



step inside this home!

# for the kids

It was a case of practice makes perfect for this couple who has built the dream family home

WORDS **CARRIE HUTCHINSON** STYLING **EMMA O'MEARA**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **NIKOLE RAMSAY**

STYLING ASSISTANCE: KIRRILLY HOLMES, FLOWERS (THROUGHOUT HOME), SHE'S A WILDFLOWER, 0408 471 361, PLANTS (THROUGHOUT HOME), PIPPI'S PLANTS, @PIPPISPLANTS ON INSTAGRAM, ISA FORM CUSHIONS, NERIDA HANSEN PRINT & TEXTILES, NERIDAHANSEN.COM.AU.

**OUTDOORS** Owners Matt and Lauren use this covered spotted gum deck area for daily meals and entertaining. The kitchen's marble benchtop extends outside while the heating lamps and skylights inset into the panelled ceiling combat changes in the weather.

## cheat sheet

**Who lives here?** Lauren and Matt Wilson, their sons, Teddy, 4; Henry, 3; and Jimmy, 8 months; and Elvis the kelpie. Matt runs Built By Wilson, a company that specialises in architectural homes; and Lauren, a lawyer, is helping out while she's on maternity leave.

**Style of house:** A '30s Californian bungalow in Victoria's Newtown, that has had an extra level and an extension added.

 The renovation took seven months and cost \$450k. "The big costs were the oak flooring, cabinetry and kitchen appliances," says Lauren.  




**DINING AREA (left)** A Ubabub *Sundae* framed print contrasts with the timber dining table designed and made by Matt. **KITCHEN** Lightly 'Godfrey' copper lamps, American oak cabinetry and benchtops in Carrara marble and Boss Architectural 'Ciment' concrete bring a tactile interest to this expansive space.

**B**eing parents to three small boys adds a whole extra layer of problem-solving to a renovation. For Lauren and Matt Wilson, it was definitely a case of knowing what was in store when they started working on their house in the Victorian suburb of Newtown 17 months ago. The pair had renovated a house just a couple of streets away, but sold it to friends who had said they would buy it if Lauren and Matt were ever interested in selling – “builders are always interested in selling!” says Lauren with a laugh.

During settlement, Lauren and Matt drove around the neighbourhood and left letters in the mailboxes of houses they thought looked like a place they might like to live. From three notes came two phone calls, and they decided on the cute Californian bungalow with its brick piers and eaves.

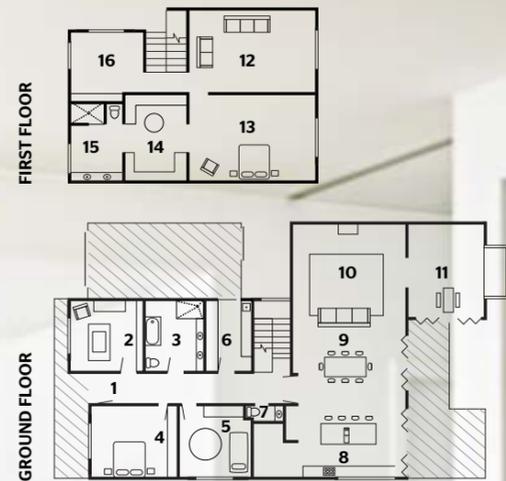
“Our last house had lots of white, including white furniture, then we had two boys and decided that might not be a great palette,” explains Lauren, who was pregnant with Jimmy for the duration of the renovation. “We wanted this one to be a lot warmer, so we went for timber and marble. We have lots of family around here, so we didn’t want anything to be too precious.” The solid American oak flooring was an easy choice for this house. “We used it so that we could sand it back if we ever need to,” says Lauren. “It’s been incredibly hard-wearing, which is perfect for a house full of boys.”

Matt and Lauren admit there’s not much left of the original house: the two front rooms remain, but almost everything else is new. Important, though, was the retention of one particular feature: the eaves on the outside of the house that Matt then carried right



Lauren and Matt had the foresight to maximise the view from the glass splashback to give their kitchen a green element. Jamie Durie 'Vertical Gardenwall' blankets were screwed to the fence to create lush scenery.

