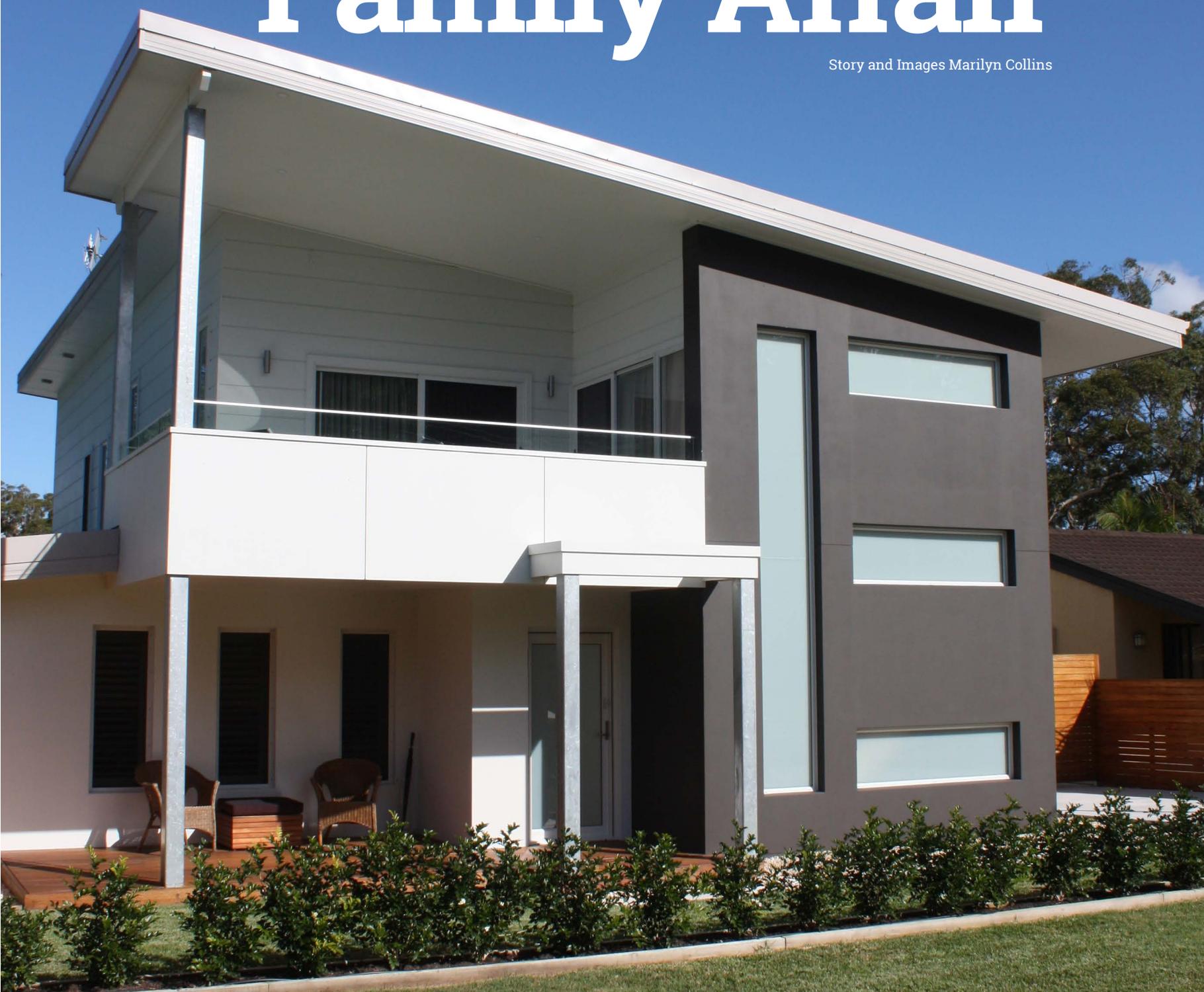
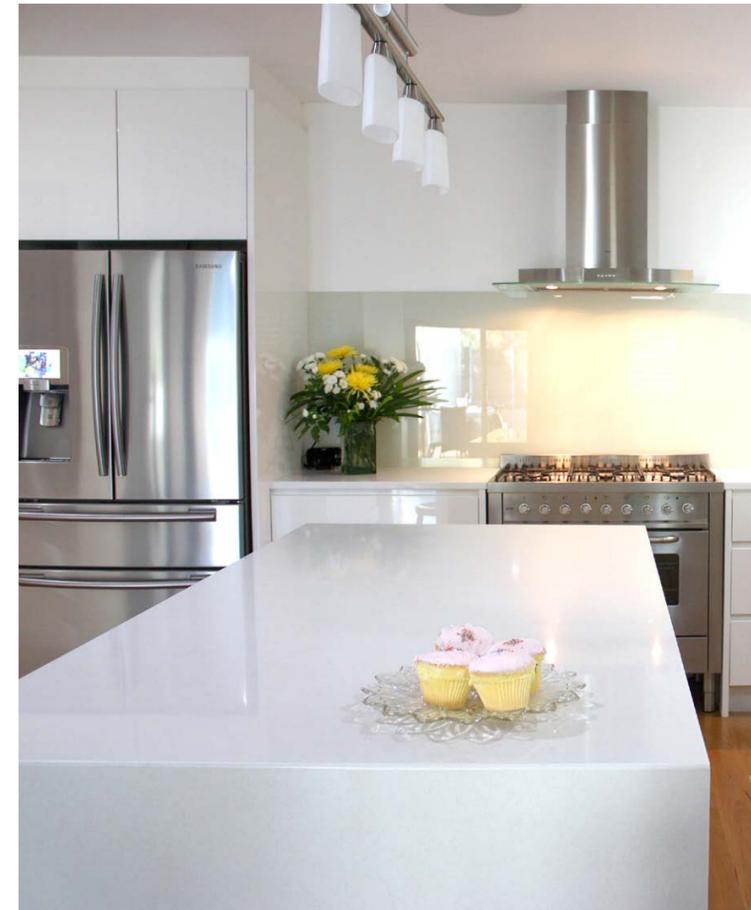


