

SATURDAY

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Living in the zone

How a blended family kept everyone happy without losing out on style **12**



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At home Opera singer Natalie Aroyan loves a little magic in her life **19**





The casual ground floor area has its own bar, living and dining area for younger members of the family.

A tale of two lifestyles

A blended family comes up with an unusual solution so that everyone gets what they want, writes **Robyn Willis**

PROJECT

Owners

A couple with a blended family

Designer

Stewart Horton, Horton & Co
hortonandco.com.au

The problem

A sound but basic design for a new home that lacked style

The site

1700sq m site overlooking Lake Macquarie

Design solution

A two-storey home split into formal and informal zones

How long did it take

12 months construction

Modern living is always throwing up new challenges for growing families but it's not often that they come up with a solution like this.

When the owners of this substantial block on the shores of Lake Macquarie decided to replace their old cottage with a new home, they had some specific needs to address.

The blended family had a clutch of children between them, although none of them were living with them full time. Nevertheless, they wanted a home where everyone would feel comfortable. But they also wanted a stylish residence that afforded them a level of luxury.

After engaging a local home design company to draw up plans, they enlisted the help of Newcastle-based interior design Stewart Horton to take it to the next level.

"From the very beginning I was trying to help them prioritise their spending to get the result they wanted," Stewart says. "They needed someone like me early on to make sure that any design changes were implemented early on."

"If you're not careful it can end up being something generic, which was what we were trying to avoid."

A great divide

Stewart says he began 'tinkering' with the plans almost immediately. The first thing in his sights was the glass-encased lift.

"The owners were a little bit wowed by the lift in the middle of the floor — which is still there — but it was going to be glass," he says. "I thought the money could be better used on higher quality fittings and finishes rather than some showy glass."

To meet the owners' brief for a stylish but robust family home, Stewart split the house in



The understated kitchen on the upper floor enjoys views of the lake.

two, with the lower floor for the younger members of the family and the upper floor aimed at the owners and their friends.

"Downstairs it is super durable surfaces and finishes — we kept it minimal," he says. "It's fairly tough polished concrete flooring throughout the lower level which is pretty easy care and upstairs it is timber flooring and high-end finishes."

Entry is via the lower level which has a generous open-plan rumpus and dining area with a bar area, along with four bedrooms and a bathroom. This space also offers direct access to the backyard where there is a separate garage and guesthouse as well as

a cabana facing on to the pool.

An open timber staircase leads to the upper floor where Stewart took the style up a notch with designer furniture and luxury finishes.

The living areas and terrace, which takes in stunning views of the lake, are spacious but the private areas are just as generous, with the main bedroom suite taking up almost half the floor. This space includes a bedroom with direct access to the terrace, a full ensuite bathroom as well as a carefully fitted out walk-in robe.

Even the lift is still there, although it is much more discreet.

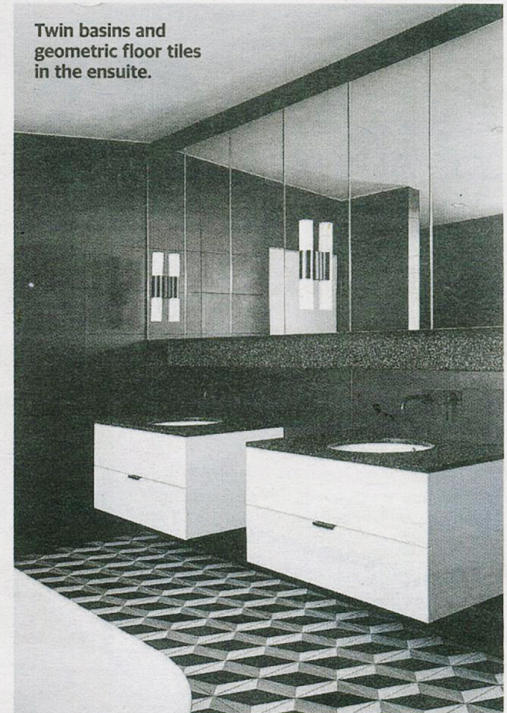
Pictures Alexander McIntyre

THE SOURCE

Sofa upstairs from Camerich, camerich.com.au
Dining chairs upstairs from Casa Mia, casa-mia.com.au
Armchairs from Jordan Furniture, jordan.com.au
Checked side table by Moooi from Space Furniture, spacefurniture.com.au
Rugs custom designed by Stewart Horton for Designer Rugs, designerrugs.com.au



The upper floor is an adult space with luxury finishes and designer furniture.



Twin basins and geometric floor tiles in the ensuite.



Private areas such as the walk-in robe have been beautifully finished.



The ground floor areas are finished in polished concrete which is stylish but robust.