

vine style

Looking at the pergola you'd never guess there's a glass roof over the grapevine. This provides shelter and acts as a glasshouse, ensuring optimal growing conditions for the grapevine.

MODERN FAMILY

When two Perth architects blended their families and built anew, they went big on sunlight, space and casual style.

STORY & STYLING *Anna Flanders* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Angelita Bonetti*

PERGOLA This expansive spot off the living and dining areas is shaded by a 75-year-old grapevine, transplanted from owner Suzie Hunt's former home. The spotted-gum deck is finished in Feast Watson Scandinavian Oil. Chairs, Bunnings. Cushions, Ottoman Empire. Custom-made coffee table. Succulent pot, Eco Outdoor. The artwork in the living area is by Wentja Napaltjarri and the chimneybreast features dry-jointed alluvial stone. *For Where to Buy, see page 206.*

This is the life

Suzie and Neil wanted options in their home. "We were after private and communal spaces," says Neil. And with Suzie a self-confessed fresh-air freak, it was important that the house open to the outdoors. The result is a large main living area with an outdoor connection, as well as "significant go-to places in the outdoor area – a courtyard, a large frangipani tree in the backyard, the pool", says Neil. Fresh air and options in one.

When Perth architects Neil Cownie and Suzie Hunt decided to build a family home, they knew it would be large. The couple was merging two families, and the property was to be home for six teenage and adult children and two dogs, while also accommodating work and study needs as well as their respective extended families.

After buying a block near the beach in December 2009, they began a fast, budget-driven build, where they decided to express their ideals about living well and experiment with different materials.

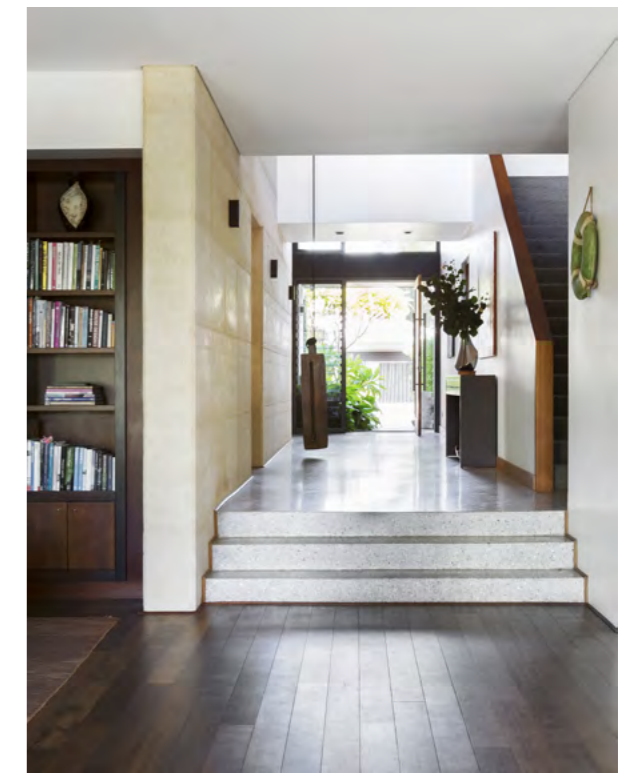
"We wanted a beach house that would be a great spot for teenagers, and we wanted each of the children to have the same level of accommodation," says Suzie. "It was also important for the home to have a relaxed atmosphere. And it needed to be robust," says Neil.

The house, completed in mid 2011, has a timber frame, with a painted brick base at the front. A rammed-earth wall extends through the centre of the home, serving to ground the interior and act as a heat sink when sunlight spills through towering windows during spring, autumn and winter.

