

HORSE QUARTERLY

# HQ

**NOW MONTHLY**

ISSUE 73 MARCH 2013

**14 WAYS TO  
UNDERSTAND  
YOUR HORSE**

**SOUTH AFRICA'S PREMIER EQUINE**



## **WESTERN PLEASURE**

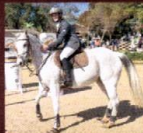
QUARTER HORSE BREEDING  
& AMERICAN PAINT p14

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USEFUL STABLE DESIGN TIPS | BANDAGING AND BOOTS: LEG, HOOF AND TAIL PROTECTION

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**panorama**

**HIGH FLYERS**  
SOUTH AFRICA  
RIDING STARS  
OF 2012



**ICELANDIC PONIES**  
1,000 YEARS OF  
ISOLATION AND  
A MOVEMENT TO  
MATCH



**COMPETITION HORSE**  
2012 SA JUNIOR  
CHAMPIONSHIPS





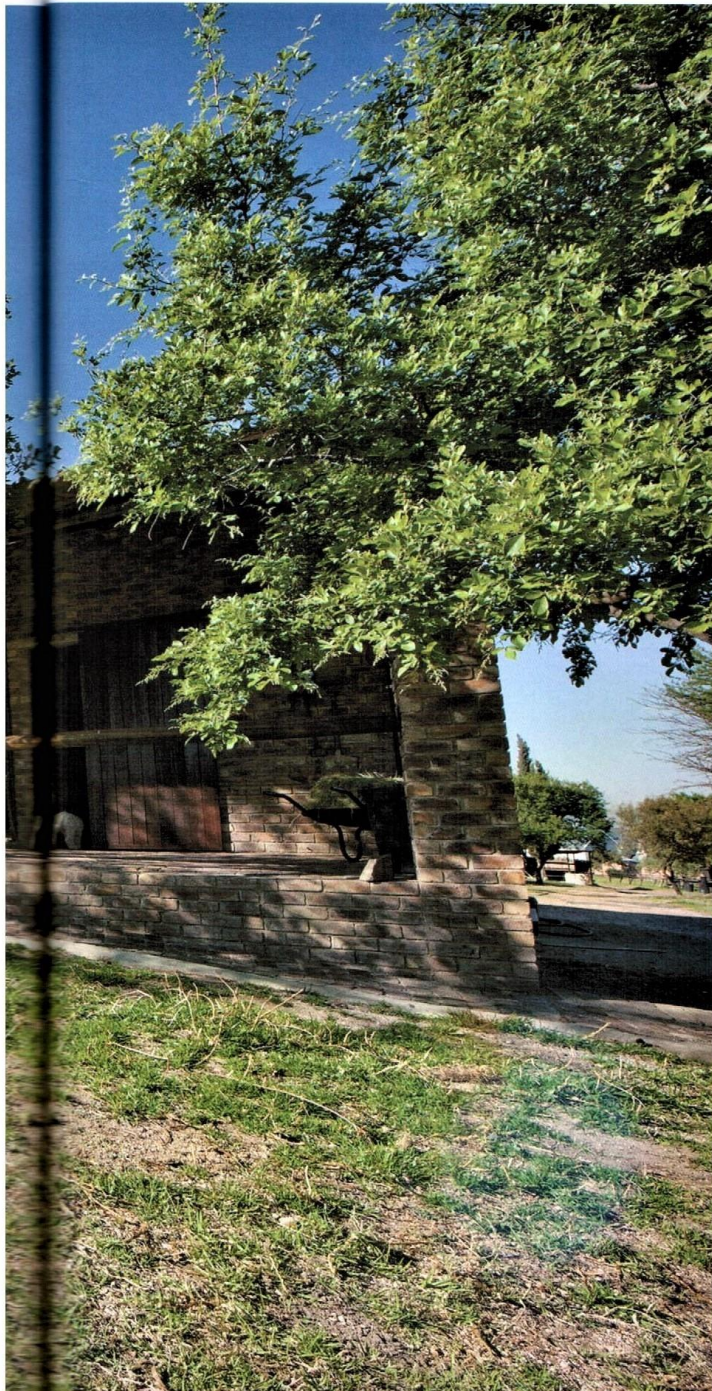


# A PLACE IN THE SUN

TEXT: BRIGITTE BILLINGS  
PHOTOS: T&B IMAGES

Sunlands Stables near Kyalami recently underwent radical changes to reduce its carbon footprint. We visited them to 'steal' some useful tips





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**W**hen Claudia Vrettas of Sunlands Stables in Sun Valley, Kyalami, renovated her yard recently, visitors had a lot to say about the improvements. *HQ* paid a visit to see for ourselves.

"I plan to be here till I'm 80, so I decided to invest in upgrades to make the yard a long-term success," smiles Claudia. The 'new look' yard is beautifully designed, but she tells us that aesthetics were not the key driver. "The layout had to 'work' well," she emphasises. Safety, efficiency and the happiness of the horses are paramount. Other elements, such as 'green' design and energy efficiency, were also incorporated.

