

BUILT BESPOKE

A CREATIVE COUPLE'S DESIGNS ON A BUSH BLOCK IN BRISBANE RESULTED IN THIS ENVIABLE CONTEMPORARY HOME WORDS ALICE MORGAN STYLIST EMMA ROSS PHOTOGRAPHS JARED FOWLER



OPENING PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER FREDERICK JONES

This striking home is the work of architect Shawn Godwin and his wife, Natalie, an interior designer. Referencing the surrounding landscape, the house works well in its environment. The choice of charcoal-grey cladding was inspired by charred fallen lumber. Slatted walls enclose the pool. →



“WE DID A ROUGH PLAN OF THE HOUSE AS SOON AS WE SAW THE BLOCK”

Natalie and Shawn Godwin have dubbed their new Brisbane home, “the storage house”. The number and variety of cupboards, niches, shelves and nooks (not to mention the presence of a dumb waiter) is pleasing to this couple, whose previous home was cramped and cupboard-less. “I remember removing part of the wall in the bathroom just so we could get a shelf between the studs,” says Shawn of their old inner-city cottage. Shawn runs his own architectural practice, Base Architecture, in Brisbane, but is also a dab hand at building. Natalie is an established interior designer, so the pair had no shortage of ideas when it came to constructing their current residence from scratch.

With their first daughter, Sienna (now aged five), in tow, Natalie and Shawn found a steep block of land backing onto bush. “We did a rough plan of the house as soon as we saw the block, before we’d even bought it,” says Shawn. The couple collaborated – mostly happily, they say, and certainly always “passionately” – on the home’s design. By the time it came to the documentation stage, Natalie was pregnant with their second daughter, Matilda (who is now two years old), and ended up spending many a long evening – right into the last days of her pregnancy – meticulously hand-drawing the joinery details. →

[Opposite page] Shawn and Natalie with daughters Matilda (on left), and Sienna. Behind them is the dumb waiter, which travels through the wall cavity from the top level to the entry landing and workshop. Anchoring the Jordan “Charlie” leather lounge, with citrus-coloured cushions from Corporate Culture, is the ‘Nightwalker’ rug by Easton Pearson for Designer Rugs. **[This page]** The pool bordering the living zones and deck is lined in the same colour as the exterior cladding.



(This page) The outdoor room has bench seats lined with cushions from Jordan. **(Opposite page, left)** It's playtime on the deck for Matilda and Sienna. Their father's 'tool shed' is hidden in the back wall. Surrounding the 'Japhy' dining table from Jordan **(opposite page, right)** are elegant 'Chair 172' designs by Takahashi Asako.



THE COUPLE COLLABORATED – ALWAYS “PASSIONATELY” – ON THE HOME’S DESIGN

During construction, Shawn would come and “tinker” on weekends, finishing off bits and pieces and installing the home’s distinctive skin of charcoal-coloured ply cladding. The beautifully crafted timber seats edge into outdoor spaces, and specially designed pendant lights and lanterns all derive from his weekend stints.

While the steep site may have scared away other buyers, the Godwins were won over by the bushland setting and have taken full advantage of it with the layout. The long living zone is the home’s hub and spills out to decks and platforms that nestle into the powerful scene of gums and grasses behind. It is set at the end of a cul-de-sac, and neighbours come in the form of wallabies, scrub turkeys, bandicoots and foxes, which inhabit the protected bushland. Cockatoos, whipbirds and magpies maintain a constant daily chorus, replaced at night by a few hooting owls and the odd curlew.

The bush also inspired the emphasis on raw, natural materials. Huge sandstone boulders retain the garden walls. Spotted-gum floors and joinery lend the interiors richness and warmth, and steel and stone benches keep the colour scheme earthy. The charcoal cladding that enfolds the house was inspired by the idea of a burnt fallen log in the bush. →



NEIGHBOURS COME IN THE FORM OF WALLABIES, BANDICOOTS AND FOXES

The pool, which is lined in the same hue as the distinctive exterior cladding, sits close to the living room, divided by a wall of adjustable glass. It currently doubles as a family fun zone and a venue for Shawn's triathlon training. At night, its rippling surface casts a play of frolicking shadows across the ceiling and into the adjacent rooms.

"The house takes on a whole new look at night," says Natalie. "We were very careful to create a soothing mood with the lighting."

Natalie was quick to commandeer a bit of "spare space" on the plans for her workroom (Shawn had it slated for a wine cellar but happily handed it over). When time permits, she designs and sews much of Matilda's and Sienna's clothing, as well as pursuing a gift-wrapping hobby. All the required accoutrement is stored in custom-designed benches and drawers for easy access. Shawn confines his "craft" activities to the carport tool shed, but has also inserted an invisible "garden shed" in the charcoal wall panelling of the back deck.

All this bespoke ingenuity shows that the plans Shawn and Natalie were so meticulous with early in the piece – long before structural work began – paid huge lifestyle dividends. ❖
For more information on Shawn Godwin's work, visit www.basearchitecture.com.au.