A Generational Family Affair

Story and Images Marilyn Collins



A Salamander Bay couple have created a very individualistic and contemporary residence which reflects the changing dynamics and the age of each of the three generations of family members who reside within the home. >



David, Lisa, and their family are enjoying their brand-new home achieved by a team of professional tradesman matched by their own determination to complete the project through what was sometimes an exhausting, but always exciting process from design to build.

The project became a major restoration work from what should have really been a complete knockdown. On every level, the right decision was made to bring a new shine to the street by taking the old and turning an initial vision into a modern and functional new house.

The couple were faced with a common dilemma many families have when accommodating the dynamics of themselves and their children as well as an elderly parent under the one roof. "David's mother, Flora, is in her 70s and lives with us and our three young sons now aged 16, 12 and 5," said Lisa. Although it is still rather unusual in Australia, multi-generational families residing together are increasing in number in today's society, a situation widely accepted as the norm in many other cultures. The upward trend of generations residing in the same residence provides practicality for modern lifestyles, resulting in significant benefits for all within the family.

The family's previous home in Port Stephens, purchased after viewing on the internet while living overseas in 2001, was spacious but had two levels.

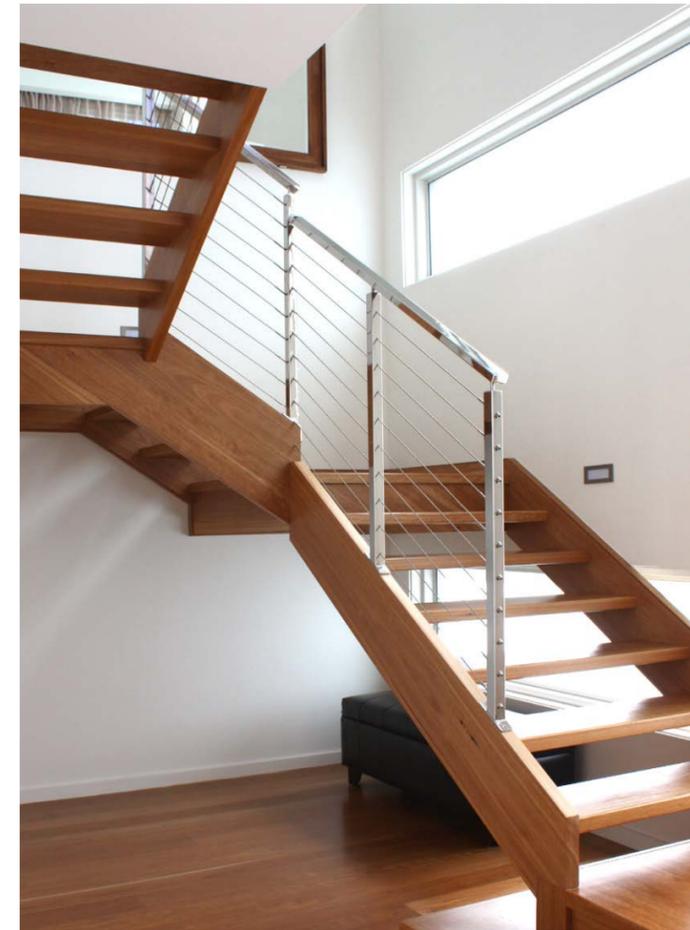
With the concern that mobility could become an issue for the most senior of the family, it was decided that a new house was required to accommodate the needs of all family members.

