

ROOM TO MOVE

Designing this family-friendly 'forever home' in Geelong was a true passion project for its design-savvy owners.


STORY *Stephanie Hope* | STYLING *SideProject Projects* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Shannon McGrath*



FAMILY ROOM Many of the rooms in this home will evolve as the family grows. Milo modular sofa, Alby ottoman and Olba coffee table, Jordan. Metal side table, Globe West. Artwork by Jessie Breakwell. **BACKYARD** At just over 950m², the property has sufficient space for a pool, an expanse of lawn and landscaping.







As owners of Geelong-based building company Built by Wilson, Matt and Lauren Wilson understand and appreciate the importance of working with like-minded people - especially when it comes to your own home. The couple bought a charming three-bedroom Victorian dwelling on a large block of land in 2016, with plans of extending it to fit their growing brood. And they knew just the man to help them: architect Ben Robertson from Tecture, who they'd worked with on previous builds.

"We have collaborated with Ben a few times, so we were familiar with each other's work ethic and had developed a mutual respect," says Matt. Ben adds, "When you have clients who understand design, craftsmanship and what makes for quality in fixtures and finishes, the process for us is much simpler and more efficient."

The beauty of designing their own home was that Matt and Lauren could tailor it to their needs, and they sent Ben to the drawing board with a clear brief. Room count topped the list - they needed five to sleep themselves and their four children - sons Teddy, nine, Henry, seven, and Jimmy, five, and daughter Vivienne, three. In addition, "We wanted a home that felt connected internally and externally, an alfresco area we could use all year round and touches of colour, playfulness, warmth and texture," says Lauren. This ►

KITCHEN/DINING The kitchen features E veneer timber-veneer cabinetry, stained to match the engineered-timber floorboards from Made by Storey. The curved island bench is topped with Volakis stone from Signorino. Custom dining table by Joel Elliott Furniture. Bay dining chairs, Jordan. *The World is Your Oyster* artwork by Jasmine Mansbridge. *Prima Familia Totems* sculptures by Marta Figueiredo, Figgoscope Curates. Buch stools, Great Dane. Flos pendant light, Euroluce.

being their dream home and all, a gym, pool and guesthouse joined the wish list, making full use of the generous 954m² sloping block.

Of course, no renovation comes without a few hiccups. Due to its age and location, the home had both heritage and flood overlays. Ben and his team suggested using the slope to their advantage. They began by demolishing an old lean-to at the rear, replacing it with a recessed addition that steps down with the land. In this way, the home gained volume without impacting the street view.

The existing layout wasn't ideal, but nothing a bit of rejigging couldn't fix. "Like many Victorian homes, the house turned its back on the rear yard with its placement of the service rooms (laundry, bathroom) at the back, and the living and dining rooms at the front," says Ben.

Satisfying heritage requirements, the original house was left intact. It now accommodates the main bedroom suite, guestroom and a study. A long corridor links this section with the new rear extension and backyard beyond, with two living spaces, dining and kitchen downstairs and three more bedrooms, family room and bathroom upstairs. "When you ►

LIVING *This page and opposite bottom right* Lauren, Jimmy (left) and Teddy relax on the custom banquette by Banksia Lounges. Lewis armchairs, Jordan. Atlas rug, Armadillo & Co. Curtains, JVI Window Furnishings. A Real Flame fireplace is surrounded with the same Volakis stone used in the kitchen and bathrooms. *Across the Field* artwork, Miranda Skoczek. Memphis coffee tables, Jordan. Custom round coffee table made using leftover stone. **ALFRESCO** Lauren and Matt have achieved their wish of "a home that feels connected internally and externally". Artworks (inside) by Melanie Macilwain. Trace outdoor setting, Tait. Cushion fabric, Catherine Martin.







“WE WANTED FINISHES THAT WERE HARD-WEARING AND EASY TO MAINTAIN.” *Lauren Wilson, homeowner*



The palette

Dulux Natural White (joinery, doors, walls and trims)

Resene Envy (boys' bedroom)

Dulux Surfmist (facade)



DESK NOOK Vivienne sits on a Dowel Jones 'Hurdle' low stool at a built-in desk into the lengthy corridor. **BOYS' BEDROOM** Henry (top) and Teddy sprawl on their custom bunks, which are designed to sleep four. Jersey navy bedlinen, Jordan. **MAIN BEDROOM** Artwork by Anne-Sophie Tschiegg, Greenhouse Interiors. Lincoln bedhead, Heatherly Design. Caravaggio wall light, Cult. Muuto 'Oslo' bench, Living Edge. **HALLWAY** Every inch of space is well used, with storage cupboards lining both sides of the two-tone terrazzo-tiled hallway. ▶

