

# Shore leave

Year-round-holiday living was the goal when this couple asked a builder friend to create their forever home in beachside Perth.

STORY & STYLING ANNA FLANDERS / PHOTOGRAPHY ANGELITA BONETTI





**ENTRANCE** / Owner Tania McMurtrie, with border collie Princess Indigo, relishes her chic, relaxed home. Antique pots (in stands) and marble-topped console table, Lauder & Howard. Indigenous artworks, Mossenson Galleries. Pendant light, Alti Lighting. Doormat, Empire Highgate.

**LIVING** / Intriguing pieces include a New Guinea dance bangle from Lauder & Howard. Throw, Empire Highgate. Jar and plant pot, Ottoman Empire. Escea fireplace, Penny Subiaco Restoration. Penny Cross artwork, Art Collective WA. FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 186.





## *This is the life*

While the McMurtrie family makes full use of the richly layered living area and the rest of the top floor in this "upside-down" house, the home cinema downstairs has proved its worth for movie nights and sleepovers, and as a 'man cave'. However, it's the idyllic, exotically furnished main bedroom that Tania loves most. "I think it's important for us, and we lead busy lives, to have somewhere to retreat," she says.







**H**otel style is often a reference point for new homes. In the case of Tania and Cameron McMurtrie, an affection for the timeless chic of east Asian resorts, the holiday vibe of South Africa's safari lodges and the generous verandahs of classic Queenslanders converged to inform a beachside build in Perth. "We really fell in love with the look of black timber floors, white walls and an elegant but relaxed way of living," says Tania. "We felt that style translated so perfectly for our family life and the location."

The couple bought this sloping, 716m<sup>2</sup> block in 2007 to create a home for themselves and their children – Conor, now 18, Eloise, 14, and Lexie, 11. It came with an aesthetically challenged 1970s house, where they lived while planning their new abode.

"We would take wine out to the garden and sit on a step, looking at the view," says Tania. "I'd say to Cam, if we were to build up on this block, we'd get fantastic views. We should build an upside-down house." Cam was convinced when he finally climbed onto the roof and was moved to yell, "It looks amazing!"

Enter Dean Humphrey of Humphrey Homes architecture and building practice. A long-time friend of the couple, he instantly understood the dream and his team drew up a design to make full use of the block.

Fast forward to the new home, brought in on budget and ahead of schedule. To the street it presents classic colonnaded verandahs shaded by a magnificent jacaranda. From the top-level entry foyer, an art-filled hallway winds past a study and guestroom to the open kitchen, living and dining zones, sited to take advantage of ocean views and dreamy ►

**LIVING** / The eclectic interior is based around a sofa, chairs and coffee table from Blu Peter; Basket, Mossenson Galleries. Cushions, Ottoman Empire; Daybed, Lauder & Howards. Paul Uhlmann artworks, Art Collective WA. Lamp designed by Anna Flanders.

**DINING** / This space sets up a dynamic design tension between traditional upholstered chairs and contemporary furnishings. Table and ceramic tableware, Blu Peter. Candelabra, Empire Highgate. Rug, Jenny Jones Rugs & Home. FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 186.



### Stylish details

Tania and Cameron were prepared to be flexible during the build where they deemed it appropriate, but remained steadfast in their overall vision of a home that epitomises relaxed sophistication. "You have to commit," says Tania. "There's a lot to be said for sticking to your theme. Whenever I had to make a decision on site, I'd go back over my images. I learnt that from my last build, and by doing that we now live in a home that is exactly as planned."