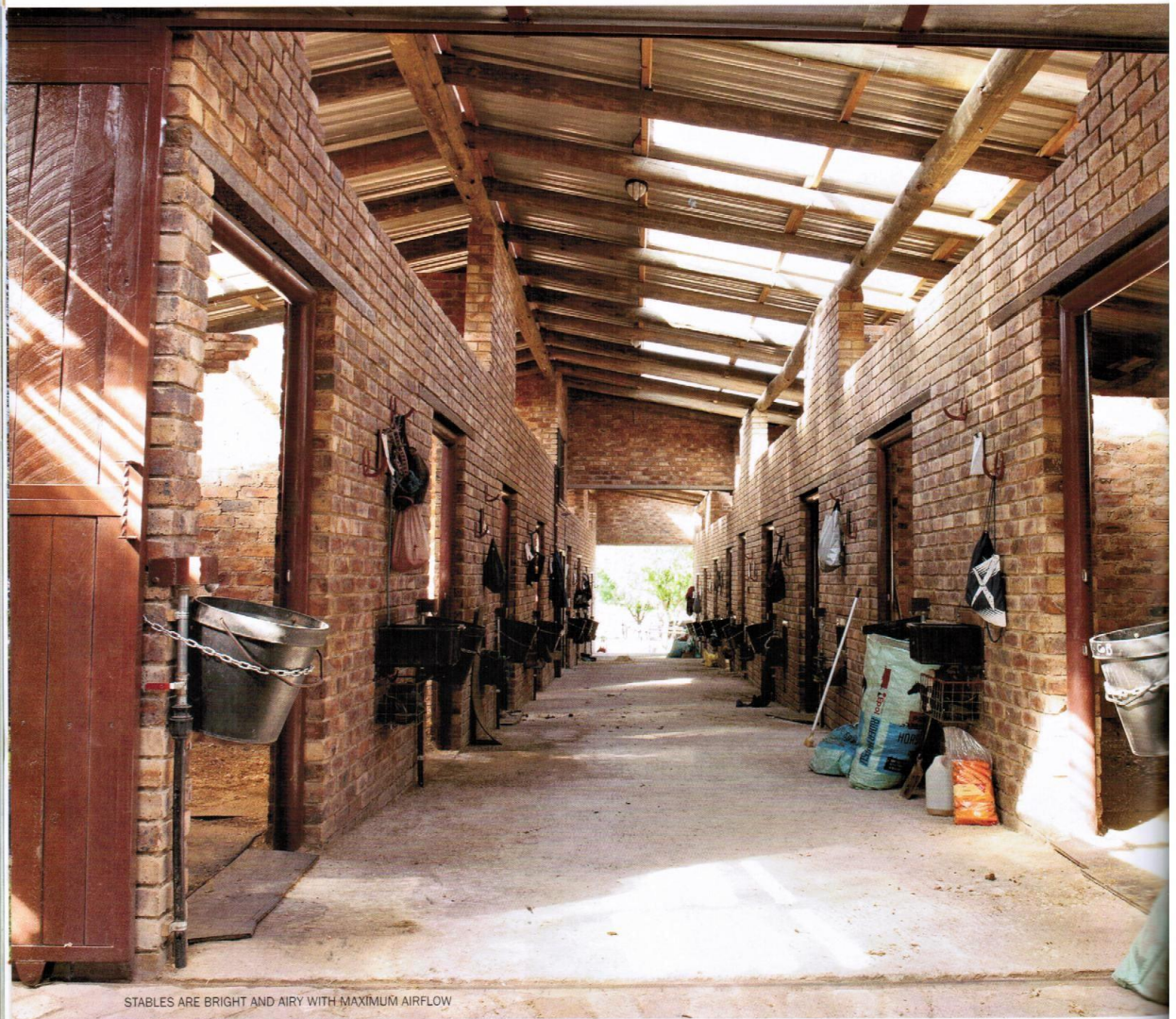
#### **HAPPY HORSES**

Unlike the current trend towards open-plan barns, Claudia has opted for a number of stable blocks, some of which face each other. The interleading walls, however, are ceiling height. "A lot of people believe that horses want to see each other all the time. I feel that when they're sleeping they want privacy. If they want to see each other they look over their doors. Low walls between stables just leads to squabbling, particularly at mealtimes. I want my horses calm and relaxed; privacy is part of this."

A short block of smaller stalls is home to the yard's school ponies who need less room, but apart from these the stables are bright and roomy, with double volumes keeping the air fresh, and skylights allowing high levels of natural light. Optimal airflow keeps flies and odours to a minimum even on the hottest days.

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STABLES ARE BRIGHT AND AIRY WITH MAXIMUM AIRFLOW

Aisles are spacious so that horses can move through without fear of annoying 'bum-biting', and Claudia has designed doorways with rounded poles rather than square ones to avoid bashed hips for those who tend to bolt through doors.

