wellness talks, movement workshops, and educational sessions
- Seasonal and family-friendly events that bring neighbours together

These initiatives are designed to foster consistency, motivation, and community connection, reinforcing the idea that fitness at The Hills is a shared lifestyle experience.

Who Decided Mornings Had to Be Perfect?

For years, mornings have been treated like a performance. Wake up early. Drink the right thing. Move your body. Clear your mind. Start strong. Somewhere along the way, the simple act of beginning the day turned into something to optimise.

Social media did not help.

Perfect kitchens. Perfect light. Perfect routines that promised productivity, balance and success before most people had even made coffee.

The problem is not that these mornings look appealing. It is that they quietly set an unrealistic standard, one that leaves very little room for real life.

In recent years, lifestyle and wellness conversations have increasingly questioned hyper-optimised routines, favouring approaches that feel more realistic and sustainable.

Lately, people are pushing back. Not loudly, but deliberately. The idea that a morning has to be perfect to be valuable is being challenged, replaced by something far more practical and far more human.

The question is no longer “How productive was your morning?” but rather “Who was this morning actually for?”

Instead of rigid routines, people are choosing moments that work in real life. A good cup of coffee enjoyed while it is still hot. Sitting quietly for a few minutes before the house wakes up. Opening a window and letting fresh air set the tone, rather than a screen.

Mornings are becoming an act of quiet resistance. Drinking your coffee slowly. Taking the dog for a short walk without tracking steps

or time. Stepping outside before opening emails. These choices are not lazy or unambitious. They are intentional. A way of reclaiming the start of the day before it is claimed by everyone else.

Homes play a subtle but important role in this shift. Kitchens are no longer just functional spaces. They are where mornings unfold. Breakfast nooks, patios, garden paths and shaded walkways are being used again, not styled for photographs but lived in. Spaces that allow the day to begin without urgency.

Estate living, in particular, offers something many people are realising they value deeply in the mornings. Space. Quiet.

The sound of birds instead

of traffic. Streets that invite a gentle walk rather than a rushed exit. These are not luxuries that need to be scheduled. They already exist as part of everyday life.

There is also growing permission for mornings to look different from day to day. Some start slowly. Others start rushed. Both are valid. The pressure to perform wellness before sunrise is fading, replaced by a more realistic understanding of modern life.

Parents know this instinctively. Teenagers too. Some mornings are about getting through, not getting it right. And that does not make them failures.