The search began for a new home that would accommodate everyone's needs, including proximity to the boys' school and young friends, the eldest son's weekend job and also a residential area that was quiet enough to allow David to sleep during daylight hours, as he is a paramedic required to work a shift roster. The wish list also included the highly favoured northerly aspect on Tomaree Peninsula as well as possible water views - all within a defined budget.

After being out-bid at a land auction, the couple finally decided that the only realistic option was to find an ideally located property and create their own vision. In July, 2010 they purchased an old house built circa mid 1970s on the basis of its location, views, privacy at the back of the property and the fact that it was situated on a level block. They decided to renovate rather than demolish to maintain the front aspect with views to the Bay.

"To be honest, the home's purchase was considered by many of our nearest and dearest to be the most insane decision we had ever made," both Lisa and David agreed. "However, even on a dark and damp day in July we could both see what could be achieved with a little creativity and a lot of fortitude." >





The location was perfectly situated in Salamander Bay, facing north with nor-east views over the Bay towards Corlette. The block is also positioned backing onto a sports oval - which David claims gives them the biggest backyard in the Bay, perfect for energetic children.

From the first on-site inspection, Lisa said she could visualise a large family kitchen exactly where the underneath car port was positioned. Over a period of two years, the concept developed after many a late-night session with pencil and paper altering draft planning documents and continually reviewing the scope of the project.

A preference to contract local suppliers and trades for the right high-quality materials and expertise has contributed to the success of the project, now evidenced in the end product of a beautiful home finished with quality fixtures and fittings.

As with many build projects, there were numerous challenges during the planning stage as they attempted to incorporate elements of environmental sustainability with functionality. Persevere they did, and once the build actually started the whole project took shape really quickly.

After doing a lot of site clearing themselves as well as demolishing the old backyard sheds, the appointed builder, Darren Butterworth of Butterworth Constructions and his team commenced work in January, 2013. As with most homes constructed during the 70s, the original house was built with a large amount of asbestos. This had to be carefully removed, along with a large separate granny flat constructed

in the very early 80s located at the back of the block.

During the construction phase, David was fortunate to be able to take leave from work to project manage the build working alongside the principal contractor.

David completed his construction white card and site induction to become chief painter and 'go to' for all manner of site jobs that were required. His involvement proved invaluable as well as being a cost-saving initiative, as he was also readily available on site to discuss matters or make quick decisions with the builder if an issue arose or a minor variation was needed.

The building design is deceptive from the streetscape, with a generous, light-filled spacious interior layout behind the front facade. The home has many architectural design features including opaque windows, square-set architraves, open-plan living and high, vaulted ceilings. The skillion roof takes full advantage of nor-easterlies by channelling the breeze downwards through patio doors into the house.

As you enter the front of the home through a wide, frosted-glass door, you are led into a long hallway which has side-nailed, solid 130-millimetre, honey-coloured Blackbutt floorboards, a very practical flooring solution as well as a feature that reflects the contemporary design.

Downstairs, the main living accommodation has a family-sized kitchen with open-plan dining area, media room, walk-in pantry, laundry, separate WC and a shower room, perfect for when sandy feet come back from the beach. >



Each of the boys has his own spacious bedroom with a wall of wardrobe space providing plenty of storage, along with dual-aspect windows flooding the rooms with light. A family bathroom with freestanding bath against a feature tiled wall and separate WC completes the 'boy zoned' area. Here again, David's multi-skilled

The kitchen has high-quality European stainless steel appliances, island breakfast bar, glass splashbacks and Caesarstone benchtops. Another feature in the dining area and throughout the home is white plantation shutters supplied and installed by Newcastle-based firm The Shutter Guy.

The media or family room, entered from the downstairs hallway through opaque double glass sliding doors, has been designed for the three boys to watch 'big screen' movies with Dad and has all the required built-in surround sound and latest technology, making it a real "man's cave", with the added benefit of complete soundproofing.

