

# meant TO BE

Although it was love at first sight, it took years before this sun-filled Queensland beach house became a couple's own cherished retreat

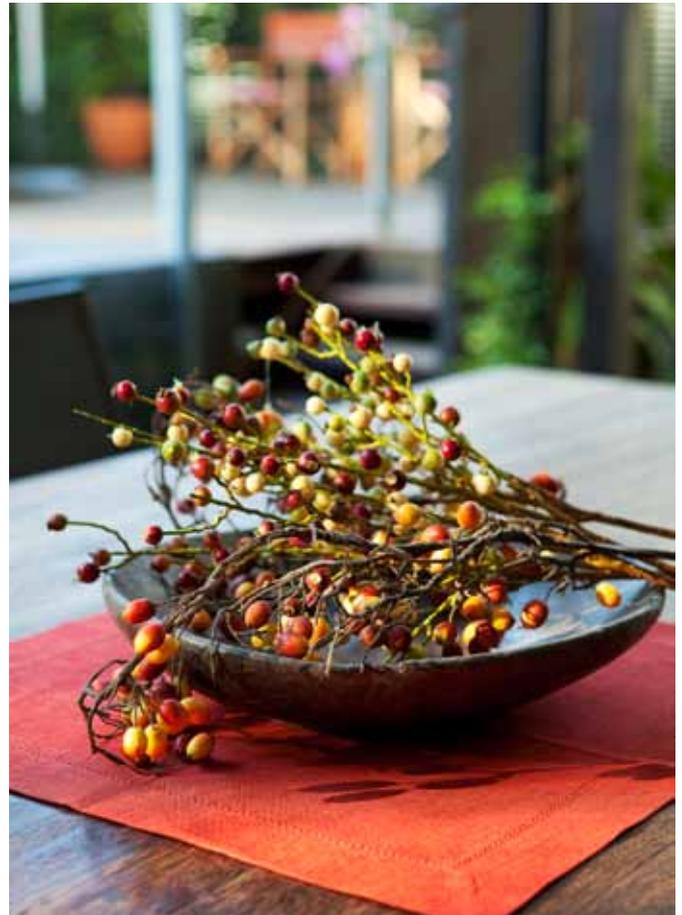
STORY KYLIE JACKES STYLING STEPHANIE POWELL PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN DOWNS



OPEN-PLAN LIVING When Beryl and Owen acquired their coveted dream home after a decade of yearning, the home needed only the simplest of tweaks to add some creature comforts. In the living area, a Garden Carpet rug from Karavan in Brisbane anchors a locally sourced coffee table and a white sofa from Oz Design Furniture. MASTER BEDROOM {opposite} The couple's bedroom is a restful retreat, opening onto a balcony with an enviable view of lush greenery. >



**DECK** The double-height north-facing deck connects the home's internal spaces to the landscape. Layers of screening filter light, shadow and sea breezes to create a private and comfortable courtyard. "This is where it all happens," notes Owen (pictured), who often works outside on his laptop. "When we bought the house, we knew this would be the place where everyone would congregate, so we bought this big teak table as a gathering point." Owen painted the countless high-set timber battens himself, a real labour of love; they're now a feature element of the home. "Although it was a very long, difficult job, painting them was one of the best things we did," he says. "When we bought the house, the timber was incredibly weathered, but the staining has given the house a new sophistication."



**Couple Owen and Beryl** were enamoured with their house long before they bought it. They first spotted their future home by chance 10 years ago, as it was being built, and were seduced by its architectural lines and prime location on a leafy street in coastal Queensland, just a short walk from the ocean. “We’ve always loved the area and wanted to live here,” explains Owen. “We both share a keen interest in architecture, so when we saw this unique house going up, we came more often to watch it take shape, envying the family who owned it.”

After years of admiring it from afar – and nearby – one day, the couple noticed their dream house was advertised for sale. “We couldn’t believe our luck,” recalls Beryl, who immediately arranged an inspection. “When we walked through it for the first time, we had to control our enthusiasm. It was perfectly positioned on the block and every window in the house looked onto trees and greenery.”

Within a few short weeks, the couple had sold their own property in Noosa, enabling them to snap up the long-coveted house as their own. Although the house had perfect bones, it had evidently been built on a tight budget – the major concern was the absence of a few creature comforts and how to integrate them in keeping with the decor. “We wanted to make some changes, but it was important for us to maintain the integrity of the design, so we consulted the original architects to see if certain modifications were possible,” explains Owen.