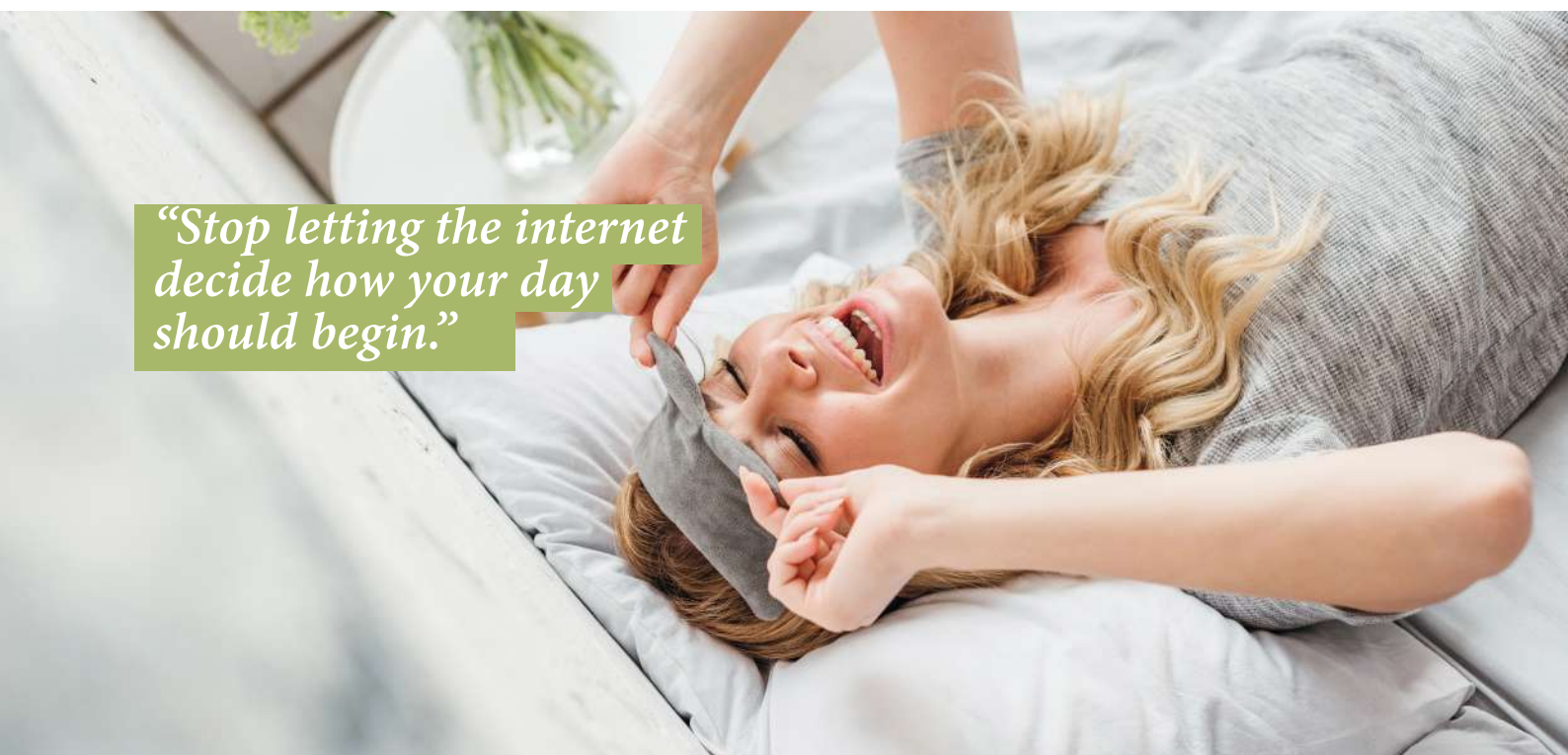
What matters most is how a

morning sets the emotional tone for the rest of the day. A calm start, even a brief one, creates steadiness. Not because everything was done correctly, but because the day began with intention rather than obligation.

The end of the perfect morning is not about lowering standards. It is about rejecting someone else's idea of what a good start should look like.

A successful morning does not need witnesses. It does not need optimisation or approval. It simply needs to work for the person living it.

In a world that constantly pushes us to do more, earlier and faster, the most powerful way to begin the day might be deciding who gets to decide how it starts.



“Stop letting the internet decide how your day should begin.”



Dennis Nyathi

t 071 513 3069

e thehillssecurity@omegasol.com

SECURITY UPDATE

Dear Residents,

As we settle into the new year, we would like to extend our warmest wishes to every resident and family in the estate. May the year ahead be filled with health, peace and many positive moments within our community.

Safety remains a top priority, and we would like to draw special attention to fire prevention, particularly in relation to lithium batteries. With the increasing use of solar power systems, we strongly encourage residents who have lithium battery installations to ensure they are adequately prepared in the event of a fire. Lithium fires behave very differently from conventional fires and require specialised fire extinguishers to be managed safely and effectively. Having at least one lithium fire extinguisher on hand is highly recommended as a proactive safety measure.

We have also observed ongoing concerns regarding garden services entering the estate with vehicles that do not meet roadworthy requirements. To maintain safety standards for all residents, access for such vehicles may be restricted until full compliance is achieved. We appreciate your

cooperation in ensuring that service providers adhere to estate regulations.

In our shared play areas, particularly parks designated for children under the age of 12, we have received several reports related to bullying and excessive noise. These spaces are intended to be safe, welcoming environments for younger children. We kindly remind parents and guardians to supervise their children during park visits and to remain mindful of neighbouring homes when it comes to noise levels.

