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Globe trotter

This light-infused Applecross family home buzzes with a sense of international edge.

TEXT: Lexi Rollins IMAGES: Robert Frith

EYE-CATCHER: The Empire dining table's recycled teak beams contrast with the smart Lara chairs in white leather, from Table & Chair, for an inviting contemporary look. Hurricane lamps from Baileys and Spacecraft artwork from Empire.



You could easily be forgiven for thinking you were in Bali or Los Angeles when you step into this two-level Applecross home. And

it's no surprise. The owners have drawn from their travels over a five-year editing process to ensure their six-bedroom, four-bathroom home reflects not only the places they love most around the world, but also the laidback, hip lifestyle they enjoy.

"It started out as what I would call a Balinese temple," says architect Shane Le Roy. "Then the homeowners came back from being away and basically said they wanted a more modern approach, so we took on a really organic, contemporary feel to it. I feel like the whole house just gives you that whole Miami contemporary feel."

Floor-to-ceiling windows open up to courtyards and balconies throughout the home, while natural stone, marble and wood used in the design echo the elements of outdoor style found in the balmy climes of Bali or Miami. All this is wrapped up in a contemporary vibe evoked by the home's clean, straight lines and pared down, monochromatic colour scheme.

The heart of the home is the open-plan living space, which encompasses kitchen, dining and entertaining areas. Designed

HOME APPLECROSS



BRONZE FINISH: The open-plan living area makes a grand statement with bronze mirrors, an armless Samson chair in flocked silk velvet from Empire and organic wood and brass ornaments from Bali. (top right) An artwork painted by the homeowner's daughter and nostalgic pieces give the study a personal feel. (bottom left) Collections from travels. (bottom right) The Modular lounge in the theatre room is from Baileys.





with the social life of the residents – a family of five – in mind, interior designer Leon House paired ivory walls with beige marble flooring and modern organic-style furnishings to create a bright and airy space. Sunlight floods in through bifold glass doors that lead to a patio and swimming pool.

Enhanced by the interior ceilings and floors that continue into the outdoor entertaining area, these doors can open completely to create one all-encompassing space. “It’s all tied in, so now it has got that inside-outside appeal,” says Leon. “It’s got a really good feel to it.”

This “good feel” is one of sunny warmth, but it’s seemingly at odds with the property’s southern frontage. “It’s a south-facing house that should be cold, and the house is white (also cooling), so to keep it warm is quite a contradiction of terms. Most people go, ‘How does that work?’” says Leon.

In this case, it does work. Warmth and light are created through the use of glass, mirrors, natural materials and an inviting tactile element introduced in the form of

textured fabrics, wallpapers and a polished plaster finish on the walls.

“We’re not maximising the whole solar principles, but it was the only way to go about it,” says Shane of the choice to point south. “If we went the other way, the house would probably be 100sqm smaller than it is today... but you don’t feel that it’s cold by any nature, so it does actually work.”

Stepping outside, you enter a subtropical haven tailored for relaxation. When designing the space, landscape designer Jo Taylor envisaged a scene straight out of an Asian resort. “The client asked for a resort-type garden because they travel overseas a lot and wanted to bring the look home with them,” says Jo.

The space is built around a luminous pool, which is slightly lowered from the rest of the area to produce a feeling of elevation in the garden zones. A Balinese stone Buddha reclines by the pool and takes advantage of a seating space that has been carved into the concrete of the external wall. This is a feature echoed by a suspended bench found outside the study.

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STRONG LINES: The ensuite features a movable mirror, Pietra Grey limestone slabs and a tub from Rogerseller. (left) Gold/cream silk tasseta quilt from Cocoon Boudoir makes a lush statement in the master bedroom. The Crystal lamp, mirror coffee table and velvet lounge in the background are all from Baileys. (bottom left) The daughter's bedroom has a gothic vibe with artworks by Dan Estabrook and Tane Andrews.