More than happy to see their concept further evolve, Stephen Guthrie and Lindy Atkin from Bark Design Architecture collaborated with the couple to implement several additions and refine the raw finishes with

a more sophisticated palette of materials and colours. Beautifully designed as two split-level pavilions placed either side of a towering Moreton Bay ash, with the upper storey connected via a bridge passageway, the remarkable transformation included installing a second glass-walled walkway on the lower level, and adding a new laundry and powder room. The stained chipboard floors were replaced with attractive blackbutt timber flooring, bespoke joinery was incorporated in the living area and a pop-out workspace was created on the upper bridge to provide the most serene and scenic location imaginable for Owen and Beryl’s snug home office.

The decor is imbued with subtle greens and greys, inspired by the natural colours in the native garden, while the couple’s love of art ensures an extensive collection of works enlivens the walls and floors. Yet it’s the sculptural Moreton Bay ash in the central courtyard that represents the home’s focal point, viewed and admired from the expansive deck and pool area where Owen and Beryl love to entertain and while away the weekend reading the paper. The home is tailor-made for its location and owners. “The internal spaces, quality of light and the way the house functions are all as good as the beautiful exterior architecture and landscape,” says Owen. “For us, this is the ultimate house.”

No longer merely envious passers-by, Owen and Beryl admit they still have to pinch themselves when they take a time out to consider their incredible good fortune. “I work two days a week in Brisbane, and one day at home, which is ideal,” says Beryl. “Often as we drive down the road home, I say to Owen, ‘Can you believe we actually live here?’”

**STAIRWELL** {above left} Swathed in translucent polycarbonate sheeting, the stairwell benefits from an abundance of light, which acts as a counterpoint to the dark stair treads and feature battens finished in Feast Watson Black Japan stain. Illuminated by a lightbox effect by day, the stairwell turns into a glowing lantern at night. At the foot of the stairwell is an equally sculptural Eames lounge chair; try Replica Furniture for a similar version – visit [replicafurniture.com.au](http://replicafurniture.com.au). **OUTDOOR DINING** {above right} Simply decorated with a burnt orange placemat, timber bowl and dried foliage, the stunning solid teak outdoor table is easily the most popular gathering point in the home for Owen, Beryl and their guests. With the deck’s airy setting {opposite}, framed by the timber battens, this has to be the quintessential Australian outdoor room. >



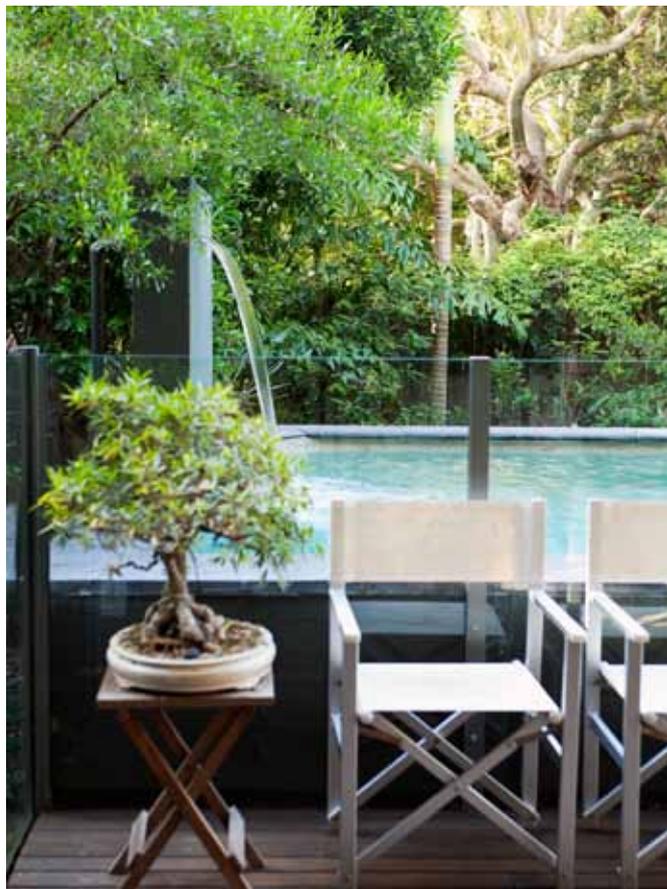
**KITCHEN** {top left} Opting for a more subtle palette of finishes, Beryl and Owen replaced the original red cabinetry in the kitchen with white laminate and a new colour-backed glass splashback. A stainless-steel Ariston oven and a Fisher & Paykel DishDrawer were also part of the kitchen's chic upgrade.