Access control continues to play a vital role in the smooth functioning of the estate. We ask that all gardeners, domestic helpers and contractors carry valid identification when entering the estate to prevent delays at security checkpoints. When placing orders for deliveries, please ensure that your stand or ERF number is clearly referenced to avoid incorrect drop-offs. Sending access codes to visitors in advance remains the most effective way to reduce congestion and queues at the gate.

Finally, we would like to address concerns related to roaming and barking dogs. While we appreciate the role pets play in our homes, repeated disturbances and animals roaming freely are not permitted under estate rules. Fines will continue to be enforced where violations occur, and we encourage pet owners to remain considerate of their neighbours.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and commitment to maintaining a safe, respectful and enjoyable living environment for all. We look forward to another positive year ahead within our community.

Warm regards,
Your Security Team



CLASSIFIEDS

If you would like to advertise in the Echo's Classifieds section, please email Tobia at tobia@k-studio.co.za by the 15th of every month. The Classifieds section is exclusively available to The Hills residents, allowing you to advertise at no cost. Please include your stand number and contact details for references.

Classified advertisements are intended to connect residents with trusted services and are not typical sales promotion adverts. They serve as a platform to bring together community members who can benefit from each other's services.

As a resident, you are welcome to recommend good and reliable service providers for inclusion in the Classifieds. Please inform us if a service provider has changed their contact number or is no longer available, so we can update or remove them from the list accordingly.

Important Notice: The publishers and the HOA are not responsible for the quality of services provided by any suppliers listed. Satisfaction with service delivery is not guaranteed, and any concerns should be addressed directly with the service provider.

BUILDING/ CONTRACTORS

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- Phill - 082-648 6164 - Builder

BEAUTY SERVICES

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- Tulips Beauty Spa, We come to your house +27 60 550 9390.

BOREHOLE DRILLING & WATER SERVICES

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- Inyati Drilling & Borehole (Morne) 071 689 0300
- Manzi Water (Water Filling) 084 412 2084
- Reinhardt (Water Filling) 078 135 2783
- Robert (Watersystem) 082 903 5956
- Veronica (Water Filling) 072 212 6151
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- English and Science Tutor available in Pretoria East. Complete IEB NSC Bachelor's Degree Pass in 2020. Year-round achievements at Reddford House The Hills. Currently studying BSc Biological and Agricultural Sciences (2nd Year in 2022). Tutoring and Pick-up from school can be arranged. Tutoring at R120 per hour. Contact details 083 415 8235 / mokgadi.violinist@gmail.com for full CV.
- IKI KIDS sells STEAM educational products including Robotics and Coding Kits. 081 517 9589 or <http://www.ikikids.co.za/>
- Learn to Swim, contact Annette 072 128 2689 from Jolly Waters Swim School Situated in Grootfontein.
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- Ed's Electrical, Eddie (Electrician & Plumber) 082 576 6616
- Ikigai Engineering (Solar water heating, backup, and hybrid solar solutions) 081 517 9589
- JP Liebenberg - 082-390 9791 - Solar
- Marius (Electrician in the Estate,

satisfaction guaranteed) 082 559 8859

- Olckers Projects (Albert) (Electrician & Maintenance) 071 496 0136
- Roby Mokone (Electrician) 082 314 7554
- Ruan (Electrician) 072 643 3228 / 082 616 6068
- Rudolf (Electrician) 083 218 4466
- Wian (Electrician) 084 555 5662

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GAS SUPPLIERS

- Africa Multi Client Services (Karabo) 081 773 0317
- Chris Pagel 083 384 5345
- Fusion Gas (Craig Fourie) 082 770 2600
- Frank (Collects and supplies gas cylinders in the Estate) 082 557 1550
- Gas lady (Barbara) 082 305 2419
- Gerrie Marnewick 071 602 9349
- ID Gas 065 955 0115