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

VIVIENNE'S BEDROOM Fritz Hansen armchair, Living Edge. Rug, Kip & Co. Bedlinen, Castle. Paris Au Mois Daout pendant light, Hub Furniture. Artwork by Jessie Breakwell. **STUDY** Muuto 'Fiber' chair, Living Edge. Nemo wall lamp, Cult. Rug, Goose. Artworks by Ellie Malin (large) and Castle (small). **BATHROOMS** *Opposite, top right and bottom left* The bathrooms are divided in two sections, which can be used simultaneously by more than one family member. CityPlus 'Exposed' showerheads, Reece. Wall and floor tiles, Signorino. Inax 'Yohen Border' kit kat tiles, Artedomus. Ellipsis freestanding bath, ACS Designer Bathrooms. City Stik floor-mounted mixer, Reece. **LAUNDRY** Pink Kit Kat tiles from Geelong Tiles and Bathware add personality to this utilitarian space. ▶





“TOUCHES OF COLOUR ADD WARMTH, TEXTURE AND A SENSE OF PLAYFULNESS.” *Lauren*





FACADE “We fell in love with the heritage facade instantly,” says Lauren. New Colorbond roofing in Surfmist was added and the derelict cladding upgraded.

Cercis ‘Forest Pansy’ trees make a striking feature.

GYM AND GUESTHOUSE Elvis the kelpie-border collie cross reclines in front of the pool, with the gym and self-contained guesthouse behind. *For Where to Buy, see page 192.*

A RECESSED REAR ADDITION IS ALMOST INVISIBLE WHEN VIEWED FROM THE STREET.

open the front door and see all the way through to the back, you get a sense of the home’s scale and layering,” says Ben.

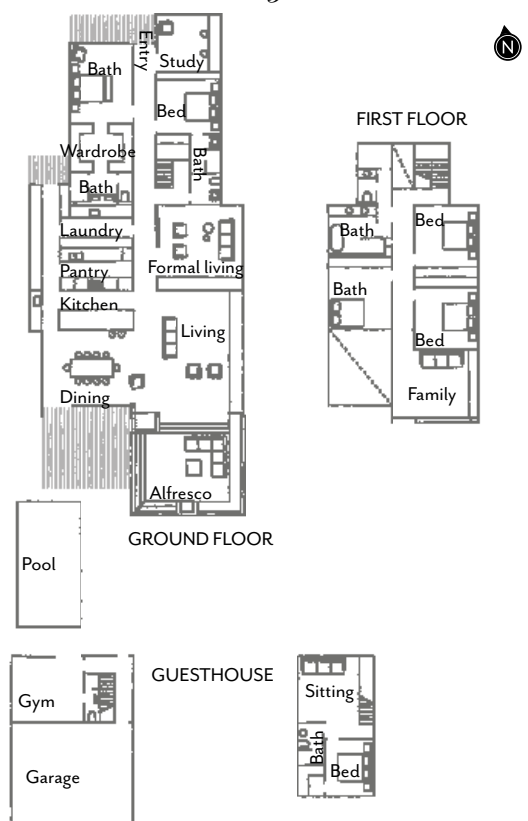
The interiors were Lauren’s domain. “We wanted a fresh and warm material palette,” she says. “We had some existing furniture in white, tan and timber tones, so wanted to ensure they blended into their new environment.” To that effect, light engineered-timber floorboards were used in the kitchen and living spaces and plush woollen carpets in the bedrooms. Woodgrain laminate joinery features in the wardrobes, study and formal living room, the kitchen benchtops are natural stone and terrazzo floor tiles were chosen for the bathrooms.

“Having four children under the age of 10, we wanted to ensure that the finishes were hard-wearing, durable, easy to maintain and safe - no sharp edges,” says Lauren. “We therefore created a soft curve in the island bench, which replicates the subtle curves in the external brick corners.”

And while choosing a favourite child might prove difficult for Lauren, she’s happy to nominate her favourite room in the finished home: the alfresco area. “The inclusion of an outdoor fireplace and the walls that enclose it means we have an entertaining space that we can use all year round,” she says. “We introduced several skylights too, which allows natural plenty of light to enter the adjoining living room.”

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The layout



THIS IS THE LIFE

Having designed and built many homes in their time, Lauren and Matt were in the perfect position to create their own "forever home". Most days, you'll find them in the kitchen/dining/living area and alfresco space, which has become a family entertaining hub. "There have been times we've gone on holiday, come home and felt like our house is more of a resort than the accommodation we've just stayed in," Lauren says.