**GUEST BALCONY** {top right} Even the guest room offers its own treetop balcony, where visitors can soak up some sunshine in low-key luxury. In keeping with the home's casual beachside setting, a rustic timber table and bench seat, covered in French stripe fabric in Peregian Beach from Otilly & Lewis, add effortless comfort and colour.

**DECK** {left} The hub of the house is the magnificent spotted gum deck, which sits below a double-height void partially screened by batters. A long, low-set bench seat topped with bright cushions from Gnu Cargo in Noosaville is a favourite hangout for Owen and Beryl's grandchildren, where they play underneath the sprawling branches of the Moreton Bay ash.

**COURTYARD** The home's two pavilions were designed to sit either side of the towering 100-year-old Moreton Bay ash tree, to take advantage of its striking natural beauty inside and out. The leaves and sculptural branches filter rays of dappled sunlight through windows and walkways. >





**LIVING AREA** {top left} Floating cabinetry, hanging above a low-set window, provides the perfect platform for displaying art and a few select pieces. Eyecatching indigenous artefacts and family photos are grouped below a painting by Claire Le Jeune.

**GARDEN** {top right} Just one of the many green and leafy aspects of Owen and Beryl's idyll, this tranquil view is a testament to the home's carefully considered design. "The house has beautiful natural light, warmth and airflow, and the additions are seamless," says Owen. "There's no distinction between old and new."

**BATHROOM** {left} Dark floor tiles and a stone-hued laminate vanity in the bathroom set the tone for timber embellishments, including a decorative screen and stool from Gnu Cargo, and a pelican artwork by Ellie Durbidge.



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*we love...*

an inspired colour palette

The home's colour scheme reflects its gorgeous natural surroundings, with native gum-grey hues highlighted by caramel timber tones, such as this bedhead and bedside cabinet, and burnt orange, embodied here by an orange throw from Linen & Moore. Artworks above the bed by Hal Barton and Rick Everingham depict the Australian landscape in all its glory, completing the home's colour story. >



# Inside story

**Who lives here?** Owen (inset), a semi-retired graphic designer and art director, and his wife, Beryl, a museum manager.

**What was your best decision?**

Owen: "Selling our house in Noosa and getting this one. We really did buy the house of our dreams – we love everything about it."

**Best spot in the house?**

"Sitting at the big table on the deck, relaxing with architecture journals and a cup of tea, or working on graphic design layouts. This spot gets the cool breezes in summer and warm sun in winter, and I love the outlook over the garden."

**What do you love most?** "The house has a wonderful feel. It's full of natural light and because the rooms flow into one another and the outdoors, it's incredibly relaxing."

**What was your biggest extravagance?**

"Replacing the existing flooring with blackbutt timber, but it was really worthwhile. It has given the house a real warmth and sophistication."

**What was the most economical aspect of the renovation?**

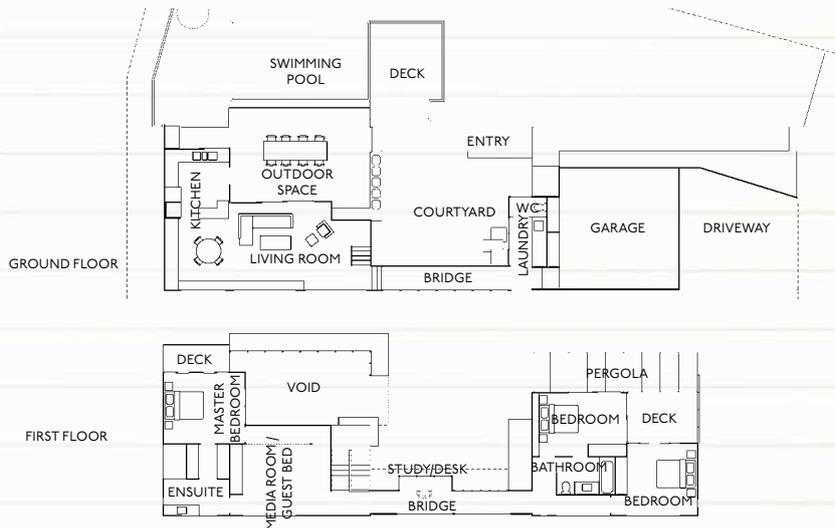
"Putting a lot of hard work in myself by painting all the timber battens. It was a real labour of love. I was such a regular at the paint shop, they called me Mr Ebony."

