



AVANT GARDENERS

Neville and Sharon Trickett have, as a couple and in their individual trajectories, had a significant influence on the local design and botanical landscape. Home is Saint Verde, an extraordinary farm in the Dargle Valley in the KZN Midlands. Fiercely creative and wickedly funny, Neville wears many hats: creative director, brand guru, trend forecaster, artist, designer and, currently, digital curator, having launched what is South Africa's hottest blog (www.itswhatiminto.com). Sharon is an artisan known for her work in iron as well as other mediums. She is also the country's best-known collector and cultivator of, and consultant about, succulent plants. The Saint Verde store on the farm – as well as the café – has become a mecca for those seeking succulents as well as unusual furnishings, glassware, *objet* and other magnificent and quirky treasures, many with a romantic, imperfect and handmade aesthetic and, much of the time, with a connection to the botanical theme that continues to be their *raison d'être*. **Saint Verde is open once a month to the public, 033 234 4356**

5 MINUTES INSIDE NEVILLE'S CRAZY-BEAUTIFUL WORLD...

What's been keeping you busy the last few months at Saint Verde? Sharon's been around the country searching for new and rare plants to add to the collection, which is growing faster than the space we have, so designing new greenhouses that look more like glasshouses is on the drawing table – we've already built one on the farm.

What happens at Saint Verde come spring? This is when we say 'thank fuck' it's not -3°C every morning. Then we bring out all the new plants ready for people to enjoy. I usually give the store a full makeover or curate an installation that is pure indulgence. This year I'm feeling for oversized botanical prints that clash onto fabric.

What's exciting you right now? I'm hot for dress-weight fabric, we've got some new fragrances, art prints, my paintings, music mixes and I am importing a limited range of bench-made shoes from England (which means they're hand-tooled by a cobbler). My new passion is shoes; in fact, I now have 43 new pairs that I love as much as my wife.

Do you do the online thing? Our new website has just launched; we have several top South African bloggers on retainer and we think it's going to rock the world, or South Africa at least! www.itswhatiminto.com

'World Heritage' (240-4NF), Midas

'Canopy' (M7-264), Midas

SPRING GREENS
Kerstin Eser, independent stylist, consulting decor consultant for the Freeworld Design Centre and former Joburg Bureau Chief of *Elle Decoration* magazine, picks a bevy of beautiful South African-inspired greens that are immensely wearable for your home.

'Mayor Green' (G5-A1-1), Plascon

'Addo Skin' (GR-G07), Plascon

'Okavango Plain' (GR-Y07), Plascon



BOOKS WE DIG

TWO GREAT GUIDES THAT WILL HAVE YOU HARVESTING YOUR OWN BEFORE YOU CAN SAY PASS THE MULCH

Apartment Gardening: *Plants, Projects and Recipes For Growing Food in Your Urban Home* by Amy Pennington (Sasquatch Books); and

The Edible Balcony: *Growing Fresh Produce In the Heart of the City* by Alex Mitchell (Kyle Books/Penguin), **both to order www.kalahari.com or www.amazon.com.**

SPLICE GIRLS

A NEW GENERATION OF (FEMALE) CREATIVES IS CROSS-POLLINATING FASHION WITH HORTICULTURE TO FANTASTICAL, FUTURISTIC EFFECT

1. Based in Tokyo and Los Angeles, Airi Isoda is one half of Wrk-Shp, a multidisciplinary design collective whose work merges architecture and fashion design. Isoda's latest womenswear collection takes its direction from materials commonly found in building construction. The Tyvek raincoat has been inspired by sustainable architecture, in particular living vertical walls. Made with Tyvek (a recyclable hi-tech fibre), strategically placed pockets are filled with wheatgrass, allowing the silk-lined jacket to 'grow' with every rain shower – poetic and practical. www.wrk-shp.com



3. A biker jacket you can compost? Enter BioCouture, an ongoing experiment in the creation of textiles grown from bacterial microbes – the sort that ferment drinks like ginger beer. BioCouture is the brainchild of Suzanne Lee, a senior research fellow at the School of Fashion and Textiles at London's Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. The bacteria feed on a sugary liquid, form fine threads of cellulose that are harvested, dried and sewn into garments with the feel of 'vegetable leather'. Growing a frock in a science lab? Now that's Franken-fabulous! www.biocouture.co.uk



2. If you're simply too busy to commune with nature, slip into a pair of US-based 'experiential' designer Kristin Neidlinger's Natura Pathos Oxford brogues that are lined with moss insoles. The experience of walking through the forest is enhanced with wireless headphones that pick up the sound of your feet sinking into the mossy 'path'. www.slimavocado.com



4. Forget about wearing your heart on your proverbial sleeve. Rather, wear your garden. Inspired by the idea that 'plants needn't be housebound', Atlanta-based industrial designer and artist Colleen Jordan has created her range of Wearable Planters. These miniature necklace pendants or earrings can be planted up with your favourite succulent, fragrant herb or a pretty blossom picked on a country ramble. Available to order from her Etsy shop; see www.colleenjordan.com for details.