

# ABOUT US...

Justin & Natalia met whilst working on Cruise Ships in Alaska in 1998 and worked on over 25 ships on various cruise lines and on some of the biggest ships in the world until 2007 when they left to start life on land with their dreams of owning a hotel and starting a family.

Justin (born in Glasgow and brought up in London) has a degree in Photography and worked as the Photo Manager in charge of 10 photographers on approximately 15 different ships from 1997 until 2004, Natalia is a successful hair stylist and was the Spa Manager on approximately 15 different cruise ships leading teams of up to 20 therapists from 1998 until 2004.

In 2004 they teamed up to sell art at the art auctions held onboard the cruise ships, they did this with great success until 2007 when they decided 10 years at sea was enough. They worked 7 days a week for between 10 and 13 months at a time with no breaks in order to save enough for their dream of opening their own hotel when they left.

Living in a hotel (cruise ship) for 10 years meant that the hospitality environment was second nature and the high standard and attention to detail that is required to survive in that world became the standard.

Justin & Natalia came to Cape Town for a vacation in 2000 and fell in love with the area known as Oranjezicht in the 'City Bowl', they returned on their next vacation in 2001 to purchase a property in Oranjezicht and eventually purchased the house next door in 2003 with the intent to open the two of them as a guesthouse when they left ships.

After leaving ships and by chance, one Sunday in mid 2008, whilst visiting a show house they got talking with the agent and it was revealed that Flower Street Villa, a property in the next street to theirs and a property they had always been curious about was about to come on the market. After a quick sale of the 2 houses and some negotiating with the bank the dream became a reality and on January 15<sup>th</sup> 2009 they had their own 19 room guesthouse.

The plan was always to renovate one day in the future but they couldn't wait, the old guesthouse was very run down and in much need of repair - it was last decorated in 1973. The property had been neglected for so long and according to some of the neighbors who had been here for up to 70 years it had always been in a state of disrepair and a bit of an eyesore for the neighborhood. The balconies had been enclosed and converted into bathrooms and many of the original features had been lost. Rooms and corridors had been added over the years but never with any proper design or consideration for natural light or the flow of the building.

They started renovations in July 2010 with the help of RSA architects who specialize in historic buildings. With R&N Master builders and 150 workers they completed the project in just over 5 months, something of a record for Cape Town!

They opened the doors on 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010 to the new and updated 15 bedroom property and have had nothing but positive reviews and its been all go since then!