OPPOSITE: ON CREDEZA: VASE, ARRO HOME, ARROHOME.COM; ARROWS, MINERAL AND MATTER, MINERALANDMATTER.COM; POT, HAVE YOU MET MISS JONES, HAVEYOUETMISSJONES.COM.AU; THIS PAGE: BLUE BOWL, FREEDOM, FREEDOM.COM.AU



- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Entry         | 9. Dining area     |
| 2. Jimmy's room  | 10. Living area    |
| 3. Bathroom      | 11. Playroom       |
| 4. Guest bedroom | 12. Parent retreat |
| 5. Boys' bedroom | 13. Master bedroom |
| 6. Laundry       | 14. Walk-in robe   |
| 7. WC            | 15. Ensuite        |
| 8. Kitchen       | 16. Study          |

**LIVING AREA** A custom sofa with timber legs from Banksia Lounges in Geelong is a great comfort and style choice, complementing the curved-back '170' timber chair by Takahashi Asako from Feelgood Designs. A mint green Kip & Co velvet cushion and 'Scamp' marble-topped coffee table from Blu Dot are tactile additions.

around the house and to the garden shed. "I wanted the outside to be a complete representation of what was here," he says. "I didn't want to change any of the outside style elements and once I started going down that path, there was no turning back. It took three or four guys a total of four weeks to finish."

As the backyard wasn't huge, the couple decided to build another storey, adding the master bedroom, a walk-through robe, ensuite, study and retreat on the upper level. An open-plan living space and playroom was added to the back of the home. The original ceiling height of three metres was kept throughout the living area, deck and backyard, all of which adds to a sense of space.

Importantly, every decision made was one the couple talked through themselves. "We paid \$1800 for a drafts person to draw up our rough sketched plan," says Matt. "Then we determined all the design elements along the way together, like the timber sliding doors and skylights in the kitchen and bathroom. Being conscious of budget and having the experience of previous renovations, we worked together to include the things that we both wanted."

The kitchen, in particular, is packed with beautiful details: a window splashback behind the stovetop that overlooks a lush vertical garden; a Carrara marble countertop that extends out into the covered barbecue area and up beside the windows; and a trio of hand-beaten copper pendant lights floating above a hefty poured concrete island benchtop.

And, in complete opposition to their previous all-white home, Lauren has added splashes of colour through pieces of furniture and art. "At the moment, I seem to be buying everything in pink," she says, "which may just be because I have three sons and I'm trying to channel some feminine energy!"

There are also plenty of child-friendly choices, including a commercial plastic carpet in the playroom and one of the couple's favourite features, a huge timber-framed glass door that separates the playroom from the rest of the living area. Wherever you are in the downstairs area though, you can see the kids whether they're watching TV in the living area or playing in the yard.

Most of all, everything in the house has been carefully thought out by the designing duo. "I'm always encouraging my clients to take part in the design and interiors of their house," says Matt. "Whether they use an interior designer, architect or not, it's important that your house and space has a sense of you. On this project, we managed everything ourselves and that's one thing that we can easily say: we have done it exactly the way we wanted to do it. It reflects our family and how we live perfectly." **LD**

For more on Matt's business, Built By Wilson, visit [builtbywilson.com](http://builtbywilson.com).



The timber-framed door slides across to separate the living area from the playroom and neatly frames the shelving in doing so (above). "There were many jokes about it being the biggest door in the world. It's close to 300 kilos, but it works," says Matt.

ARTWORK (THIS PAGE, TOP) UP ROSE A CLOUD PRINT BY MICHAEL MUIR

“We have done it exactly the way we wanted to do it – the house reflects our family”

MATT WILSON, HOMEOWNER



**PLAYROOM** The Bolon carpet tiles from The Andrews Group have withstood the daily rigours of three lively boys. “They’re made of vinyl, so you can vacuum or mop them,” says Lauren. “The kids eat in there and it doesn’t matter if they spill food.” The floor’s geometric pattern combines with the ‘Babanees’ table setting from Green Cathedral and bright Eloyink prints to form an inviting kid-friendly zone.