**What's your ideal weekend?** "Reading the papers on the deck, pottering around the garden and walking down to the beach in the afternoon."



**fave find**  
 Add eastern flair with embroidered cushions. Try Turkish Kilim fragment cushion. Price: \$120. Find it: Chalise Koroglu, (07) 5594 9280.

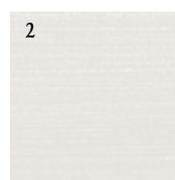
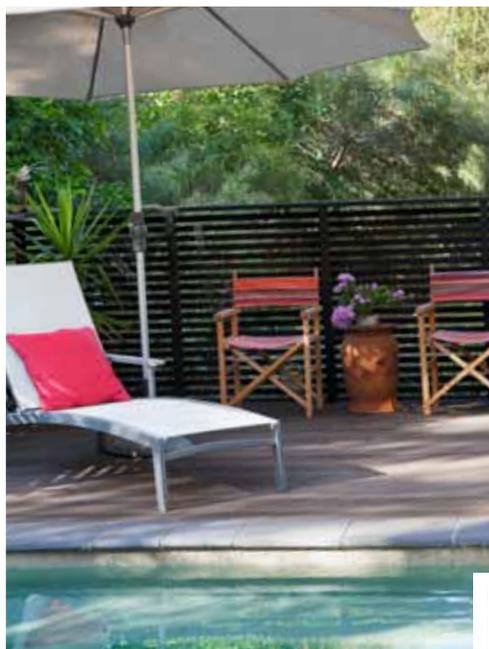
**BALCONY** Shrouded in dense bush and drenched in sunlight, this balcony off the master bedroom is a tranquil spot complete with a vintage bullock driver's cart seat from Nusa Style. **READING NOOK** {below left} Between the two floors on the mezzanine is a mini library with a window seat for reading; the bench seats are topped with cushions from Otilly & Lewis.



**ENTRANCE {right}** Encouraging guests to embrace the landscape, the home's informal entrance leads visitors down a rustic path of old railway sleepers and underneath a jasmine-entwined pergola. "In spring, the perfume is incredible," says Beryl.

**DISPLAY {below}** In an artful display, a mask from the Timbuktu To Kathmandu gallery, one of many Owen collects, is paired with a timber sculpture from Add+ Warehouse.

**SHOWER {below right}** The wet zone is quite simple, featuring little more than a pair of showerheads, floor-to-ceiling white brick tiles and terracotta tiles underfoot.



**POOL {above}** The pool, nestled among the trees, is a secluded place to cool off after a stint working in the garden. Owen landscaped it with a mix of Australian natives, birds' nest ferns, tiger grass and lomandras. Inspired by the sculptural qualities of the ash, the tabletops are adorned in miniature versions in the form of bonsai. "We have three bonsai, two ficus and one bougainvillea from our son's business, Bonsai Culture," says Owen.

**STUDY {left}** As part of the redesign, a pop-out office with shelving and a floating desk was created along the bridge. Overlooking the tree and the pool, it's an inspiring, light-filled place to work.

## colour & materials

**1 Timber batten stain** Sikkens 'Cetol HLS' stain in Ebony, \$39.70/litre, With The Grain Timber Floors.

**2 Interior paint** Bondcote in Donkey Grey, \$73.50/3.5kg (comes in powdered form), Porter's Paints.

**3 Interior flooring** Select grade blackbutt timber, from \$74.10/square metre, With The Grain Timber Floors. **Stockists, page 190** Due to the printing process, actual colours may vary.

**CONTACTS:** Bark Design Architects, (07) 5471 0340, barkdesign.com.au; With The Grain Timber Floors, (07) 5450 7288.