#### GREEN GAUGE

Stableyards can be thirsty. Not only do horses drink a lot, but we're constantly using water to wash walls and floors, bathe horses and hose down legs. At Sunlands, grey water runoff is directed to a small dam, which is home

to a flock of delighted ducks and provides irrigation for the surrounding grass.

Claudia has also designed a rubberised wet zone – horses walk into a bath and can stand in it, rather than having water hosed over them. Should you need to hose them down, the remaining water doesn't run into a messy puddle and evaporate.

#### RECYCLE, RECYCLE!

Mounting blocks have been made out of old tractor tyres, which Claudia has planted with flowers from the fields surrounding the yard.

The circular shape comes in handy for those horses who walk off before mount-up and have to be repeatedly led up to the block. Now you simply walk your horse around the tyre until he realises it's easier to stand still!

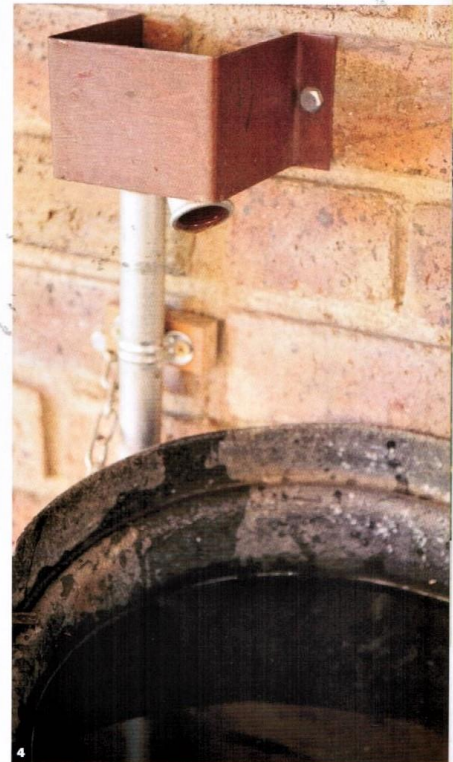
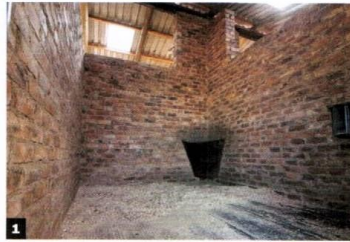
Claudia has also made feeders in stables using recycled conveyor belt. These are hard-wearing, horse-friendly and save grass. Other savings are made by the rubber mats in each stable which minimise the need for shavings and are gentle on horses' legs. "I haven't had a capped hock since we installed the rubber mats," she says.



## SMART STABLES



1. DOUBLE VOLUMES AND SKYLIGHTS KEEP STALLS LIGHT AND AIR FRESH; RUBBER MATS AND FEEDERS SAVE SHAVINGS AND GRASS, WHILE ROUNDED POLES IN DOORWAYS AVOID BASHED HIPPS
2. FEED BINS SLOT THROUGH THE WALL AND CAN BE CHECKED AND CLEANED WITH EASE
3. BASKETS FOR KIT CAN BE CLEANED IN A FLASH
4. WATER BUCKETS – WHICH SWING EASILY INTO STABLES – HAVE THEIR OWN WATER SOURCE FOR EASY REFILLS



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy efficiency is not only about electricity and water. Claudia has also focused on human energy expenditure to help her grooms get their jobs done more easily. No stable is more than five doors away from a feed or tack room, which cuts back on the usual feeding time mayhem that occurs when long rows of horses get over-excited waiting for their supper to arrive.

Feed bins slot through holes in the wall, making mealtimes easier and allowing Claudia to easily see if anyone has left food

behind. These bins can be quickly hosed out and left in the sun to dry. A similar system is available for water buckets, with each stable having its own water source for refills. Stables also sport wire baskets outside each door to hold individual grooming kits and accessories; these are easily washed out to avoid the usual build-up of dust and dirt.

### SAFE STORAGE

A feed, grass and shavings storage room runs the entire length of the block with doors opening into the stable section, providing



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## SMART STABLES



SUNLANDS IS A POPULAR COMPETITIVE YARD IN SUN VALLEY, KYALAMI



SUNLANDS HAS BOTH GRASS AND SAND ARENAS

grooms with short routes to carry bedding and fodder. This area has loading bays providing ease of access for delivery vehicles, much as you'd see in a warehouse. Blankets are stored in lofts over the tack rooms, which are arranged with almost Teutonic tidiness, and securely bolted against theft.

Riders are factored in to the energy equation: small cool-off camps are situated near the stables so that horses can cool down after work, and then be easily retrieved for a meal. These camps double as hospital units for horses on stable rest.

### WORTHWHILE EXPENSE

While recycling and energy saving are vital parts of the design, these haven't been primary drivers. Claudia has worked towards creating a harmonious haven that considers all of its occupants. "Over the years I've learned about the small things that make life easier, and horses happier. Sometimes these elements cost a little more, but I think the expense is worthwhile," she concludes. 🐾