



Nthabi Taukobong

DESIGNING WOMAN

The Gauteng designer behind Ditau Interiors has launched a range of fabrics and homeware fragrances that are as rich and exhilarating as the African continent that inspired them.

FROM THE HEART

YOUR GREATEST FEAR?

'Not living my dream of a passion-filled life.'

TWO THINGS PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

'I love kwaito music and amakipkip, the multicoloured popcorn you get in the townships.'

DOES JUGGLING WORK AND FAMILY COME EASILY?

'I have one beautiful son, a major inspiration in my life. He helps out at home and I also have the best support. I need both work and family life to keep me going.'

WORST TRAIT?

'Procrastination. I become my own worst nightmare.'

She's always dreamed of creating an African lifestyle brand, and for the past three years Nthabi Taukobong has been working on just that. Not content with helping high-end clients achieve a style she calls 'effortless luxury living', this accomplished interior designer has now moved into production too.

In collaboration with top fabric house Hertex, Nthabi has designed an African Queen range of fabrics that brims with vibrant colours and textures. Equally exotic is the blend of perfumes she has conceptualised for her homeware fragrance collection. TAU by Nthabi Taukobong includes candles, room sprays, diffusers, hand washes, hand lotions and ceramic burners, and is available at JVB, House & Haven and Loads of Living.

Next up is a bathroom range.

WHAT NTHABI SAYS:

'At this level of the game, a paper trail is vital.'

Nthabi grew up in Soweto and Durban, and spent a year in Calgary, Canada, as a youth ambassador for South Africa. After doing an interior design diploma at Technikon Natal, she worked with an international design company on local high-end hotel projects.

After three years she went on her own, focusing on hotels, and residential and corporate interiors. But it was with Ditau Interiors, the company she launched in 2005 in partnership with her investment banker brother, that she really found her feet – doing the homes of business executives, senior politicians and royalty.

With the launch of her lifestyle ranges, she's flying.

ON THE COUCH WITH NTHABI

Most important business lessons learnt?

'The importance of fine-tuning not only my creative skills but also my business skills. At this level of the game, a paper trail is vital. I've also learned the importance of teamwork.'

What has been your biggest knock in business?

'Biting off more than I could chew. I started a large venture with a good creative concept, but the business structure was not thought through.'

How did you overcome it?

'By letting go of my ego and being open to advice from other established companies in the industry. Though I'm still far from being a master of business, I no longer allow obstacles to knock me out. I've learned to surround myself with the right team and to avoid trying to micro-manage.'

Are you a perfectionist?

'I strive for excellence in everything I do.'

What is your best childhood memory?

'Plaiting my grandfather's grey hair with black wool and him being so proud of the mess I'd created on his head.'