

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE BOYS ARE BACK AGAIN AT DECOREX 2016

The bachelor pad, the man cave, the lad's lair... call it what you will, but the demarcation, in recent years, of an exclusively all-male space in the home has given new definition to the term 'masculine décor'. In the past, the trend has been admirably acknowledged at Africa's premier décor, design and lifestyle exhibition with showcase features such as Mancaves and Manscapes, and this year is no different.

The boys are invited back again to Decorex 2016 with the launch of the brand-new Top Man feature, only this time *they* get to create the living space that best portrays their personalities.

Sponsored by Real Natural Stone, suppliers of everything from Travertine tiles and cladding to quality marble and mosaics, the Top Man showcase is being launched at the KwaZulu-Natal leg of the three-part show, which takes place from 18 to 21 March at the Durban Exhibition Centre.

The exclusive feature will see four local male celebrities – well-known radio presenter Damon Beard, journalist and media personality Varshan Sookhun, former South African rugby fly-half Andrew 'Butch' James, and World Lifesaving Champion Brandon Ribbink – each paired with a prominent designer, who will interpret the former's unique style in the ultimate "men-only" room setting.

Breaking décor rules with unashamed abandon, these unique spaces – be it for work, living or pure play – are guaranteed to be as variable as the men who have inspired them. Damon Beard, for instance, is most recognised as the voice of one of East Coast Radio's flagship shows, *The Drive with Damon*, which he presents every weekday from 3 to 6pm. But few know that Beard, who started his career with the station in 1991, is also a qualified pilot, nor that he studied journalism and trauma counselling and has travelled the world extensively.

Says self-styled "organic décor guru" Brett Harris of Even Flow Décor, who will be decorating the exclusive space inspired by Beard's personality: "We'll be going for a look where natural materials – think plenty of masculine leather, stone and sustainable timber – predominate. The scheme will be built around an outdoor shower, fire pit and bar – a relaxed 'weekend' space that flows seamlessly from patio to open air – and decorated in a contemporary colonial style, with vintage maps, table lamps and exclusive 'chill chairs'."

Harris, whose business is situated at trendy Station Drive in Stamford Hill, specialises in the manufacture and distribution of, among others, organic décor, wooden furniture, Nguni hides, game skins, ottomans, cushions, tableware and wall art. Naturally, he will be using plenty of his own product range on the stand. "We believe in quality, sustainability and originality," he says, pointing out that these are all values close to his Decorex muse, Beard's heart too.

Like Beard, Varshan Sookhun is a seasoned radio man. At age 35, Sookhun, who gained national recognition when, in 2001, he joined LotusFM as the producer-presenter of the *Bollywood Billboard*, has 18 years of professional broadcasting behind him. Today, KwaZulu-Natal listeners know him best as the voice of the station's popular lifestyle show, *The Midday Spice*.

But, like Beard, there is more to the man than his professional accomplishments, impressive as they may be. A strict vegetarian who begins each day "with prayer and motivation", Sookhun's dedicated Top Man showcase will be as multifaceted as the man himself, says interior designer Riyaad Tayob, of Design Time Art and Décor, with whom he has been partnered. "Varshan is a truly modern man. For this reason we'll be adopting a clean-lined contemporary scheme but one that includes the soft, flowing imported fabrics for which our practice is known."

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Tayob is hoping visitors to Decorex Durban “will experience the glamour and appeal of the upmarket celebrity lifestyle while realising that it is wholly within their own reach.” His Overport firm strives to produce creative yet liveable spaces for clients while “striking that delicate balance between quality and value”.

Appropriately, minimalism is at the heart of the stand designer Angela Rousseau is creating for ‘Butch’ James. The former South African rugby union player who represented South Africa 40 times and was a member of the team that won the 2007 Rugby World Cup is a “no-frills kind of guy” and Rousseau’s aim is “to produce a stand that is trending, comfortable and practical”. Says the Kokstad based designer: “We are keeping it really simple with the use of clean lines and a neutral colour palette, all of which is true to the minimalist style. We will be making use of different textures, such as timber, steel and marble, and have focused on the masculine element through our choice of bold furnishings and artwork.”

As for what she is hoping visitors will take away from their experience of her and Butch’s Decorex collaboration, Rousseau says: “We want them to walk away inspired by simplicity and embracing the beauty of the minimalism. We want them to discover that effective design need not be overly complicated and are hoping that they will be able to take aspects of the design home to ‘make it home’, as Decorex says so well.”

Unsurprisingly, avid surfer and former World Lifesaving Champion Brandon Ribbink’s Top Man showcase will be inspired by sun, sea and sand. “Brandon is a family man so we’re going with a relaxed living-room space dressed in a healthy dose of cool, oceanic blue,” says Paige Waplington of Redesign Interiors, the designer Ribbink will be working with at Decorex Durban. Waplington, whose interior-design business is based in Durban, explains that the highlight of the stand will be a three-dimensional “wave wall” created from off-cuts of the kneeboards Brandon shapes. “Beyond the aquatic theme, the look will be supremely laid-back and easy to live with, just like Brandon himself,” she adds.

Celebrity credentials aside, what’s arguably the best thing about the Top Man feature at Decorex Durban is the fact that corporate proceeds from this exciting installation will go to the charity of each celebrity’s choosing, giving this testosterone-fuelled project feel-good finesse in more ways than one. Visitors will be invited to vote for their favourite Top Man, donate towards their charity and stand a chance to win a prize to the value of R30 000 from Real Natural Stone.

Decorex Durban details:

Decorex Durban: 18 – 21 March 2016
Time: 18 – 20 March, 10am to 8pm; 21 March, 10am to 6pm
Trade days: 18 and 19 March

Ticket prices: R75 for adults; R65 for trade, pensioners and scholars; R20 for children under 12
Venue: Durban Exhibition Centre

For more information, e-mail decorexsa@ThebeReed.co.za
Visit: www.decorex.co.za Facebook: Decorex SA Twitter: @decorexSA

Decorex Durban forms part of the Decorex SA portfolio and is owned by the Thebe Reed Exhibitions.

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