

# FROM CAPE TOWN TO CAPE CORAL

At long last the weather has turned. Humidity still lingers in the air like a blanket of steam, but it is less repressive than at the height of bad hair season. This balmy, almost comfortable night my significant other and I are invited to Sean and Debbie Campbell's magnificent house for dinner (full disclosure: I had a little something to do with the design.). We arrive before sunset as instructed and soon learned why this was an oft repeated requirement of our hosts. After walking through the house, we were treated to one of the best show's Mother Nature has in her bag of tricks: a stunning orange orb slowly making its way behind a wet wall of deep blue Caloosahatchee



River. The Campbell's live on the wide part of the river, a sweet spot they picked up in it's previous incarnation as a perfect waterfront lot with a not-so-perfect 1970's era bungalow. Yes, the plan was always to tear it down and build something else . . . and oh boy, did they ever! Debbie was born in Zambia but spent her early years in Queenstown, the Rose Capital of South

Africa and a central farming hub, and not far from Port Elizabeth. High spirited and with the perfect combination of intelligence and intuition, Debbie moved to Port Elizabeth and then Cape Town where she found success in the insurance business. Her ability to speak the English and Afrikaans languages propelled her on . . . and then there was Sean.



Sean grew up in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, a large city on what is now known as Nelson Mandela Bay. I know this to be true because having traveled to Port Elizabeth, I visited Sean's childhood home. He was really surprised when a photo of the house showed up on his iPhone one day! Port Elizabeth was settled by the English to defend their activities in the Western Cape from the indigenous people. The place is so connected to the wild sea that it seems impossible that a kid could grow up without a deep fascination, even love, for the sea. Which is precisely what happened with Sean. Sean's entrepreneurial spirit was forming at the same time as his seafaring skills were being honed. He eventually made his way to gorgeous Cape Town before making a decision that would change his life and bring him into mine.

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The couple first met in 1984, but it wasn't until six years later they met again and this time the sparks flew. Eventually, Sean and Debbie left one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen: Chapman Peaks Drive at Hout Bay in Cape Town, to make their way to the Caribbean. There, they chartered their yacht with Sean at the helm and Debbie as First Mate. Four years on the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Oceans provided them with enough great stories to last for years, along with the friendships they forged with their guests. Time out from the sea was spent in Cape Coral. The Campbell's recognized Cape Coral as the place to be before it was the place to be. With naturally beautiful wide river geography, along with 400 miles of canals, Cape Coral is the city with the most navigable waterways in the world. It's the Cape's (as it is locally known) time to shine. The Campbell's saw it coming and decided to invest in a new homestead and a new business while raising their young son. >>



TheHomeMag arrives in the mailboxes of over a hundred thousand Southwest Floridians every month, but it also arrives in mailboxes in Salt Lake City, Portland, and New Orleans. Also, in Atlanta, Washington DC, and Boston. In fact, TheHomeMag is franchised in 58 US cities. Debbie's superior sales skills and natural drive combined with Sean's ability to dream, plan, and organize like few people I've ever met has made the couple's American dream come true. Sean liked the idea of using the postal system to advertise; the fact that it could be targeted so precisely was new to the South Africans. Once they saw the impact their magazine had on the local southwest Florida market, they effectively pioneered it into a franchise operation. The company has provided the opportunity for entrepreneurs across the country to use TheHomeMag platform to build a good living serving the huge market of home owners in this country. >>





Sean's mind never stops; I guarantee he is cooking up ideas about his business ventures while I write these words. Debbie's time is spent taking care of the couple's son and building TheHomeMag brand alongside Sean. The more I get to know them, I see in them what must be the true meaning of a "power couple". Both are extremely physically fit and start the day early, a sign of true achievers. As Sean says, "he loves to see the day wake up". Avid boaters, the couple is known to spend weekends in their off-the-grid house on Upper Captiva Island.



Our involvement on the project for the Campbell's was a nearly three-year long journey from concepts to design development to construction. This project is special in every way with every square inch considered. It takes the perfect combination of forward thinking clients and a fearless designer to create the kind of magic that is the new home of the Campbell family. ■

