

Reveal appeal

A new home can surprise, even when you've designed it yourself

After years of designing houses for other people, architect Charles Howroyd has finally found time to design a home for himself. He and his wife Heather Shaw and their two youngest children moved into their new Tarragindi dwelling five weeks ago, and the settling in period has already revealed some unexpected – and welcome – outcomes from the design.

For a start, there are the bonus views. They knew they would be able to see the city, but Heather and Charles were surprised by the beautiful vista from the main bedroom on the top level.

"Lying in bed, looking out over the deck, all you see is the trees on the hill of the Tarragindi Reserve," Heather says. "The house has all these aspects we didn't realise we would get." The couple is also pleasantly surprised, and a

little relieved, by how well the deck balustrades work to enhance the view.

"When the balustrades went in, we were freaked out at first because they are sort of commercial looking," says Heather. "We wanted something different but weren't sure how it would look. But we've started to see how the sunlight shines through the holes, creating patterns on the deck floor and we love it."

If the balustrades seem familiar, it might be because they come from the company that designed much of the street furniture around our city. Street & Garden Furniture Co. in West End was founded by Heather's brother David Shaw, and you can see one of the studio's recent additions to the urban landscape in the sinuous Liana Lounge at South Bank.

S&G designer Forrest Gillham says the 3mm-thick steel balustrades reflect an aesthetic developed over time in the studio.



The laser-cut pattern is like a digitalised version of dappled sun



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"The laser-cut pattern is like a digitalised version of dappled sun," Forrest explains.

At night, the dappled sun turns to twinkling stars as the interior lights shine through the balustrades, creating a head-turning display for passers-by.

The balustrades decorate two of the three levels. At the top, there are four bedrooms plus the main, the middle level is for living, and on the ground there is a massive garage with space for a "man cave".

At the moment, the cars are parked alongside a collection of indoor plants whose job will be to climb up steel cables running from the garage level, through the internal staircase to the top floor. A Velux skylight above the staircase will provide filtered sunlight and air flow for the greenery.

What a stunning effect the foliage will create once the plants take off, an organic presence amid the other textures at play, including an Italian marble-tiled floor, stainless steel hand rails on the staircase and honey-toned plywood.

"We started with a black and white palette in mind," Charles says. "Eventually, colour crept in and we were also helped by an interior designer (Sonya Harward)."

For the floor plan, achieving a natural flow from the living area straight out to the back garden was a priority, says Charles.

"Our previous house was a Queenslander on a sloping block, which didn't encourage us to use the pool down the back as much as we could have," he explains. "In this house, I wanted there to be a direct connection from

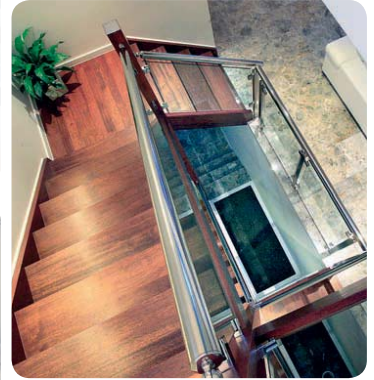


the kitchen to the lawn. I've been able to create a sight line from the kitchen straight through the house to the back door, which frames a tree that has a light shining through its branches at night. I enjoy including those aesthetic touches."

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