- Kish 012 804 1003 / 072 548 0735
- Monile Gas Solutions 078 244 7667

HANDYMAN

- Calvin 076 894 4624
- Evert von Zwietring 081 582 4387

MEDICAL

- Dr. Kendrah da Silva, Chiropractor, is available for appointments at her Olympus practice and also offers a convenient home office in The Hills for residents. Contact her at 082 566 9831.
- GP practice with a Clinic in Tierpoort. Tierpoort Medical. Dr David Hyams Tel 060 324 2048

OTHER SERVICES

- Dawn Appliances (All repairs to appliances) 079 789 6746 / 078 812 5592 - Reference: Guido 082 323 8163
- Hennie Watkins (Aluminium Doors) 012 379 5989 / 082 857 5232
- Johnathan (Aluminium Doors) 078 469 7506
- JP (Garage Doors) 074 122 2942
- Malesa (Painter) 073 559 9513
- Mike (Tiler) 063 413 6525 / 069 108 8422
- Patrick (Tiling) 078 858 1160
- Watertite Waterproofing (Johan) (Waterproofing Services) 083 254 1400
- Proofreading, editing, copyediting, document formatting, content creation, website designing (for small to medium-sized businesses) and social media account management services. Call Susan Nganjo in The Hills at 0828826866

- The Hills Estate School Transport
Contact 082 450 0933

PET CARE

- **Paws & Claws Pet Sitting**
Offering reliable and caring pet-sitting services right here in the Estate. Micha comes to your home to make sure your pets are looked after, loved, and comfortable while you're away.
Contact Micha on 082 962 8255
- **Housesit Bruh:** House sitting, Overnight Pet Sitting, Daily feeds and hanging out, Animal walking. 081 556 5465, email: housesitbruh@gmail.com
- The Country Pet Hotel in Pretoria East offers boutique pet boarding with 24-hour care; contact 082 056 0561 or 082 920 4990.

PLUMBERS:

- AA Plumbers (Greg) 076 923 2277
- Casper Coetzee 071 944 5689 / 078 695 4167
- Chris Skhossy 072 060 5653
- Eugene 078 110 0912
- Heino 073 294 8577
- Mishack Eugene (Plumber & Construction) 082 954 7231
- MRL Plumbing 073 941 2480
- Ruan 072 643 3228 / 082 616 6068
- Rudolf (Plumber) 083 218 4466
- Source Leak Detection (Sydney) 076 229 6320

POOLS

- David Moraites (Pools) 072 299 9335
- Pacific Pools (Mike) (Pools & Pumps) 083 293 1349
- Weekly **pool cleaning** at a monthly cost of R600 - ALL chemicals included. Contact 083 278 8720.

YUMMY CREATIONS & COOL TREATS

- I am selling raw honey at R80 a bottle or Honey and Rusks at R140 Contact Gladiola 0721915097 Free delivery for the hills residents and R80 courier anywhere else in Gauteng.
- Artisan Air-roasted coffee beans/ground by Airabica Roasters! Free delivery in The Hills. Priced from R110-R330. Contact Duncan 082 440 9174 or orders@airabica.co.za
- Divine Decadent Cakes - 2024 Indulge in our delicious baked goods, crafted to perfection! Our offerings include: Scones, Biscuits, Cupcakes, Cakes. To order, WhatsApp: 0786238029. Treat yourself to our delightful creations, perfect for any occasion!

Quiet Work. Powerful Impact.

From the Environmental Team



The natural beauty of our estate is one of its greatest assets. Maintaining that balance requires ongoing attention, careful planning and people on the ground who understand the landscape and its challenges. This month, the Environmental Team would like to acknowledge **Jason Jacobs**, an environmental student working under Environmental Manager Danie van Eeden, whose contribution has already made a meaningful difference across the estate.

From his first days on site, Jason has shown a remarkable level of commitment. One of his most important contributions has been the identification and mapping of invasive plant species throughout greenbelts, vacant stands and sensitive natural areas. This detailed groundwork has enabled the Environmental Team to move away from reactive clearing and towards focused, strategic intervention.

Working closely with a team, Jason has also been directly involved in tackling two of the estate's most aggressive invasive plants, pompom weed and lantana. **Together, they targeted heavily overgrown areas and removed an impressive 380 refuse bags of invasive plant material.** This effort is a clear example of what can be achieved when residents and the Environmental Team work together with a shared purpose.

