

A serendipitous find

Erika and Dewald, who permanently live in Lephalale, own several guesthouses there – this has been their bread and butter for the past decade. But on a visit to Prince Albert in 2013, the couple fell in love with the small Karoo town.

“Erika had booked a photography course with Louis Botha in Prince Albert as a birthday present for me and while I was busy, she explored the town,” Dewald explains.

As fate would have it, Erika came across Ta Mala cottages; the property was up for sale and they made an offer and bought it, despite it being 1 400km from their Limpopo home.

Shortly after, the couple commissioned local builders to begin renovations, but they were only able to complete the main house and a basic renovation of Meerkat cottage before their end-of-year break started in early December.

“We had no choice but to finish the job ourselves as we had to return to Lephalale and we wanted to open for guests before we left,” Dewald says. After many long hours and with plenty of hard work and help from their son Divan and daughter Tanya, they got it done before they had to return home.

“At the time, we may have said that we would never do this again but Erika and I love to get our hands dirty.” >>



When it comes to contractors, you don't always get what you asked for. So we thought: how difficult can it be? And decided to give it a go.

– Dewald



What did the judges say?

A wonderful family effort and a piece of history proudly restored to its former glory. – Johan Spies of Pennypinchers Timbercity



The pair didn't let a builders' holiday stand in their way and they did the job in 40°C Karoo heat! They also maintained the old-world character of the cottage beautifully.

– Marian van Wyk, creative editor



When everybody leaves you in the lurch... – Deon de Goede, DIY expert



A touching story of a romantic cottage on the platteland – restored with so much care and sensitivity.

– Wicus Pretorius, editor