A private deck leads off the main bedroom (opposite page, left), which has been softened with the subtle colour of Country Road bedlinen. Artworks on the stairwell (opposite page, right) are by local artist Simon Degroot. Hanging beside them is the pendant light designed by Shawn. The bathroom tiles (this page) are from Apavisa's Lifestone porcelain range in Grafito, while installations such as the wall-mounted timber and steel towel racks were also designed by Shawn.



IN DETAIL

ideas from the Godwin home

Spotted gum flooring (bottom) and decking (middle and top), from \$4.54-\$12.96 per lineal metre, all from Hardware & General Timber, (02) 8456 1188, www.hg.com.au.

Organic feel

Nestled on a sloped block in Brisbane, the Godwins' highly contemporary home employs natural materials to gently integrate with the bush setting. Bounded by large blocks of natural sandstone as retaining walls, the dark timber exterior features white sun and privacy screens to break up the facade and add a porous, almost delicate element to the structure.

The use of native Australian timbers for the decks and the outdoor rooms continues through the interior of the house, too, with spotted gum used for all internal joinery and flooring. Paler timbers, like oak, have been picked for furniture (such as the Jordan table) to provide a soft, warm contrast to the caramel spotted-gum tones.

Smart spends

The owners have invested in key furniture pieces, such as the Jordan 'Japhy' table, but they've also had the sense to see the great value found in Ikea designs – like the stylish 'Sebastian' bar stool. This economical approach will really stretch a budget further, without compromising aesthetic standards. (Below) 'Japhy' table, \$4900, from Jordan, www.jordan.com.au. 'Sebastian' stool, from \$69, from Ikea, (02) 8002 0400, www.ikea.com.au. →

INSIDER'S GUIDE TO... GALLERY LIGHTING

Above the kitchen bench is a system of lighting often seen in galleries. In fact, Leonardo's *Last Supper* is lit by the original version of this 'Cestello' design by Gae Aulenti and Piero Castiglioni. Similar options include Jan Van Lierde's 'Kwadro', from De De Ce, (02) 9360 2722, and Konstantin Grcic's 'Hertz', from Euroluce, (02) 9380 6222. iGuzzini 'Cestello Model 3184' lighting system, from \$1999, from ECC Lighting + Furniture, www.ecc.com.au.

THINGS TO SOURCE...

↑ **SPOTTED-GUM TIMBER** Queensland spotted gum was used throughout the house for floors, decking, joinery and wall veneers. As a reasonably priced and hard-wearing Australian hardwood, spotted gum is tough to beat. Paler than Queensland walnut and darker than tallowwood, the timber varies from soft caramels to mid-chocolate tones.

↑ **COLOUR PALETTE** A simple but zesty palette of lime and yellow makes a striking impact against the chocolate and latte tones of the timber and leather upholstery. While exciting when applied in small doses – as seen with the citrus cushions in the lounge room – these busy colours can easily become overwhelming if not sensitively used. Murowash in (clockwise, from top left) Lime, Brown and Spice, all from \$39 per 1L each, from Murobond, www.murobond.com.au.

↓ **METAL LAMINATES** The bank of cupboards above the kitchen sink is finished in Abet Laminati's '877' metal laminate, from a collection that ranges in tone and texture from classic, brushed stainless steel to brightly coloured anodised aluminium. 1. '730' stainless steel. 2. '877' flat anodised aluminium. 3. '727' brushed stainless steel. 4. '877' corrugated anodised aluminium. All POA, from joiners and cabinetmakers. For more details, visit www.abet.com.au.

celebrate the special relationships in your life!



unique hand stamped sterling silver jewellery

koolaman designs
silver with character®

www.koolamandesigns.com.au

0419 341 582

IN DETAIL



External affairs

The house uses random external battens to break up the dark-stained plywood cladding and painted fibre cement. Boral's 'Evolution' outdoor cladding is a marine-grade plywood made from plantation timber with a rough-sawn finish. The 12mm-thick plywood comes in widths of 1.2m and lengths of 2.4 to 3m. It's treated against insects and fungal rot and is available either solid or with grooves.

For more information on Boral's 'Evolution' external plywood cladding, contact Boral on 1800 773 596, or visit the website at www.boralplywood.com.au.

Blooming rugs

Renowned for their fashions, Brisbane-based Lydia Pearson and Pamela Easton have since extended their highly crafted, ethnic-inspired aesthetic to rugs. Last year, they came up with eight rug designs that showcase the skills they've acquired from working with fabrics and prints over the years. The abstracted floral forms are not for the shrinking violet but work wonders in the Godwin home. 'Favorita' adds vivid fun to the children's room, while in the lounge, the deco-like pattern of 'Night Walk' evokes artful sophistication within the home's woody interior. (Top right) 'Favorita' rug, from \$5156 for 250cm diameter, and (below) 'Night Walk' rug, from \$4950 for 2 x 3m (all designs are available in custom colours and sizes), both by Easton Pearson, from Designer Rugs, 1300 802 561, www.designerrugs.com.au.

STONE'S THROW BLOCKS ARE BEST SOURCED DIRECT FROM QUARRIES. TRY CAPRICORN SANDSTONE, WWW.CAPRICORNSANDSTONE.COM.AU