OPPOSITE: ISA FORM PATTERNED CUSHIONS AND FLOOR CUSHION, NERIDA HANSEN PRINT & TEXTILES, NERIDAHANSEN.COM.AU. THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT: FOX CUSHION AND CHECK BLANKET, OUCH CLOTHING, CUCHCLOTHING.COM.AU, MILK & SUGAR RUG, GOOSE, GOOSESTORE.COM.AU. BOTTOM RIGHT: NINHO TOWELS AND TIENKO TOWEL STAND, AMPERSAND, 0425 285 196



### lessons learnt

“If I could go back, I’d add 20 per cent to what we thought everything would cost as a contingency”

LAUREN WILSON, HOMEOWNER

**Biggest mistake:** “We don’t feel like we made any, except probably when it came to budget,” says Lauren. “But that happens – once you’re on the path, you’re on it. If I could go back, I’d add 20 per cent to what we thought everything would cost as a contingency.”

**Best advice:** “We put the lawn down and did quite a lot of the backyard before we started on the renovation,” says Lauren. “In the last house, we ended up with a mud pit in the backyard and you don’t need that with three little kids so, basically we started out the back and worked through to the front. Having a separate playroom off the living space worked perfectly in our last house – you want to be able to confine toys to one space.”

**Best surprise:** “The door that separates the playroom from the living area, and pushes back to frame the shelves. I showed Matt a photograph on Pinterest and said, ‘Can we do this?’ says Lauren. “The kids can be in that room making a lot of noise and we can just close them off. It blocks them off but you can still see them,” adds Matt.



**BOYS’ ROOM (above left)** Teddy sits at the top bunk of this bed from Domayne. **JIMMY’S ROOM (above)** An Ikea cot and sideboard from Milkcart continue the timber theme. The chair and prints are from Middle Of Nowhere. **BATHROOM** The details shine here with floor tiles from Academy Tiles and the Stephanie Ng Design ‘Scoop’ pendant light.





**bright idea**

As this bedroom is quite large, Lauren and Matt were keen for a feature element, creating this American oak bed-nook with a window for natural light.



**MASTER BEDROOM** A Kip & Co cushion and blanket, as well as a Lola Donoghue artwork, bring lively tones to this calm zone. Soft grey forms, such as the lamp from David Moreland Lighting and the BoConcept chair, add sophistication. **FACADE (opposite)** The facade's charm has been restored with a newly painted blue door that offsets the brick piers.



3 GREAT FINDS AND PAINT PALETTE: PRODUCT SOURCING: JOSEPH GARDNER. PAINT COLOUR MAY VARY ON APPLICATION. OPPOSITE: RUG, KIP & CO, KIPANDCO.NET.AU. THIS PAGE STROLLER, BUGABOO, BUGABOO.COM. BLANKET, KIP & CO, AS BEFORE



**style is child's play**

Here's how to choose a pram that's both practical, but also driven by design. Gabrielle Kirson from Bugaboo gives us three key elements to consider.

**Lifestyle** Think about your day-to-day routine. How will it fit in your car? (Have you checked the measurements of your boot against the size of the pram when it's folded down?) Will it fit through your front door and can it be easily parked inside?

**Functionality** What functions and accessories will you need? A capsule for transfer, or replacing parts for different uses down the track as your child grows up and your needs change? Think long term - the best choice is one you'll want to keep for a while.

**Fabric** The fabric detail is the fun bit - it's where you can choose a pop of colour or beautiful detail print - but also think about how you'll use it. Strollers get dirty, so it's important it can be easily maintained.

**COME ON IN!** Thanks to Bugaboo, you can take a video tour of this modern family home. Our editor-in-chief Claire, market editor Joseph and blogger Rebecca Judd will be your guides. Visit [insideout.com.au](http://insideout.com.au) to see the video.

**3 GREAT FINDS**

**1** 'On the Dot' rug, \$1119, Kip & Co, [kipandco.net.au](http://kipandco.net.au).



**2**

Lock Ring No 8 abstract giclee print by Lola Donoghue, \$378.90, [loladonoghue.etsy.com](http://loladonoghue.etsy.com).



**3**

Bend Goods 'Lucy' chair in Copper (indoor use only), \$550, Own World, [ownworld.com.au](http://ownworld.com.au).



**paint palette**

'4 Seasons' gloss exterior paint in Ocean Charm, \$60.90/4L, British Paints, [britishpaints.com.au](http://britishpaints.com.au).



Low sheen acrylic paint in Snow White, \$43.20/1L, Porter's Paints, [porterspains.com](http://porterspains.com).