

# By Design

Nto Interiors transforms spaces  
with personalised design,  
blending style with comfort



Words  
**Nomonde  
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## SUCCESS STORY

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**T**he privilege of figuring out your destiny from a young age is one that is reserved for the luckiest of people as it requires great confidence and trust in one's intuition and abilities. Thirty-year-old Ntongase Mathabela is among the selected few as she knew who and what she wanted to be from a young age.

Born and raised in the bustling streets of Johannesburg South, Ntongase, who is affectionately known as Nto, has taken her business, Nto Interiors, to great heights, all from the humblest of beginnings and, of course, with the constant support of her family.

Although she did not know it at the time, her journey to becoming the esteemed interior designer we've come to know and love today began when she was just a little girl. Growing up, her creativity was her superpower and fortunately for Nto, her mother was able

to identify this and encourage her to develop her skills through her school art projects, as well as the DIY projects she would spend her time completing.

While Nto always knew where her passion and interests lay, financial constraints led her to pursue a Sports Management Degree and later a postgraduate degree in Business Administration. Although she was determined to succeed in that field, she always knew she was destined to be in the interior design space and her disdain for complacency lit a fire under her to do so. Taking her future into her own hands, Nto utilised any and every resource that was available at her disposal to realise her dream of entering the interior decor industry. This involved enrolling in online courses, watching an ungodly amount of YouTube videos and interior design shows, and just like that Nto Interiors ceased to be a dream and became a reality.

Determined to be the change she wants to see in the world of interior design, she sought a practical solution to provide more accessibility through a firm that offers a modern, functional and affordably luxurious style. 2023 was the year of big risk and when Nto officially founded Nto Interiors. Since then she has been watching her vision come to life



through her clients' perspective. 'The initial vision was to democratise design, blending luxury and practicality for all... I love creating spaces that reflect the client's personality but also maintain a timeless elegance. At Nto Interiors, I focus on designs that are sleek, inviting and practical, ensuring the spaces I create are not only beautiful but also comfortable and functional. I aim for designs that clients will enjoy for years to come,' she explains.

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According to Ntongase, the concept of Nto Interiors was inspired by the adventures and challenges she watched others experience, some of which she experienced herself. The space she wanted to enter is notorious for being exclusionary towards people in the middle and lower class, which forms a large part of SA's population, and she was determined to bridge this gap and create a more inclusive space regardless of one's budget. 'I wanted to break the notion that beautiful spaces were only for the wealthy, so I turned to social media to showcase how anyone could create stunning, functional homes with limited resources.'

By taking full advantage of social media, Nto began showcasing her unique ability to revamp spaces on a strict budget with her own space, which she reveals is how she established a clientele for Nto Interiors. Through this, she enabled her audience and potential clients to realise that a big budget is not a prerequisite to remodeling spaces, whether the vision is luxurious or not.

A year into learning the ropes and navigating the challenges of managing her business, Nto has found her groove with every project that she's taken on. This has not only allowed her to grow and consistently improve her craft, but it has also exposed her genuine and lasting connections with her clients.

With durability and the client's vision as the end goal, Nto Interiors has soared to great heights and has emerged as a go-to, particularly among black, middle-class people as they are provided with a level of access to home improvements that were once unattainable. Finding the perfect balance between incorporating her own personal style while bringing the client's vision to life has been a gratifying experience for Nto. 'Every project presents an opportunity to bring beauty and comfort into a home, and watching my client's reactions to the finished product is deeply fulfilling,' Nto says.

While already having an established clientele and fanbase at the time, Nto embarked on a once-in-a-lifetime project with Happiness Dladla, a young woman she met via TikTok. She reminisces on the unique experience of taking her followers through a process that she had been through alone countless times before.



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This inspirational project took social media by storm as Nto showcased her unique ability to make design accessible, functional and appealing to the eye.

'We turned a modest shack into a luxurious bedroom without making any structural changes, achieving a result that looked like a lavish hotel room while ensuring functionality. The project required creativity in material selection, textured walls and carefully chosen furniture that was both stylish and easy to maintain. This transformation highlighted that luxury and comfort can be achieved in any space, proving that even the most humble environments can be made into sanctuaries of opulence.'

Up next, Nto has her sights set on a few ambitious endeavours, which include an expansion of her brand and breaking into the international market. According to her, she intends to focus on custom-made furniture, creative design solutions and eventually open a showroom to allow her clientele a more up-close and personal look at her furniture.

'My ultimate goal is to make Nto Interiors synonymous with quality, creativity and accessible luxury for all,' Nto shares.



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