



swede sensation

In creating her Sydney home, a translator elegantly captures the tone of her Swedish heritage, while adding a thoroughly Australian accent

STORY DAVID SMIEDT STYLING LOUISE OWENS PHOTOGRAPHY CATH MUSCAT

ARTWORKS (FROM LEFT) BOURKE STREET BAKERY BY CHRISTOPHER LEHMPFUHL, UNTITLED BY PETER GODWIN



LIVING AREA Stephanie and Paul's home showcases their love of Scandinavian design and warm natural materials. In the living area, a brick divider separates the living space from the central courtyard and provides a handy seating area for daughter Nina and miniature schnauzer Lotta. >



DINING AREA The couple gave the space a retro feel with a Carl Hansen & Son dining table, 'CH30' chairs by Hans Wegner and a vintage 'Kastholm' brass pendant light, all from Vamp Vintage Design. The polished concrete floor reflects the changing hues that flood in from outdoors, while white walls provide the perfect foil to the family's treasured artworks, including *Untitled #27* by Jun Chen.

"We love *white walls*, so the colour is provided by the art, textiles and furnishings"

BUYING THEIR HOME in Sydney's inner west was a decision made swiftly by Stephanie and her lawyer husband Paul. While living near a park where they enjoyed spending time with their children, Jasper, 12, and Nina, 10, they had kept an eye out for a property adjacent to this much-loved swathe of green, and when one became available for sale, they took the opportunity to snap it up.

Deciding how to renovate their home to suit their needs and tastes was a rather longer process, however. "It took five years for us to figure out what we wanted to do with it!" admits Stephanie.

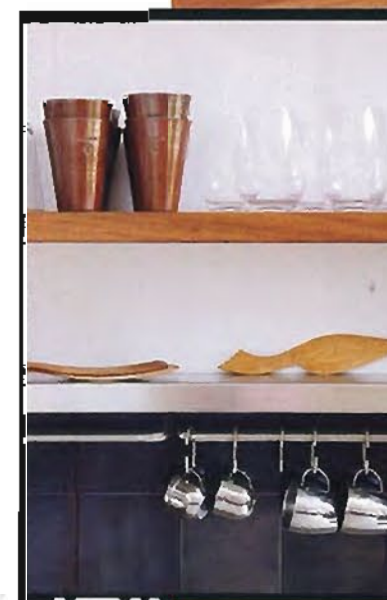
Early moves included polishing the floorboards, repainting the walls, remodelling the bathroom and having the in-ground swimming pool in the backyard filled in. "There's a public swimming pool in the park right across the road, and we preferred to have the space in the garden for our two children to play," explains Stephanie. These updates made the home liveable while the couple and their architects, Sam Crawford and Karen Erds of Sam Crawford Architects, formulated the grand plan to reinvent the home.

When the renovation eventually came about, it maintained the two original bedrooms and bathroom at the front of the house while the rear was rebuilt. The reworked parts of the house include a spacious living area/home office, a kitchen big enough to accommodate a table for family meals – "I love feeding people," says Stephanie – and a dining area that opens out to a covered courtyard. "Sam was insistent we have a courtyard to flood the house with light. It's a key feature of the new part of the house, and means I don't have to turn on a light until after the sun goes down." A set of stairs up to the first floor study was also repositioned, while an ensuite and walk-in robe were added to the master bedroom.

On the ground floor, glass walls and doors now immerse the space in natural light, enhanced by rows of high clerestory windows, combined with exposed timber beams, mid-20th-century Scandinavian furniture and a dramatic suspended plywood screen. >



KITCHEN Stephanie, a keen cook, opted for stainless-steel benchtops and cupboards in American walnut crown-cut veneer, a Miele oven and a Highland cooktop. "Our architect came up with the idea of dividing lower and higher woodwork – I think it lifts the room having the white joinery up top," she says. Stackable glass doors provide an easy transition between the kitchen and living area.





LIVING AREA (above) The vintage three-seater sofa in the living room/home office was designed by Denmark's Illum Wikkelsø, and bought at Vampt Vintage Design. For Stephanie, it's a favourite place to spend quality time with Nina.



