



Home straight

When the cost of their curvy first choice proved prohibitive, this family homed in on the design details that matter

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Television commercials can be tiresome, but not if your pride and joy is featured in one of them, as this Corinda house is set to be in a few months' time. Designed by Knowlman McDonald McMillan, the two-storey riverside home was also the winner of the National Residential Master Builder of the Year accolade in the 2009 Master Builders Awards.

Despite the attention, the owners remain pragmatic. They want their house to look good, yes, but it also has to work like a well-oiled machine.

"Our brief to the architect was that it has to look good and work for a family," says Sue, one of the owners. "So I went through what we do every day as a family with our two young boys, aged 10 and 11. And during the design process, we were also trying to look forward so that the house is not set up just for little kids either."

Right now, the lifestyle map charts the daily routine of work and school. Once the car pulls into the garage after 3pm on a weekday, the boys have no excuse for leaving their bags and shoes scattered on a trail of destruction from the front door. Hats and shoes go in a cupboard in the garage. Bags are stowed under a bench in the scullery and school notes are put on the wall above that bench.

Although there is a cooktop in the kitchen, the scullery is where all the action happens so the formal kitchen is left neat and tidy.

"I can prep dinner while the boys are doing their homework. For a dinner party, I can prep a first course and have it plated up on the bench in the scullery and know that the front kitchen

still looks good," Sue says, clearly proud of the fine tuning that has gone into the layout of this space.

"When the boys are older and not doing their homework in the scullery anymore, I can still use the bench as kitchen workspace," adds Sue, who admits that the kitchen, dining and living area formed "the money pit" part of the house.

"All along, our brief had been that this is where we are going to live so let's put most of our money into this area," she says.

This meant using expensive, frameless bi-fold doors in this area only, although they would have liked them in the formal living room as well. And that wasn't the only compromise made in the year of design to achieve the three-bedroom house on 3632sq m.

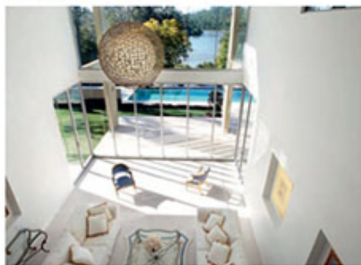
"Initially, the whole house was going to be curved - all curved glass and a curved pool," Sue says without a trace of bitterness about what they had to forego to stay within budget.

"But that was what was so good about having architects and builders in the one company, as Knowlman McDonald McMillan does, because I didn't have to wait to go to tender to find out the building costs for our curved idea.

"When they came back with the first quote, I thought, 'where's all the money gone?'"

"The team explained that curves are expensive. We got a lot more bang for our buck by straightening everything."

Even with the curves gone, some of the requested features, such as the glazing, called for expensive solutions. In the formal living room, 3m-high retractable glass doors sit



OPEN MINDED ... natural light and river views add to the house's appeal. Photographs // Richard Waugh

beneath a 5.5m-wide window with six panes of glass weighing 120kg each. Such a structural arrangement called for some ingenious engineering as the architect had never worked with the doors before.

The result, though, is worth it as the views

and light achieved with the glazing make the space what it is.

ARCHITECT // Ross McMillan, Knowlman

McDonald McMillan, ph: 3378 1155

BUILDER // Knowlman McDonald McMillan

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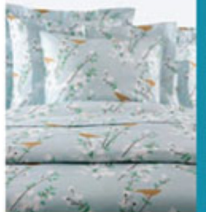
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