

The famous Bruynzeel House



Photo by Willem Malherbe

A Landmark in Stellenbosch

De Hoge Hoek - beauty and technical art combined

50 years ago the Dutch wood merchant, Kees Bruynzeel, wanted to show what you can do with wood. He commissioned a brilliant young architect, Aart Bijl, to design his home.

Aart Bijl was a student of the well known architect Pius Pahl and both were influenced by the Bauhaus tradition. But where the typical Bauhaus building has a flat roof, Aart Bijl used a technical wonder: a roof in the shape of a hyperbolic paraboloid (saddle shape).

The roof, constructed with teak rafters, was raised first, fixed on just two pillars. The community of Stellenbosch was fascinated and watched the building activity closely, especially when shortly after the roof stood, a raging storm was devastating the area for days. But the roof stood firm.

Then the rest of the house was built with flat face-brick, teak panels and enormous glass windows set in teak frames. The walls were fitted into the roof in a way that left free movement for the roof.



Photos by Aart Bijl

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When this super modern building was completed in 1962 it met with a similar reaction Paris greeted the building of the Eiffel tower in 1889: outrage in the conservative population, sheer delight from architects and engineers.

Today, Stellenbosch is proud of the famous Bruynzeel House and architects from many countries have come to admire it.

The materials used for the construction of this building are of unsurpassed quality:

Teak, yellow wood, copper, glass and a slim face brick that was commissioned and specially made for this house.

The quality of workmanship is equally stunning. The face brick walls were built with a slight slope of 3 degrees, which is a costly procedure but so much more elegant. The bedrooms have moulded plaster ceilings.

When the house was built, it cost ten times more than the construction of a normal house.

30 years ago, a German family bought the house, utterly overwhelmed with the beauty of the building and its setting on the north facing slope of Stellenboschberg.



1981, when the Breuer family had just moved in

You are welcome to ask me for information and high resolution photos.

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More information:

The house was built 1961/62 for Mr. & Mrs C. Bruynzeel by
BIJL GREEN & TODESCHINI ARCHITECTS
67, Strand Street, Cape Town, in Association with Munnik Visser & Black

Links: <http://www.landmarkhouse.com/>

New photos: <http://www.stellenboschwriters.com/flobilder1.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kees_Bruynzeel

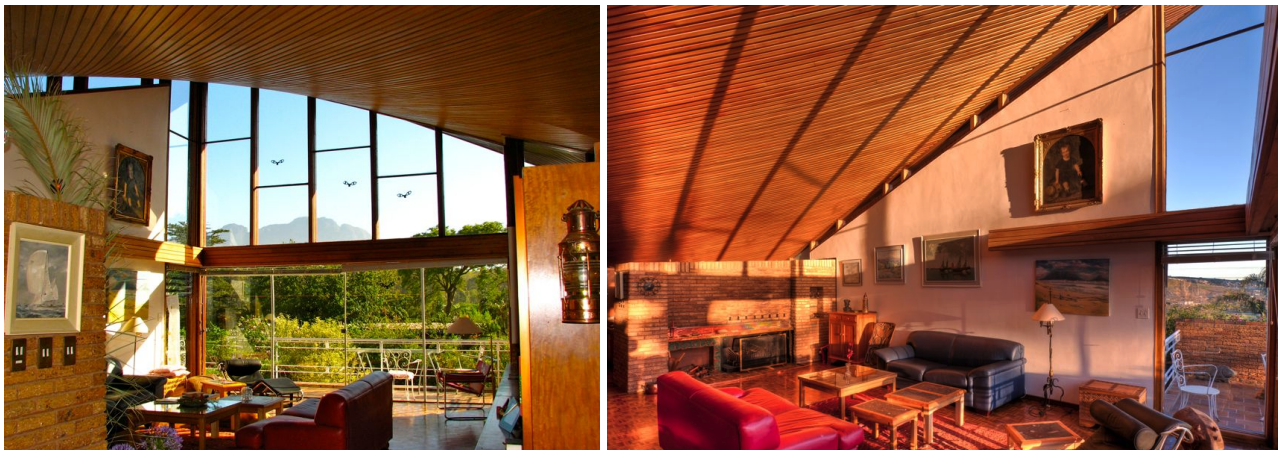
Cornelis ("Kees") Bruynzeel (February 19, 1900, Rotterdam – 1980) was a Dutch businessman, timber merchant and yachtsman.

Pius Pahl <http://oharchitecture.blogspot.com/2011/07/oh6-pius-pahl-monograph.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hyperbolic-paraboloid.svg>



20 years later



Today

Rosemarie Breuer, February 2012

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