



# Landscape architecture in South Africa celebrated

Marlene de Witt

What are probably two of the most important books on South African landscape architecture to date were launched on 11 April 2012. *South African landscape architecture: A compendium* and *a reader* is a book set that celebrates and documents the achievements in South African landscape architecture over the past three decades. It also debates the theory and current thinking behind the profession today.

The book set was officially launched at the University of Pretoria, where it was conceptualised and produced with the support of the Institute for Landscape Architecture in South Africa (ILASA).

The editors, Dr Hennie Stoffberg, Clinton Hindes and Liana Müller were all associated with the University of Pretoria at the time that the books were conceptualised and compiled. Hindes and Müller are now both lecturers at the University of Cape Town.

## A compendium

*A compendium* takes the reader through the evolution of the discipline of landscape architecture in South Africa since the 1980s by featuring the complete collection of projects that have won ILASA awards since the inception of the awards in 1985 until 2009 when this book was conceptualised.

Although there have been many international publications over the years that have featured a collection of important works in landscape

architecture, a book such as this one was lacking in South Africa, where the discipline commenced as early as 1946. Furthermore, only five publications on South African landscape architecture have been published in the last 30 years.

*A compendium* was initiated with the support of ILASA, with the goal of documenting and conserving all these important projects in one compilation. This book is sure to become a key reference work to guide and inspire those in the profession.

*A compendium* starts with a section featuring some of the foundational landscape architecture projects of the 1980s, which illustrate the diversity of project types that were being undertaken in the profession, such as the Berg-en-Dal restcamp in the Kruger National Park, the Environmental Impact Control Plan of the Palmiet pump storage scheme in Grabouw, Church Square in Grahamstown and the Durban South Beach play park.

The second section features projects that were rewarded for excellence in design, for example, the Reserve Bank



→ The Outeniqua Pass between George and Oudtshoorn.



→ The Berg-en-Dal restcamp in the Kruger National Park.



→ The Palmiet pump storage scheme in Grabouw.

in Johannesburg and the rehabilitation of the Outeniqua Pass between George and Oudtshoorn. These are followed by projects undertaken between 1998 and 2003 that have won awards for their ecological consideration in design. These include the new visitor facility at Cape Point, the upgrading of the Table Mountain cableway and the development of the N3 toll road between Cedara and Heidelberg.

The last section features award-winning projects that can be seen as a celebration of the South African landscape. These include the Big Bay development at Bloubergstrand, Freedom Park in Pretoria, The Mitchells Plain Public Transport Interchange and Thesen Islands in Knysna.

Although not all important projects were necessarily entered for the ILASA awards, only the award-winning projects were selected for the scope of this book.

However, it is hoped that the other important projects omitted here will also be documented in the future.

### A reader

*A reader* contains a collection of articles, written by academics actively involved in the field, who together reflect on the theory and thinking behind the discipline today. It features theoretical analyses, as well as examples of how theory is implemented in good project design across different sectoral projects. Such project descriptions add tremendous value to the discipline and integrate theory and academia with the profession.

*A reader* serves as a platform for current South African landscape architecture research and theory to be made widely accessible to peers involved with research, both nationally and internationally. The articles published in this book were all double-blind peer reviewed and fall in three

broad categories: culture and heritage, science and strategy, and design.

Papers in the first section cover topics relating to, among others, the role of landscape architecture in an urban environment, the role of history in development, and the role that community factors play in the planning and design of South African parks. The second section deals with visual impact assessment, the role that climate regions can and should play in design, and carbon storage and the sequestration of trees in an urban landscape. The last set of papers deals with examples of how design can and should be used in landscape architecture.

It is hoped that *A reader* will significantly add to the dialogue on the developing discourse of South African landscape architecture and that it will bring about a better understanding of the importance that landscape design plays, or has the potential to play, in our society today. ➔



→ The Berg-en-Dal restcamp in the Kruger National Park.



→ Grahamstown Church Square in the Eastern Cape.