Off the entrance and cavernous hallway is a home office for Suzie and Neil, with a courtyard that connects it to the street. Further along is the games room, which features noise-dampening acoustic



KITCHEN An eight-strong family calls for a roomy and robust kitchen. Suzie and Neil chose stainless steel for the work surfaces and decorative Calacatta marble with 60mm edging for the island bench. Joinery in Evener timber veneer in Aniseed, Elton Group. Gessi Oxygene sink mixer, Abey. Timber fruit bowl, Accento. Barstools, Ikea. Here, as in the entry and games room, a perforated-plywood ceiling hides acoustic insulation. **Designer buy:** George Nelson Cigar pendants, \$995/each, Alti Lighting. **ENTRANCE** The rammed-earth wall sets a natural tone in the entry area. Sturdy polished concrete leads into engineered-walnut flooring in the living zone. *For Where to Buy, see page 206.*



LIVING Chocolate labrador Milo strikes a pose in the living area. The rug is comprised of four kilims from The Rug Studio stitched together as one. Leather sofa, Freedom. Armchairs, Turnstyle Collectables. Coffee table, Basic Elements. Cushions, Ottoman Empire. Bemboka throw (over chair), Empire Highgate.
DINING This room's centrepiece is a custom-designed dining table from Beclau. George Nelson Saucer pendant light, Alti Lighting. New York art print from Ikea. Rug, Jenny Jones Rugs. Water jug, Georg Jensen. Gold planter, Accento.
Designer buys: Harold Carver chairs, \$900/each, Arthur G. For Where to Buy, see page 206.

THE PALETTE

Dulux Bogart
living

Dulux Hog Bristle Quarter
dining and bedrooms

Try this accent

Haymes Paint Burgundy



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

◀ panelling and separate access to the backyard. Behind the wall on the opposite side of the hallway are a garage and laundry.

The hallway steps down into the main living area, where glazing soars up 2.7m. Here, the kitchen, living, dining and outdoor areas are positioned in four distinct zones, while two large sliding doors leading from the living and dining areas seamlessly connect indoors to out.

A hub for the family, the kitchen is appropriately generous in size. The dining table seats up to 12, while the living and outdoor areas accommodate from two to 200 people (the latter having been tried and tested).

The pergola is covered by a glass roof and a 75-year-old grapevine transplanted from Suzie's previous home. The roof protects the area from the elements while giving that alfresco feeling. "No one notices the glass roof," says Neil, who has since used the idea in designs for his clients.

While the ground level is focused on communal living and drawing the family together, the first floor is where the seven bedrooms, study and retreat areas come into play. It benefits from a savvy floor plan

wrapped into an earthy materials palette that the architects love.

"Planning is one of the strengths of the home," says Neil. "Downstairs is all about being together. On the first floor we have the kids' wing, while our suite is separated via a 'bridge' over a void."

The main bedroom has views to the ocean, while a retreat is tucked behind the ensuite and has views of the backyard. Its intent was as a private area for time out, or for the parents to have time alone with each of their children.

Materials and tone - rammed earth, polished concrete, wood - conspire with spatial planning, natural light and an indoor-outdoor connection to give a retreat feel to all areas of the home.

"I love that I come home and feel relaxed. I think that is to do with the size, the light and the connection to the garden. Wherever you are, you are looking at the garden," says Suzie. ▶

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THE LAYOUT



'I love that I come home and feel relaxed, and I think that is to do with the size, the light and the connection to the garden...' Suzie Hunt

MAIN BEDROOM The recessed ceiling is designed to define the space around the bed while concealing lighting and airconditioning grilles. Lamp, Angove Street Collective. Bedlinen from Pure Linen. Caf Collection carpet in Mocha, RC+D. Artworks by Cy Liston.

ENSUITE The custom-designed vanity features Calacatta Oro marble wrapped around Evener timber veneer in Evenmink, Elton Group. Marble, Marble & Cement Work. Mizu mixer, Reece.

Designer buy: Jura limestone tiles in Blue-Grey (400x400mm), \$105/each, Attica.

POOL Milo goes for a dip in the laidback pool area. Sofa, Contempo. Coffee table, Empire Highgate. Chair, Ici et Là.

Designer buy: Shelta Terrazo Verona umbrella in Sunbrella fabric, \$1399, Oasis Umbrella World.

H&G
For Where to Buy, see page 206.

FEATURE PLANTS

POOL AREA

- Frangipani
- Boston ivy
- Money tree

BACKYARD

- Wintergreen Couch grass
- Pittosporum hedge
- Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*)



Fresh ideas

With both architects well-known for their materials palettes, choosing the right look was a lesson in restraint. "Neither of us is into shiny and new," says Neil. "We had a melting pot and we were both confident enough in ourselves to put an idea forward and see what would stick." Earth, plywood, stainless steel, marble and a touch of walnut all made the cut. The result is a home that feels grounded and soulful – a true retreat.