Jo designed a water feature to tunnel through a dividing wall between the pool and the entry, so it offers a hint of what's to come to visitors. Several mature frangipani trees, fortuitously salvaged from a local worksite, and a stylish Veneto Bianco marble lightbox complete the scene.

"What we tried to create is something interesting everywhere you looked out," says Jo of the landscape elements, which have been used to maximise the limited outdoor space.

Over the five-year editing process for this home, the team has seen a number of deviations from the original plan. "Through travelling and seeing different things, ideas change," the homeowner explains. "I'd ring the boys while I was away and say, 'I've just seen this, what do you think?'"

"We just added accents as we went along," Leon adds. "I think the best part of design is that you can move and groove because building takes a while, and the council takes a long time."

While the majority of changes have been cosmetic, one major revision was to flip the

BARRI'S

FINE RUGS

“... we took on a really organic, contemporary feel to it. I feel like the whole house just gives you that whole Miami contemporary feel.”



A daybed in the study features custom-made pillows and a didgeridoo that's special to the owners.

main bedroom around. The decision was made halfway through the building process. However, it's a choice that ensured the room took advantage of Swan River views, which span the entire eastern wall of the upper level, even while lolling about in bed.

These views are also reflected in a long, bronze mirror suspended above it. This mirror, with its warm golden hue, is a striking focal point of the room. However, Leon did face some reluctance to it from Shane and the homeowner.

“I was overseas when they rang me up and asked again if I was sure about the mirror,” Leon laughs. “I walked into a hotel as they were talking to me and there was this huge bronze mirror there. I said, ‘Guys, I’m standing right in front of it and you’ve got to do it.’”

An ensuite, inspired by another overseas trip, completes the main bedroom. “I wanted something that I had seen in Bali. He (Shane) understood exactly what I wanted and came up with this,” says the homeowner. The bathroom is decked out in earthy Pietra Grey marble with parallel vanities mirroring each

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OUTDOOR IN: The family room opens out to a Balinese-style entertaining area with a lagoon-look pool. The outdoor dining setting was imported from Bali. (bottom left) A Buddha statue is a striking visual in the entrance. (bottom right) Cooktop by Gaggenau. A movable glass pane hides a scullery.

Empire (08) 9388 1318, worldempire.com; Table & Chair (08) 9388 1855; tableandchaircompany.com.au; Baileys (08) 9388 7214; Cocoon Boudier (08) 9388 7224

other over a freestanding bath, giving the space a simple sense of balance.

The upper level comprises an apartment-style wing, designed with the homeowner's two adult daughters in mind. It's here Shane took advantage of the corner block's double frontage to create two separate entrances. The main staircase, an attention-grabbing affair in chocolate-stained Tasmanian oak, leads up to this three-bedroom wing, which can be completely shut off from the rest of the house by sliding shut two doors. "It gives the girls that whole apartment living aspect," says Shane. "They can close this off."

The home has been a classic case of the old 'good things come to those who wait' adage.

Although it is spacious at 700sqm, the use of consistent, natural materials throughout the home gives it the warmth and cosy zones of a much smaller home. "Even when there's just my husband and I at home, it doesn't feel too big because it's got a really nice warmth," says the homeowner.

For architect Shane, interior designer Leon and landscape designer Jo, their work together over the past decade provided a strong foundation for this collaboration. "We know how we work and we can feed off each other in that respect," says Shane. The results speak for themselves: the architecture, decor and outdoor areas certainly exude a sense of integrated style and atmosphere. ❶



CONTACTS: BUILDER: Shayne Le Roy Design (08) 9316 8988. INTERIOR DESIGNER: Leon House (08) 9316 8448. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Taylor Landscaping (08) 9386 2345. SOFT FURNISHINGS: Paula Buratto (08) 9386 2345. POOL & WATER FEATURES: Exclusive Pools (08) 9344 2366. FLOORING: Bernini Stone & Tiles (08) 9388 1193. TILER: Capitol Stone 0414 832 578. DOORS: Inglewood Joinery (08) 9249 6199.