

Play room

The backyard was the drawcard for this Sydney family and, thanks to a colourful makeover, there is excitement around every corner.

STORY CHRIS PEARSON • STYLING KATE NIXON
PHOTOGRAPHY MAREE HOMER





LIBRARY French doors frame views of the deck and beautifully landscaped garden. Existing wingback chairs were reupholstered in B Berger Grenadine fabric from Ascraft. Custom-made day bed, Ashco. Vintage lamp bought in the US. End table, Retro on Regent. Scalloped pelmet by Coco's Soft Furnishings. Vintage rug. Outdoor dining table, Soundlike Home. Dining chairs, Space. For Where to Buy, see page 288.



When Melissa and Daren first saw this house in Sydney's inner west in late 2009, the sprawling back garden caught their imagination. At 700m², it could become a wonderland for their children – plenty of room for a cubbyhouse, play equipment, lawn and a pool. It was a world away from the compact courtyard in the terrace they owned at the time.

"We fell in love with the backyard," says Melissa. "We could see its potential and with three growing children, we needed the space." Those three children – Laila, seven, Harrison, six, and Miller, four – now have a younger brother, Will, two, and the yard is in constant use, an adventure playground shared with rainbow lorikeets and kookaburras. But how to create a fairytale ending for the adults within the plain-Jane 1980s brick house on the block?

First up, architect Danny Broe extended the portico and added shutters to the facade to create a more inviting impression from the street. Windows along the rear wall were replaced with french doors to create an easy connection with the garden. The brickwork was rendered in a warm sandstone hue and a deck added on at the back.

The couple called on interior designer Brett Mickan of BMID to transform the interior and he deftly combined rich colours and textures, weaving in influences from New Regency to African savannah, to create a home that's totally gorgeous.

The priority for Brett was the living room, which felt more like a passageway since the home's double front doors opened directly into the long, narrow room. A mirror was installed on a side wall to visually expand the space and a très '80s glass-brick wall separating >

KITCHEN Melissa serves up refreshments for Miller (left) and Harrison. Colour-backed glass from Architectural Glass Systems is used as a white board. Patricia Urquiola Flo stools.

FAMILY Harrison in the family area, which doubles as a playroom. Vista sofa and Iko Iko chair, both Jardan. Vista sofa and Iko Iko chair, both Jardan. Lamp, MRD Home. Ottoman, Kame. Rug, Armadillo&Co. Artwork by Max Hill. **Smart buy:** Matchstick indoor blind, \$36, Buntings.

LIVING Brett raised the floor in the adjacent entrance to give the living zone a stronger sense of purpose. The colour scheme was inspired by the striking Melissa Egan artwork. Autobahn Tulp table lamps, Spence & Lyda. Knoll end tables, Home Furniture on Consignment. Coffee table base, Claphams Furniture & Antiques, with marble top from Granite & Marble Works. Vintage Carl Malmsten Grandma chair, Gamla Lan Interiors. Arabesque rug, PAD. **Designer buy:** Molteni&C Lido sofa, from \$16,170, Hub Furniture Lighting Living. **For Where to Buy, see page 288.**

This is the life

This home is blessed with oodles of space and not a bit is wasted. "We use every square inch of the block and that's really nice," says Melissa. "When I am inside, I spend most of my time in the library at the back of the house — I can see what's going on in the backyard and throughout the living areas at the same time. Because everything is so open, we can see where everyone is."



"WE DIDN'T WANT THINGS TO MATCH PERFECTLY. IT'S A STYLISH SPACE BUT ONE THAT PEOPLE LIVE IN." BRETT MICKAN, INTERIOR DESIGNER



ENTRANCE

An artful arrangement of treasures welcomes visitors. Sea Creatures sculpture, Home Furniture on Consignment. Bust bought in South Africa. Artworks by Mauricio Gomez. Mirror, Orson & Blake.

DINING Louis XV armchairs from Côté Maison, upholstered in Missoni Kew, are teamed with Paul Kafka dining chairs from Retro on Regent. Dining table, Home Furniture on Consignment. Curtains made from Christopher Farr Cloth Belfour, available from Ascraft.

BOYS' ROOM A painting by Harrison and vintage stamps spelling out Miller's name are cute personalising touches. Beds, Ikea. Bedside lamp, Mondo Luce. Biplane light bought online.

ENSUITE Colours and textures are in harmony with the adjacent bedroom. Tapware, Reece.