At the back of the home is the very large, open-plan living room with high ceilings, concealed curtain tracks along a full wall of glass and screened sliding doors providing seamless access between indoors and outdoors. You are then led out onto a spacious outdoor Blackbutt floored deck area with built-in timber seating. A decorative feature in the outdoor area is an oversized glass photo print of an underwater shot from the international, multi-award winning photographer and friend, Justin Gilligan (also featured in this edition.)

Neat green lawns flow in the fenced rear garden and the playing area continues through the back gate into the oval behind.

The upstairs is accessed from the entry hallway of the property via a rather grand stairway built from solid blackbutt treads and stainless steel which is encased in light, both day and night, due to the 4.8-metre vertical window and three horizontal windows on the front facade of the property.

Upstairs, the original structure has been completely re-designed and remodelled from a three-bedroom/kitchen/lounge area to what is now four bedrooms including a grand master suite with double-sided WIR and en suite. The north-facing master bedroom features include a ceiling that is almost four metres high and concealed curtain tracks with luxurious drapes. Double-thickness glass sliding doors lead you from the master bedroom out onto the very private walled front upstairs balcony. The balcony, with its travertine tiles, can also be accessed directly from the hallway and is a favourite spot for the family to sit and enjoy the blue-water views out over the Bay.

Each of the boys has his own spacious bedroom with a wall of wardrobe space providing plenty of storage, along with dual-aspect windows flooding the rooms with light. A family bathroom with freestanding bath against a feature tiled wall and separate WC completes the 'boy zoned' area. Here again, David's multi-skilled talents extended to hanging all the feature wallpaper in the upper-level bedrooms and the downstairs hallway.

The exterior structure of the home has been cleverly designed to conceal another hidden gem of the property, a completely self-contained, one-bedroom studio suite for granny. The open-plan studio suite, entered from the side of the property, features a designer kitchen that includes all of the necessities plus incorporates the European concept of a concealed washing machine, making it truly a self-contained residence. The accommodation includes a lovely spacious bedroom with full-length, frosted-glass robes to reflect the light and fully equipped bathroom suitable for disabled and elderly including a shower with grab rails and no lip or trip hazards on the floor throughout. It is anticipated that this space will reinvent itself as the circle of life unfolds as the studio suite adapts to being perfect for one of the boys sometime in the distant future.

The stunning cabinetry for the laundry in the main residence and the two kitchens (in the main house and studio suite) was designed and built by local craftsman, Dale Gardiner of Seaside Cabinets.

The design brief also focused on the fit out that you can't see from the finished build. An ambient temperature is maintained inside the home as a result of high-performance insulation installed throughout in walls and ceiling. Windows and sliding doors were also considered for their insulation properties and soundproofing. >

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The installation of double-thickness windows and doors has had the result that energy costs have been reduced by minimising heat transference into the home during the summer months and loss of warmth from the home in winter.

The exterior structure is a mix of rendered brick and James Hardie Scyon Stria weatherboards to reflect contemporary modern design. As the couple wanted a change from the currently popular shades of grey, they engaged colour consultant Kelly Pierce to provide professional advice on alternatives. The result is that the exterior colour is painted in "Surfmist" with the colour "Dune" for the garage door, fencing and roof. The front fascade is highlighted with a deep dark-brown colour to complement the exterior colours.

There is no doubt the couple have amazed their friends at what has been achieved. The construction phase was less than six months, with the family moving in over the Queen's Birthday weekend in June, 2013. At that time there was still some work to do, particularly on the gardens, paths and exterior painting. However, by Christmas they were very settled in their new home.

"On a personal level, the house not only represents our family home and its growing and active boy 'population' but also a place for my mother-in-law, surrounded if she chooses by boisterous family, and at other times a place of quiet and relaxation in her own space," said Lisa.

David enjoyed working with such a professional and proficient builder, although the memory is still with him of those countless hours painting the entire residence inside and out until he literally felt like he was a contestant on 'The Block'. In saying that, he has apparently already asked, "When are we going to do this again?" However, Lisa is definite that for her this is the 'Forever' House!! Famous last words – I've heard that before.

The family do agree that what they have achieved is a functional, modern house that is a perfect home for a family of six, including granny, to make many new happy memories in. 🏠

*Builder: Darren Butterworth, Butterworth Constructions
Shutters: The Shutter Guy*