

Villas in the mist

Text KERRY HAYES



SECRETED AWAY IN the heavy mists that roll in and out of Polokwane at will, the windows of Bramasole glow warmly with light from the fireplaces within. This luxurious guest lodge has however, experienced a complete metamorphosis to become the charming abode it is today.

Nearly 30 years ago, prior owner Mr Dubba Wolf built a shed in which to store farm equipment, but also in which to breed Angora rabbits. The latter concept was unfortunately not a complete success, and in 1997 Mr Wolf decided to sell both the farm and his home in the local area to the current owners, Melanie and Robin McIntosh, along with a handful of investors who have been bought out since.

Bramasole, meaning "to yearn for the sun", went through a number of concept transitions - from a weekend getaway, to a hotel, a place to store equipment, and finally to a guesthouse run by Robin's father, Mervyn McIntosh, in his retirement from the mining sector. "The transformation started late 2003," says Melanie: "We broke out all the old windows, which were very small and located high up in the walls. We ended up spending a very cold Christmas camping in tents inside the shed." A brief move to France saw a halt to the renovations, which recommenced in 2005. The family moved into the farmhouse on 15 July 2005 in the middle of winter: "We had no kitchen - we were washing dishes outside in a camping basin!" she recalls.

One of the couple's fondest memories is furnishing their home/guesthouse with special pieces obtained from their travels across the world, and the interior reflects the world in its themed rooms - Moroccan, Darnis and Delft. As with many home

renovation projects, there were challenges along the way: "Apart from the plumber falling through the ceiling, breaking his foot in three different places, and cutting three of his fingers down to the bone, there was the odd bump and scrape," says Melanie.

Today Bramasole shifts between yearning for the sun and staring proudly out over the shimmering lake on one side, and the beautiful forest on the other. A home-away-from-home for visitors, this villa in the mist waits patiently to share its warm heart and hearth. 🏡

