

HOME ARMIDALE NSW

The brick exterior of this 1970s house was clad in exterior-grade western red cedar supplied by Moars Windows and Doors. The cladding was finished off with three coats of Cutek Colourtones stain in Black Ash and copper nails. The outdoor living area features a Paola Lenti Afra chair from De De Ce. For stockist details, see page 135.

MOVING INTO TOWN

A RETIRED COUPLE TRANSFORM A 1970s BRICK HOME IN ARMIDALE WITH THE HELP OF AWARD-WINNING DESIGNERS.

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A window seat lit by a La Lampe Gras No 203 wall light from Spence and Lyda makes the perfect reading nook. **BELOW** Interior walls are Glosswood Grey Jetty pre-finished wall cladding. The artwork is *Roundabout* by Derry Messum. For stockist details, see page 135.



AN IMPULSE BUY took one retired couple on an exciting journey from a homestead on a 485-hectare cattle property, about 20 kilometres out of Armidale, NSW, to a leafy suburban block in town. “We got an offer we couldn’t refuse, even though we were not quite ready to part with the place,” explains the owner. “We still had many more plans for it, and have moments of regret even now.” However, the decision was bolstered after seeing an altogether different home for sale in the local newspaper. “We could see its potential straight away,” she says.

In July 2015 the couple decided to buy the large block, complete with an outdated and run-down 1970s brick project house. It came with peach walls and dark timber ceilings that made the house feel dated and confined. The rooms were small and carpeted, and closed off to each other. And while the house had a bank of windows and doors that overlooked the garden, there was little connection between the building and surrounding landscape.

The new owners had big plans to change all this and felt confident they could bring their vision for the house to life with the help of Sydney interior design firm Hare and Klein. They had worked with the team before on another house and knew the company had incredible attention to detail and used skilled tradespeople.

Interior designer Belinda Chippindale led the project and worked with Anna Douglass, who oversaw the interior decoration of the space. “Having worked with this client before, we understood their aesthetic — their love of beautiful artefacts and art, deep colour and natural textures, so the palette evolved from that prior knowledge,” Belinda says.

The first point of attack was the limited rectangular floor plan, which was long and narrow. Belinda says they focused on extruding additional spaces to make comfortable, well-proportioned areas that would fit the couple’s existing furnishings. A screened outdoor room was also a priority, as the owners had enjoyed one in their previous home, and Hare and Klein managed to fit it within the footprint of the existing shell.

Inside, the home now has a nice flow thanks to the extensions and a more open-plan approach. Outside, the new vertical cladding over the whole home creates cohesion, says Belinda. It extends up beyond the original roofline and conceals the pitched roof, giving it a more modern look.

Budget factored into the design as well. The brief was to create a liveable, sustainable home to accommodate an older couple that regularly has family visiting and staying, but Belinda also had to include their existing furniture into the floor plan and create both communal and intimate spaces. >



The couple’s old dining table is complemented by Hans Wegner CH20 Elbow chairs and a pair of Caravaggio pendant lights from Cult. The dark walls allow the *Pirlinyanu 2008* artwork by Julie Nangala Robinson to stand out. For stockist details, see page 135.

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This room opens up to the deck and is one of the owners' favourite parts of the house. The deck is decorated with metal pots from Orient House, an adirondack chair that matches the exterior and two Afra chairs from De De Ce that sit on either side of the woven Canasta Service Element table in white from Space Furniture. For stockist details, see page 135.

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A cane chair from the couple's former home was paired with an Indian Abrash rug from Cadrys. Behind is an Elizabeth Cummings artwork and to the left Clifton Mack's *Colours Through Rocks*. **FACING PAGE, FROM TOP** This fabric headboard made from Unique Fabrics DSN Kirubi in Stone softens the master bedroom. The Conrad lamp is from Mondo Luce; a Kaldewei Centro Oval tub is the bathroom's centrepiece. The sink is from Astra Walker and the feature wall was created with Decipher Mutina tiles in Charcoal from Academy Tiles. **For stockist details, see page 135.**



The renovation took about a year, and was completed using local tradespeople. The main issue was that the house hadn't been touched for 50 years, and was in poor condition. More structural works were needed with new slabs and plumbing throughout. Belinda says that integrating the pitched ceilings into the design while extending the overall size of the home was also a challenge — all the box extensions have a flat ceiling and a box gutter. “The pitched ceiling is a point of intrigue given it is not visible from the exterior,” she says.

When it came to the garden, the couple wanted to maximise the sense of space, especially given that they had come from a larger property. The solution was to create a house that sat in harmony with the landscape, creating a sense of connection between the home and garden. “It was important to take the landscaping into account in the selection of the colour palette,” Belinda adds. “The dark colour of the home's exterior becomes a backdrop to the colourful foliage.” From inside, the dark-edged windows frame the views to the garden.

Trust was the foundation for bringing this project to life. “We had already developed a strong relationship with the client so they were open to using interesting materials combined with strong colours,” Belinda says. “The interior palette has significant depth of colour, broken up with different textures, cladding, light plywood joinery, oak flooring, dark walls and white ceilings.” Because the dark colours are matte and natural in finish, they allow texture to come through. Similarly, the dark interior walls allow the homeowners' collection of Indigenous art to stand out. “It is almost a gallery space and is often re-curated when a new object or painting is acquired,” Belinda says.

The owners are thrilled with final outcome — a sustainable, solar-powered home. “It is a pleasure to live in throughout the year,” she says. “It is warm in winter and cool in summer with an inner spirit that nourishes the soul.” *CS*

BELOW Before the renovation was done, this New England house hadn't been updated in 50 years. Outside bricks were clad in cedar and stained matte black. Inside, the small rooms were opened up and new wooden floors were laid by local tradesmen from P&D Wilkinson Flooring Services. New decking also allows seamless living from inside to out. In the bathroom, a complete overhaul was done with new floors, walls, cabinetry and tub. The dated venetian blinds were replaced with a floor-to-ceiling frosted window that provides both privacy and natural light.

