

myweek

FREE!



URBAN TREND

JOIN THE
LOCAL FOOD
REVOLUTION

COCKTAIL HOUR
FAB BARS
IN THE CAPE

HOT DESIGN
TABLE VIEW'S
SKYSCRAPER

STREET STYLE
SNAPPED AT THE
TYGER WATERFRONT

BRACKENFELL IDOL

andriette
comes home

WIN
A BLACKBERRY
STORM WITH
MYPERSONALTRAINER



NORTHERN
SUBURBS

YOUR LOCAL GUIDE TO THE GOOD LIFE

ISSUE **No6** APRIL 2009

going places

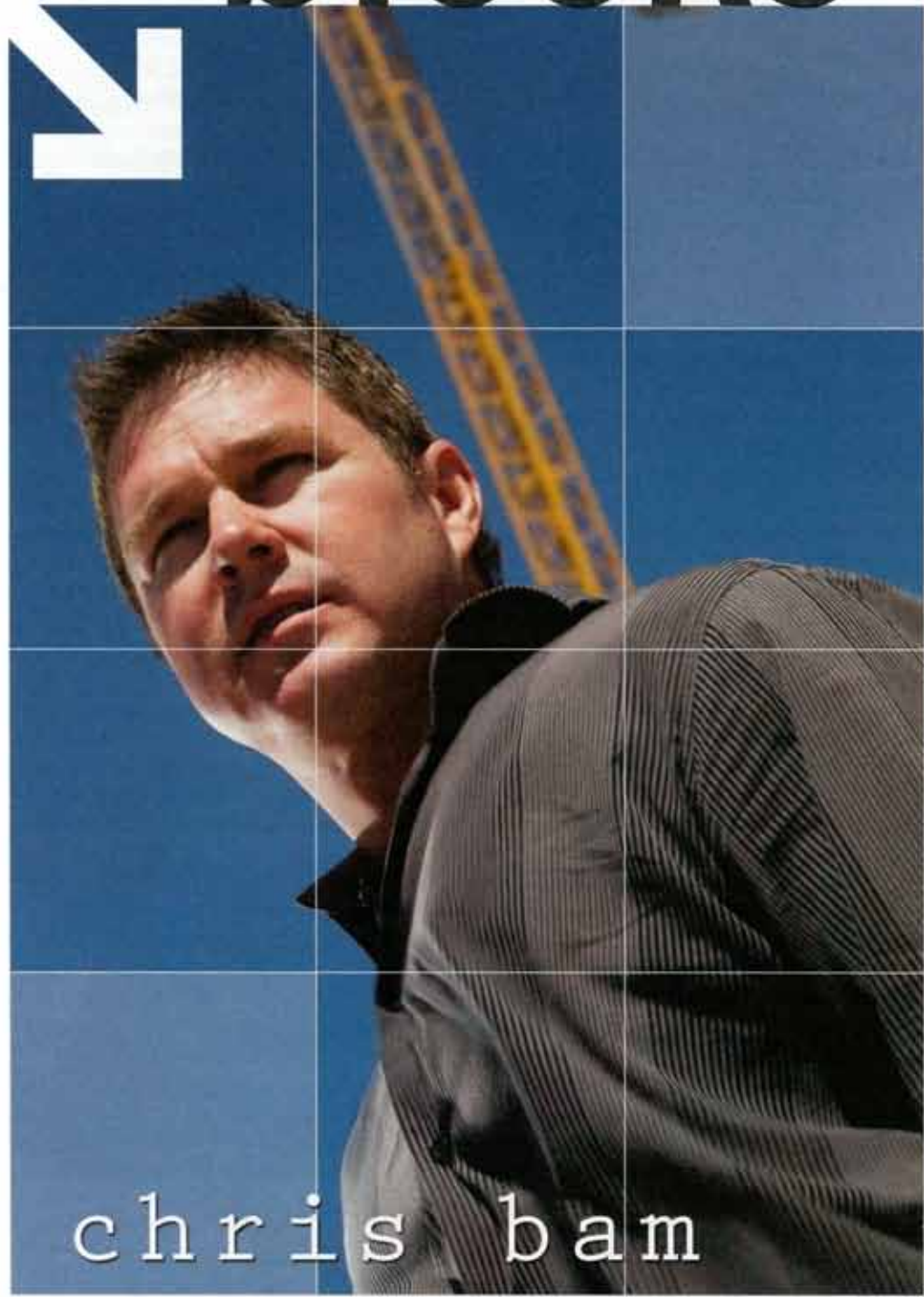
building blocks



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A LOCAL MOVER
& SHAKER

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Whether it's a Table View skyscraper or a Canal Walk gym, Chris Bam loves designing showstoppers. **Karen Nel** chats to the award-winning architect.



You won a CNBC award for Horizon Bay in Table View. Isn't a high-rise development on the coastline a bit controversial?

It's probably the building I'm most proud of. And my wife, Cindy, and I were among the first to move in. You have to see things in context. The idea is to build another development on the other side of Blaauwberg Road, and then the two will form a portal to the sea. But I know people are sceptical. A taxi driver once dropped me off at home and said, "I have no idea what they were thinking with this damn building." So I said, "How much time do you have? I could explain ..."

You also designed the new Virgin Active at Canal Walk. What's the idea behind the design? Our brief was to capture the feeling of movement and kinetic energy, so the building is designed to look like something in motion. I've been told it looks like a wave, or the wing of an aeroplane.

What was the biggest challenge when you started Bam Architects in 1992? Getting clients. Architecture doesn't require massive infrastructure – my first office was literally two by three metres with a table, drawing board and answering machine. The big challenge was to get the work in.

So when did things start happening? The renovation of the Palms Centre in Woodstock in 2000 was a big boost for me. We turned what used to be a biscuit factory into a trendy indoor shopping

space. We got a lot of exposure from that development. Our offices are still there.

What defines good architecture? A building that's functional, but also has aesthetic integrity. When the architects have done their job properly, there's an undeniable feel-good factor to the building.

Your favourite building in Cape Town? We have a few gems. If I had to single out one, I'd say the Jordan Shoe Factory in Parow. It's the perfect example of a modernist industrial building – simple and strong. Often architecture gets overcomplicated, and then it stops being functional.

Have you had any high-profile clients? I was asked to help with the restoration of Genadendal, the presidential residence at Groote Schuur in Cape Town, a few years ago. It was such an interesting job. The home is beautiful, but I don't think I could live there – it's a bit like living in a museum.

How important is light to you? Very, but controlling light is just as important. Light can be your biggest enemy if the building doesn't respond well to its orientation. The curves on the Horizon Bay building are specifically built to keep out harsh light.

How green are your buildings? The technology surrounding green building practices is still fairly new, but we do what we can. In the Virgin Active, the heat generated by the air conditioners is used to warm the indoor pool, and the grey water at Horizon Bay is recycled.

Horizon Bay



"A TAXI DRIVER SAID, 'I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY WERE THINKING WITH THIS DAMN BUILDING.'"

PHOTOGRAPHER DAVE NEL

fact file

Age 42

Lives Table View with fashion designer wife Cindy

Born Oranjezicht, grew up in Monte Vista

Qualification Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University)

First job Clerical assistant for the City

of Cape Town. "It was just after they opened the beaches to all races, and it was my job to count the people walking up and down the beach."

Unwinds by riding his motorcycle through the Karoo. "Once you've travelled by bike, driving in a car is like watching TV."