“Protecting our environment is not about quick fixes, but about consistent, informed action over time.”

Why invasive species matter

Invasive plants pose a serious long-term threat to the health of our natural environment. Species such as pompom weed and lantana spread rapidly, outcompeting indigenous vegetation, reducing biodiversity and altering natural habitats. Once established, these plants are difficult and costly to remove, which makes early identification and control essential.

Large-scale control requires coordinated planning and implementation, but residents can play an important role on their stands and in areas around their homes, particularly where infestations are still small and manageable.



Practical guidance for residents

On a small scale, aerial stems of invasive plants can be cut back before flowers produce seed. This helps to limit further spread, but it is important to understand that cutting stimulates the plant to produce more stems. For this method to be effective, plants need to be cut back repeatedly until the end of the growing season. As a long-term strategy, repeated cutting over many years is not recommended due to the labour involved. It is best used as a short-term measure to prevent flowering and seed set.

All flower heads should be removed carefully to avoid spreading seeds. Plant material must be placed in sealed refuse bags and disposed of according to estate guidelines.

Where there are single or very few pompom plants in an area, each plant can be dug out. Care should be taken to remove the entire rootstock crown, which is the point where the stem attaches to the swollen, finger-like roots. For best results, remove the crown together with a portion of the roots. Once the crown has been removed, any remaining roots in the soil will die.

It is important to cause as little soil disturbance as possible, as excessive disturbance can trigger mass germination of pompom seeds already present in the soil. Regular follow-up checks over the coming years are essential to ensure that new seedlings are removed before they become established.

Focus areas for environmental intervention

The Environmental Team will be focusing efforts in the following areas across the estate:

- Kingfisher greenbelt
- Royal Albatross greenbelt
- Extension 4 greenbelt
- Wild Cat Street
- Hillstead
- Game reserve
- Vacant properties

These focus areas form part of a structured, long-term approach to restoring and protecting the estate's natural environment.



Pompom weed is covered in fine hairs, which allow the plant to survive even after being removed from the soil. For this reason, it must not be left on the ground once uprooted. To prevent regrowth and spread, the entire plant should be properly disposed of in refuse bags.

Get involved

- Residents are invited to take part in the pompom weed removal day on 7 February 2026. More information will be shared shortly.

Beyond invasive plant management

In addition to invasive species control, the Environmental Team has been assessing soil erosion in key areas of the estate. Erosion presents a long-term risk to greenbelts and natural landscapes, and practical solutions are currently being explored to stabilise affected areas and prevent further degradation.

Good progress has also been made on the capture boma. This important facility supports responsible wildlife and reserve management and represents a significant milestone for the estate.

To enhance residents' experience of the outdoors, new benches have been installed at selected locations, offering quiet places to sit, pause and enjoy the surroundings. These benches are intended for rest and reflection, in keeping with the character of the estate. Additional bench placements are being considered and will be introduced thoughtfully over time.



Don't miss our update in the next issue *The Environmental team*



IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

Medical Assistance:

- **Primary Contact:** Immediately dial 082 911 for Netcare Pretoria East. This will connect you to emergency medical services for prompt assistance.
- **Secondary Contact:** After requesting medical help, it is crucial to contact the Gate Commander to facilitate access to your property.

Gate Access Coordination:

- Call the Gate Commander at the Garsfontein gate on 082 826 3761.
- **Information Sharing:** When you speak with the Gate Commander, be sure to provide your stand number. Security personnel will wait for the ambulance or police and escort them directly to your stand number. This step is essential to ensure that the emergency responders can locate your home quickly and avoid any delays at the gate.

Police Services:

- **Emergency Number:** Dial 10111 for immediate police assistance.
- **Local Police Stations:** Boschkop SAPS:
T: 012 802 4210 C: 071 675 7350 **Standby Officer:** 071 765 7341

By following these steps, you help ensure that emergency responders can reach you as swiftly as possible, minimizing any potential delays that could arise at the estate entrance.

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