

# Screen dream

A house featured in an Eddie Murphy film provided inspiration for a Wavell Heights construction



WITH FRANCENE RIDLEY



Many of us dream of having a house like some of those seen in the movies; a grand Southern plantation home like *Scarlett's*, maybe *Gatsby's* palatial waterside spread fit for parties and dancing, or perhaps a minimalist mansion on the beach as used in *Sleeping with the Enemy*. Many of us dream, but not many decide to build on the fantasy.

For a family in Wavell Heights, the silver screen has come to life and every day might be like coming home to something 'just like in the movies'.

Taking inspiration from the Eddie Murphy film *Daddy Day Care*, the owners came to architect Charles Howroyd with their request to replicate some of the features of the American plank house used in the movie, with one additional element – a turret room.

At the end of a six-month design phase, Charles had created a home based on a Queenslander with a large country kitchen, high ceilings and integrated outdoor living spaces, incorporating American elements such as wide horizontal planking, thick full-height columns and a central sweep of stairs as the entry.

Although their property encompasses three blocks, the owners decided to build on two, leaving enough space for the children to run and kick the football. On 1254 sq m, the two-storey home has an impressive street frontage with the focus resting on the landmark turret room on the eastern side. This room is "unique and distinctive element of the house" says Charles and with its easterly aspect, it has ideal natural light for its current use as an artist's studio on the ground floor. Beside the studio is a sunken lounge room, accessed off a stately entry, both of which are separate from the kitchen next door.

The kitchen is part of an open-plan space including the living and dining rooms. This spacious area has a bright freshness – a luminosity created by the high ceilings, creamy colour scheme and natural light streaming in through electronic high-level awning windows. The kitchen surrounds a large island bench that is seen from all informal living areas of the house.

Charming features include windows in a half circle design. A box window in the dining area provides a view to the garden and all areas look out through the high roofed patio to the in-ground pool. The patio features a massive recycled timber support pole that continues the sense of lofty height



REEL THING ... a country kitchen provides the heart of this home that features spacious, well lit living areas.



Photographs // Jeremy Veitch

and airy space in the kitchen and matches the timber finishes seen throughout the home. Feeding off both living areas is the bedroom wing including a laundry designed to "make all things accessible", says Charles.

The master suite, also with a view of the pool, has a walk-in wardrobe, ensuite and timber finishes that tie in with the polished floors in the living areas. The two children's bedrooms have larger-than-standard room dimensions and their occupants share access to the main bathroom on this level.

A guest bedroom with bathroom on the second storey is reached via a classic-style staircase rising next to the large, double-height kitchen space.

The games room also overlooks this space to the pool, and provides access to a TV room, study, and a small veranda facing the street that is more decorative than practical though it has fantastic city views. Where the staircase meets the games room,

Charles has used balustrades rather than a wall so that the ground floor can be seen from the second storey.

"Not only does this increase light and ventilation, but produces a connectivity through the house which makes a comfortable atmosphere for the family," he says.

The family had lived on the block for two years before enduring almost seven months of building for the new home.

They were completely enamoured of the site with its views over the city and quiet neighbourly atmosphere. They also appreciated the character housing throughout their suburb and have been careful to stay close to the architectural features of the Queenslander.

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