

TRANSFORMATION



"The arch windows are one of our favourite stand-out details," says Josie.

A HOLIDAY-ESQUE VIBE JUST MINUTES FROM THE CBD IS WHAT HOMEOWNERS JOSIE AND GREG HOPED TO ACHIEVE WITH THEIR PALM SPRINGS-INSPIRED RENOVATION.

PHOTOGRAPHY GRETIL WATSON-BLAZEWICZ / TIMOTHY KAYE



Floor-to-ceiling cupboards provide plenty of storage in the kitchen.



"In the main entrance we wanted crazy paving, which we absolutely love."

The kidney shaped white tiled pool is the hero of the outdoor space.



Emma Sadie Thomson designed the low maintenance garden.



An outdoor shower is tucked behind a recessed wall.

At first glance, you would think you were in the Californian desert. From the outside, cacti and varieties of succulents sporadically fill garden beds, while white rendered walls are the first hint to the mid-century, Palm Springs-inspired design, and subsequent styling, of this newly renovated home. Inside, defining arch windows, a muted colour palette and the use of texture also nod toward a modernist style.

"We knew we wanted the home to be relaxed but considered," says editorial photographer and homeowner, Josie Withers. "Natural and minimal, like the vibe of a relaxed Californian beach house, was what we were hoping to achieve. Where the kids can run around barefoot, bringing the outside in."

The house is home to five – Josie and her wine-making husband, Greg, and their three children, Archie, three and a half, Josh, two, and Raf, four months. With this in mind, the brief for architecture and interior design firm studio gram was simple – it needed to reflect family life and their appreciation of Californian architecture, something that was born during their time spent in the States pre-children. They wanted the extension to be open, full of natural light, and designed with family and entertaining in mind.

"We love the lines and the minimalism, and the feeling of being in LA," says Josie, "and we wanted to try and convey this." Australian-born, Emma Goodwin, the co-founder of the boutique Surfrider Hotel in Malibu, was a particular influence – "I'd sum up her style as effortlessly free, but incredibly detailed". Josie and Greg have emulated this style, encapsulating architecturally forward, Californian coastal living with ease.

Pivotal to successfully reimagining this holiday-esque vibe was the materiality used in the build. The use of natural timbers, travertine, polished concrete, textured rendering and crazy paving were all key to achieving this look and have been used to great effect in the new open plan living, kitchen and dining area. Natural light streams in through large floor-to-ceiling north-facing timber doors in the dining space, which looks out to a crazy paving pathway and the cactus courtyard. Not to be outdone, the arch windows in the neighbouring living room are the hero, and also allow for an influx of natural light. "I actually don't like the look of artificial lighting," says Josie, "so it was very important that the space was well lit. We barely turn on the lights!"

While this contemporary new section easily fits the brief, the front part of the property, which retains much of its

1920s charm, has also had some modest updates. "We decided to keep the front of the house as original as possible, however we did renovate the master bedroom, bathroom and ensuite," says Josie. Travertine in the ensuite provides a natural, relaxed feel, while the old Tasmanian Oak floorboards have been stripped to reveal a light timber that fits perfectly with the polished concrete in the new lounge and kitchen area. Other considered additions in the open plan kitchen include a large custom bench and hidden storage, ensuring the space is as functional as it is aesthetic.

Architecturally, this renovated home achieves what it set out to. It works in perfect harmony with its surrounds – in fact, you would never guess you were just four kilometres from the CBD – and the design elements, textures, materials and neutral tones give it the holiday vibe the owners were hoping for. Architecturally forward, minimalist, clean and modern, the property allows this travelling family to holiday at home. "We wanted to make sure that it reminded us of our happy place," says Josie. "The large open sky provides peace and tranquility and makes you feel like you're further away than what you are. It's the perfect balance between the city and the sea."