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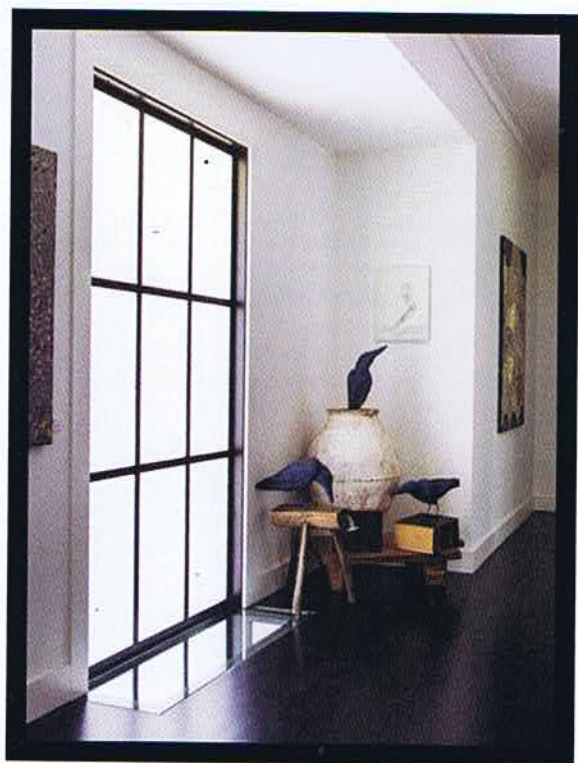
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*'We had a positive build experience and now live in a home that's exactly as planned.'* Tania McMurtrie

**HALLWAY** / The wide corridor serves as gallery space. Pot, Ottoman Empire. Stool, Lauder & Howard. Crow figures, Mossenson Galleries. Paul Uhlmann artwork (above crows), Art Collective WA.

**ELOISE'S ROOM** / Potted palms and courtyard access give this bedroom an open, airy feel. Bedcover and cushions, Busatti Perth. Missoni throw, Empire Highgate. Smart buy: Maskros pendant light, from \$69, Ikea.

**BATHROOM** / A feature wall of Pietra Grigio marble tiles from Bernini Stone & Tiles injects dark drama. Apaiser bath and basin, Rogerseller. Tapware, Reece. Striped towel, Ottoman Hamam. Pendant light, Blu Peter.

**MAIN BEDROOM** / "It has a beautiful ambience and it's quite romantic," says Tania of her favourite room. Colonial four-poster bed and Ethiopian stool, Lauder & Howard. Bedlinen, Busatti Perth. Rug, Jenny Jones Rugs & Home. Egyptian pendant lights were acquired during the owners' travels. Angela Stewart artwork, Art Collective WA. FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 186. ▶





**OUTDOOR KITCHEN** / The appliances include a barbecue, bar and a powered bench kitted out with a built-in ice bucket from Reece. Tiles, Myaree Ceramics. Designer buy: For similar fan, try the Tropical Belleria fan, from \$635, MyFan.

**KITCHEN** / The inside cooking set-up is big enough for Tania's classes as well as warm and homely enough for day-to-day family life. Wall ovens, Neff. Stools, Empire Highgate. Baskets, Freedom. Fruit bowl, Lauder & Howard. Pendant lights, Subiaco Restoration. The door frames are painted western red cedar.

**VERANDAH** / Princess Indigo joins sisters Eloise and Lexie on the deep and shady verandah. Butterfly chair, Blu Peter. The jarrah decking timber has been treated with a Sikksens finish in Ebony.

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◀ sunsets. Through the french doors and out on the verandah is an outdoor kitchen every bit as elegant and functional as the main cooking space inside. Both share access to a scullery with walk-in cool room, ice-maker and commercial dishwasher.

For Tania, a chef who runs A Better You cooking school from home, the kitchen design was critical. It has to work both as a family hub and for classes. "It's been a success," she says. "We can all cook at the same time, and we can entertain inside and on the balcony."

Downstairs is the family's private zone. Higher ceilings and a continuation of the black-and-white theme in the upstairs living areas support the resort-style feel, while all bedrooms and the home cinema open to the outdoor terrace through french doors. Conor's room has an ensuite, the girls share a double-entry bathroom and all three children's rooms have their own walk-in wardrobe. The main bedroom suite is a lavish retreat running the width of the home on the western side. Shuttered doors connect it to the lower terrace and pool, completing the picture of resort-style luxury.

"There was a quote I loved and thought about when designing this home: 'Instead of wondering when your next holiday will be, set up a life you don't want to escape from,'" says Tania. "And we really wanted to create that life in this house." Goal accomplished.

**H&G**

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## THE LAYOUT

FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



### FEATURE PLANTS

FRONTYARD  
Jacaranda  
Frangipani  
(Plumeria)  
INTERIOR  
Ficus palm  
(Ficus forsteriana)  
Red elkhorns  
(Platycerium  
bifurcatum)

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