

# OUR PERFECT SPACE

Five Dock,  
NSW

Instead of moving home to give themselves more space, the Potter family demolished their inner-city bungalow and designed a new home to suit their needs, writes **Nicole Hickson**.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RHIANNON SLATTER**

**I**T'S NOT OFTEN a homeowner can boast that they have been actively involved in the design of their home, but space planner and interior designer Anne Potter can do just that. Anne and her husband, Michael, both 45, have just finished building their dream home, a retro-inspired design that maximises space and colour. It was chosen as one of the 10 homes shown on *Grand Designs Australia* (Thursdays at 8.30pm on The LifeStyle Channel).

The couple originally purchased a classic 1960s bungalow in Sydney's Five Dock in 2001, for \$680,000. "It was on a small block with no backyard," says Anne. "Just across the road, we have a huge park. It was the perfect location because my husband wanted something that was a little more low-maintenance because he's so busy."

Anne and Michael's lives were to become even busier following the birth of their sons Alex, now 11, James, nine, and Matthew, six. Rather than buy something new, the family decided to build on the same site. "I had ideas of what I wanted," says Anne. "I was flicking through a magazine and came across our architects, Utz Sanby. I loved their style of home – very lightweight structures using steel, with beautiful symmetry and lots of cross-ventilation."

Anne had Ean extensive brief for the team and construction started soon after. "We talked about an Art Deco home because a lot of those homes have that beautiful curved feeling to them. It was about something functional and dynamic, with as much open space as possible."

Anne and Michael had a \$1.25 million

The family wanted an Art Deco-inspired home that incorporated curved lines, open space and glass doors. The interior design included a Mondrian-style mural painted by Anne and her three sons.







**“IT WAS ABOUT SOMETHING FUNCTIONAL AND DYNAMIC.”**



**Left: The master bedroom with storage behind the bed and Anne’s favourite place to sit just outside. Below: The boys at work in the study. Bottom: Each of the boys’ bedrooms has access to the garden.**



budget, but blow-outs forced them over. ▶ “We decided that it would be more efficient space-wise as well as money-wise to build in as much joinery, to maximise the storage of the house. We also had to have natural gas connected in our part of the street and a power pole relocated. While we were over budget in the end, we decided it was worth it.”

What stands out from the street is the

home’s bright primary colour design, inspired by the art of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian (one of Anne’s favourite artists). The neutral colour palette of the walls allows the colour to pop and the many windows provide plenty of natural light.

The house is on two levels, with an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area on the first floor, to maximise the stunning view, along with the master bedroom and

bathroom, while all three boys live on the lower floor, which also contains a laundry and rumpus room. A mural by Anne and the boys depicts the Mondrian colours used throughout and draws the eye up the stairs.

Anne’s vision for the open-plan living area included a walk-in pantry with a fan. It’s here she has set up the toaster, coffee machine and other appliances she uses on a day-to-day basis to remove clutter from

the benchtops. A terrace with sliding doors wraps around the upper level and blends the inside and outside seamlessly. The master bedroom maximises space, with storage for bedding behind the bed, built into the wall which separates the bedroom and the built-in wardrobe. A 1950s-designed hanging chair just off the bedroom is Anne’s favourite place to curl up with a good book. “I knew from the



FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS WILSON.



