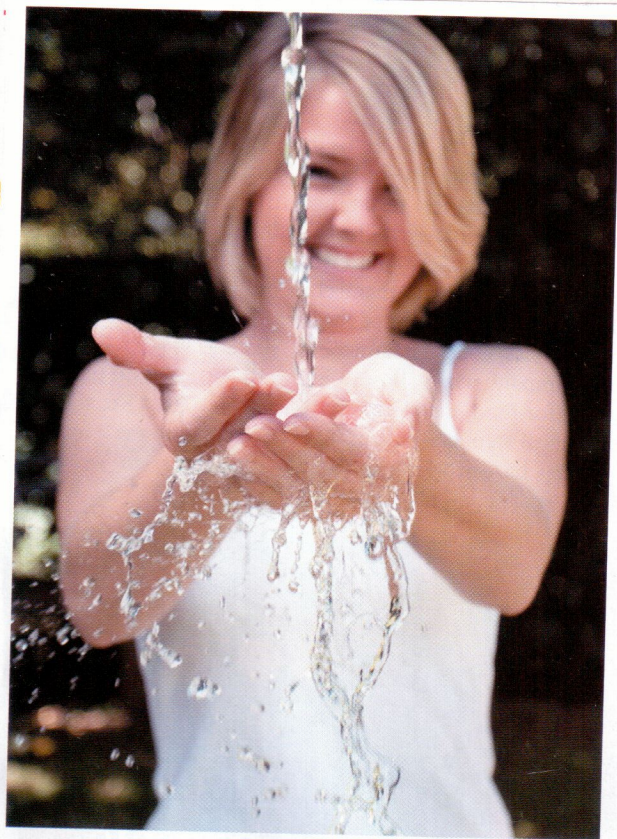


WIN
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 ESCAPES TO
 SINGAPORE
 INDONESIA
 AND SABI
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THE TEEN INVENTOR

Claire Reid is in her second year of architecture at the University of Pretoria. She has a weekend job and is an average young South African woman. Except that whilst she was still in high school, Claire invented something groundbreaking. After realising how costly, difficult and ineffective the process of growing her own vegetables was, she invented the Water Wise Reel Gardening System. This brilliant, cheap and easy-to-use system for planting vegetables cuts water usage by 80%. Not only has she vastly improved the lives of many local people, she's also been the recipient of numerous awards, including the acclaimed Stockholm Junior Water Prize. She was also a Shoprite/Checkers Woman of the Year nominee – and she hasn't graduated yet.

Does age matter? Perhaps it does to a small degree, but definitely not in terms of what you can achieve.

Has age ever been an issue for you? Being one of the youngest entrants in the Stockholm competition, I was in awe of the older contestants' inventions. But after I won, I realised that age wasn't a factor. Talent does not succumb to age.

You visited one of the American contestants in her hometown. What were the young people like? She lives in the South and most of the people in her town get married and have kids very young – they had no aspirations to leave home, let alone the state or country. In the huge high school she attended only five students had passports.

Favourite building? The Guggenheim Bilbao in Bilbao, Spain.

What's in your handbag? My favourite perfume Stella, by Stella McCartney, my sketch book and journal, purse and cellphone.

SOUTH AFRICA
 JUNE 2006

FINE ART
 A FASHIONABLE
 HOME WITH
 SMART ART

It is possible to live beyond the stereotypes and expectations of your age. Sarah Buitendach spoke to five age-defying women and didn't even ask them how old they are.

The age game

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