

In the quaint Karoo town of Prince Albert, Dewald and Erika van Zyl's Ta Mala cottages have become a popular choice amongst city slickers. And judging by their latest addition, a clever renovation of what was once a poky flat-roofed "brakdak" (a mud-roofed house typical of the Karoo), it's no wonder folks in search of starry skies choose to stop here.

The 35m² cottage, fondly referred to as Meerkat, is rustic yet comfy with oodles of platteland charm.

With all the respect due to a 200-year-old heritage building, the structure's original façade was kept largely intact, while the interior was transformed entirely – a labour of love that took them just under seven weeks.

Walls were demolished to open up the interior, the roof was replaced, a bathroom was added and large windows were fitted to let in more light. The original cement floors were retained but given a fresh coat of paint and the crooked walls were left as is – a nod to the cottage's original character and history. >>

The garden, designed to survive the harsh Karoo summers, now includes bursts of colour in the form of spekboom, red pelargoniums, flowering creepers and lavender.

Building costs

R1 484
per m²

Guests who visit Meerkat are encouraged to leave notes on a wall.