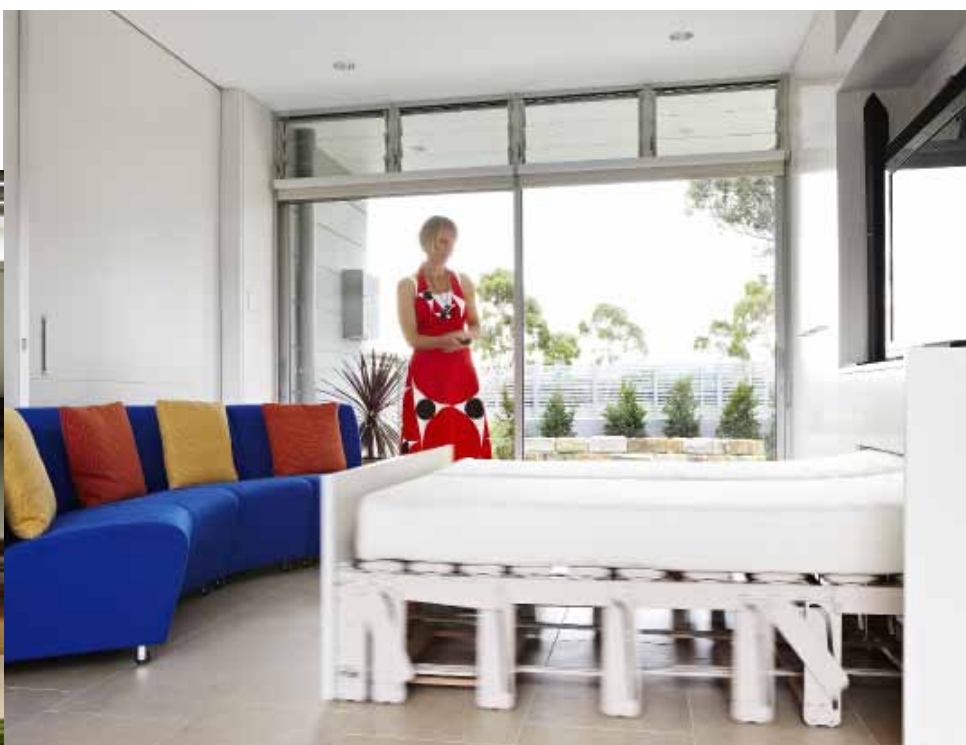
### ANNE’S TOP FIVE DESIGN TIPS

- 1** Employ the right people. It cost more money to employ an architect, but it has saved a lot of heartache.
- 2** Planning is crucial – not only in terms of what you would like your home to look like, but how it will work for you 10 years down the track.
- 3** Colour coordination is key throughout your home renovation. I have used three primary colours to tie spaces together.
- 4** Maximise the space you have with adequate storage. It might cost you a bit of money up front to ensure the storage you need is built in to your home, but you won’t have to go out and buy other pieces of furniture.
- 5** Be smart when buying your furniture. All of our pieces are on wheels so they can be moved around different spaces for extra flexibility and all of the chairs and stools we own are stackable.

**Top: The main living area with sliding doors opening onto the eight metre-long terrace, allowing cross-ventilation. Right: Anne relaxes in the upstairs living area. Above: The family are delighted with their new home.**



**Below: The rumpus room, which doubles as a self-contained flat, is separated by a wall from the garage and features a queen-size concertina bed (right).**



time we started designing this house ▶ that chair was going to be hanging there,” she says. “With foresight, our builder was able to put in some solid timber sections to support it. It’s a lovely vista.”

Downstairs, the main corridor runs past the boys’ rooms, bathroom and communal study area. Past the garage is the rumpus, the most multi-functional room. Sliding glass doors at each end of the room open out to the front and backyards, and a third wall of doors opens onto the garage to allow for extra room. The rumpus room

doubles as a self-contained flat, with a bar fridge and barbecue. As there wasn’t the space for a guest room, the architects sourced a queen-size bed from Germany that concertinas out from the wall at the push of a button. This is perfect for family and guests, and is another space saver.

The process of planning and building has taken two and a half years, but Anne is thrilled with the outcome. “I love walking up the stairs and just turning the corner and there’s this lovely, light space with all glass and the view. I think



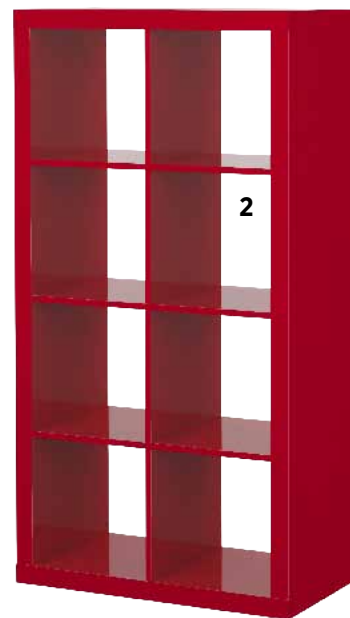
**Above: Another of the light-filled boys’ room on the lower level. Right: The stylish master bathroom comprises clean lines, a tiled splashback and a window that allows for light and ventilation.**



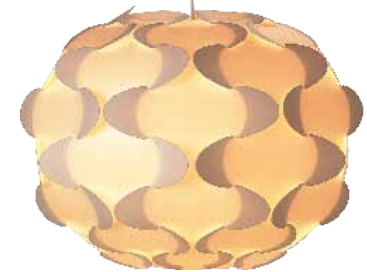
STYLING BY HANDE RENSHAW. INSET: PHOTOGRAPHY BY RHIANNON SLATTER. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE. ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE WHERE WEBSITES ARE QUOTED.



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# Get the look

Revamp a child's bedroom with bright, bold colours and fun furniture.

- 1 Venus dining chair in Mint, \$99**, from Freedom, 1300 135 588, freedom.com.au.
- 2 Expedite bookcase, \$169**, from IKEA, ikea.com.au (store locations only).
- 3 Fillsta pendant lamp, \$39.99**, from IKEA, ikea.com.au (store locations only).
- 4 Afjarden bath towel, \$19.99**, from IKEA, ikea.com.au (store locations only).
- 5 Drew quilted pillowcase sham, \$29.95**, from Sheridan, 1800 625 516, sheridan.com.au.
- 6 Toothypeg stool, \$195**, from Matt Blatt, 1300 628 825, mattblatt.com.au.
- 7 Babushka multi nest of three tables, \$299**, from Freedom, 1300 135 588, freedom.com.au.
- 8 Cleo upholstered ottoman in Bella Tango, \$149**, from Fantastic Furniture, fantasticfurniture.com.au (store locations only).



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