"We feel that a home is created by *the treasures* - people and objects - we have inside"

< There is also a delicate consistency of tone that runs below the main statements of light and timber. The black powdercoating of doors and window frames is echoed in the metal ladder by the soaring white timber bookcase in the dining area. "We've created beautiful bookshelves which remind us - and increasingly, our children - of who we are, who we have been and what we were thinking when we were reading those books," says Stephanie. Another custom-built white bookcase features in the study and within it sits a landscape painting dominated by olive green hues, which are in turn picked up by the living room sofa and the dining chairs.

The house - like its owner - expresses itself in several languages. It is striking yet not art directed, emphatic yet not intimidating, ordered yet not constrained - a stylish space that nevertheless maintains its primary purpose as an inviting family home. "We both feel that a home is created by the treasures - people and objects - we have inside," says Stephanie with a smile.



LIVING AREA (left) Designed by Eero Saarinen, Knoll's 'Grasshopper' armchair, found at Vampt Vintage Design, is a mid-20th-century classic. It's illuminated by a "sea urchin" lamp - as Stephanie calls it - bought at the Sydney Antique Centre.

DINING ZONE (bottom left) One of three eating areas, this is where the family gathers for daily catch-ups. The table and chairs are from Great Dane Furniture and the American walnut sideboard was designed by Sam Crawford Architects, as were the suspended storage units, beyond, that free up extra floor space. Stephanie drew inspiration from the vintage tiles in the kitchen splashback, and decided to suspend a partition of laser-cut Eco-ply plywood from the ceiling

LIVING AREA & HOME OFFICE (opposite) While the home office/living room is underpinned by polished concrete flooring, a cowhide rug from Great Dane Furniture brings warmth to the space. Modern artworks - *Afternoon Shadows* by Robert Hannaford (on the shelving unit), an abstract work by Brett McMahon (above the sofa, left) and *Cactus #43* by Lucy Culliton (right) - work as strong focal points.



we love

The desk/bookshelf unit

The custom built desk and cabinetry that dominate all of the study area echo the 'dark hues below' & 'light colours above' symmetry of the joinery throughout the house. It was designed by Sam Crawford Architects and built by Ryde Joinery. "The computers face outwards so we can keep an eye on what the children are doing," says Stephanie. >



Inside story

Who lives here?

Stephanie, 41, a freelance translator; Paul, 42, a lawyer; their children Jasper, 12, and Nina, 10; and Lotta, the miniature schnauzer.

Biggest lesson learnt?

Stephanie: "If you have the luxury to take your time in the decision-making process, a bit of reflection pays off. There is always something that needs tweaking or monitoring."

What's the home's best feature?

"The light that plays throughout the house at different times of the day and in different seasons."

How did you choose the colour scheme?

"We didn't! We love white walls, so the colour is provided by the art, textiles, furnishings and books."

Favourite possessions?

"Our artworks have given us the most pleasure – apart from the kids, of course – over the years... and our La Pavoni coffee machine."

Why did you choose to use so much timber?

"It feels warm and familiar and perhaps has something to do with my Swedish heritage."

NINA'S BEDROOM A panel of 'Sparrow' wallpaper, designed by Catherine Martin for Porter's Paints, adds a hit of prettiness to Nina's room, and is a lovely backdrop to a French provincial antique bed, purchased at auction 11 years ago. "We 'inherited' the bedside table from my parents' house when they first bought their house many years ago," adds Stephanie. "We lived there for a while over a decade ago and have taken that table with us to every house we have lived in since." A birdcage light fitting from The Country Trader adds an element of fun.



the details

1 Concrete floor Polished concrete in Paperbark from \$200/sqm, Concrete Colour Systems.

2 Nina's wallpaper Catherine Martin 'Sparrow' in Cream, \$220/10.5m roll, Porter's Paints.

3 Bathroom tiles Handmade glazed terracotta tiles in Olive B, \$840/sqm, Onsite Supply & Design.

CONTACT Sam Crawford Architects, (02) 9280 3555, samcrawfordarchitects.com.au
Stockists, page 196



KITCHEN The splashback features vintage yellow and black Royal Copenhagen tiles the couple bought years ago at auction.

style notes



BATHROOM Olive green tiles (see details, above left) create a unique shower wall. A Grohe 'Rainshower Modern' showerhead and Grohe 'Eurosmart' shower mixer complete the sleek look.

"The choice of materials has helped to create a warm, lived-in feel to our house that's, in large part, new."



DISPLAY Stephanie recently translated French classic books *The Fleurville Trilogy* (\$16.99 each, Simon & Schuster) into English.