Smart buy: Novo Classico travertine-look porcelain tiles, \$38/m², Royal Tiles.

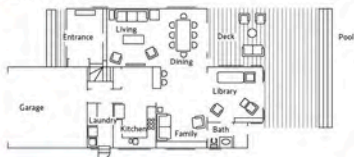
MAIN BEDROOM Grasscloth wallpaper, Ascraft. Bedside cabinets, Côté Maison. Loveseat, Colby Furniture. Vintage table. Artwork on left by Mia Galo and right, bought in the US. For Where to Buy, see page 288. >



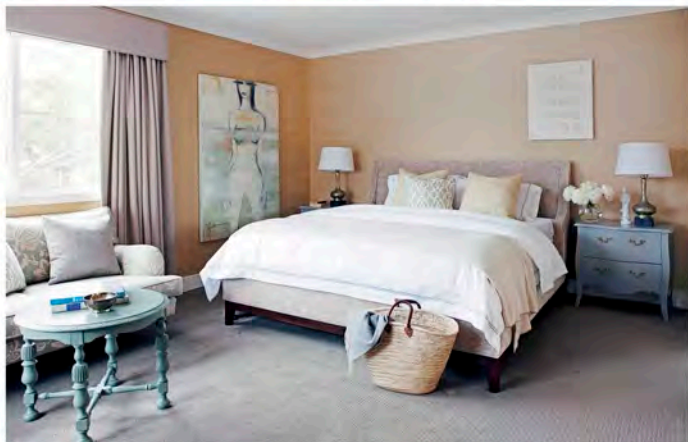
FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



'THE HOUSE HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED WITH COLOUR AND FURNISHINGS. IT IS LUXURIOUS AS WELL AS COMFORTABLE.' MELISSA





'WE FELL IN LOVE WITH THE BACKYARD. WE COULD SEE ITS POTENTIAL AND WITH GROWING CHILDREN, WE NEEDED THE SPACE.' MELISSA

◀ The living room and kitchen was removed. At the rear of the house, an inefficient sunroom with plexiglass roof was transformed into a library. The ground floor is now one generous open-plan room containing the library plus living, dining and family zones and the kitchen. All four of the home's bedrooms are upstairs.

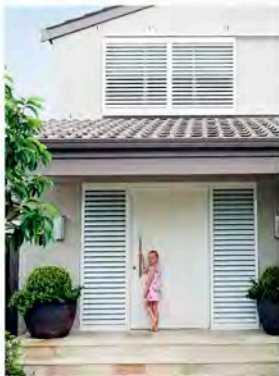
The design brief was to make the house as inviting for children as well as the adults. "Melissa and Daren have some beautiful artworks and were [open] to colour," says Brett, "so I went with pops of bold, bright colour, grounded by black-stained floors and neutral walls."

Brett scouted out furniture to complement treasured pieces in the couple's existing collection, such as a rustic Asian bench, rugs and artworks painted by friends. "We didn't want things to match perfectly," says Brett. "It's a stylish space but one that people live in."

In the main bedroom a large artwork inspired the decorating scheme. "It's a bit of a retreat with the enveloping textures and patterns," says Brett. "These blues, greens and golds are my neutrals." Melissa couldn't be happier: "It's luxurious but comfortable."

While she adores the main bedroom, the garden is still the star. "It has turned out even better than we hoped for," says Melissa as she watches the children play happily around her.

H&G
Architect: Danny Broe Architect, Surry Hills, NSW; (02) 9211 3019 or www.dannybroearchitect.com. Interior design: BMID, Surry Hills, NSW; (02) 9690 0053; www.bmid.com.au.



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

CUBBYHOUSE Miller and Harrison monkey around while Meljasa reads a story to Will. Daren built the cubby from a Cubbykraft kit. Chairs, Town & Country Style.

DECK The new deck and pergola are ideal for adults to relax while supervising the children at play. Sofa and armchairs, Grain Furniture, all upholstered in Elliott Clarke Wilson fabric in Steel Blue. Jil coffee table, Tait-Isla outdoor beanbag (by pool), Coast New Zealand. Landscaping, Bay Street Gardens.

ENTRANCE Lullu at the revamped street entrance.
For Where to Buy, see page 288.

Porter's Paints
Sable (ground floor,
main walls)

Porter's Paints Ice
(boys' room, upper
portion of wall)

Melilux Magnetic
Magic in Dark Grey
(boys' room)

Porter's Paints
Rawhide
(exterior trims)

