

Chef's special

Design with the lot passes a Bardon family's taste test

A shared love of food and a fondness for cooking outdoors inspired the alterations and additions to this Bardon Queenslander. For the owners and their three young children, it was always going to be all about the kitchen.

"We had endless discussions about family dynamics and about how we all gather in the kitchen. That's where our family life happens," the owner says.

Before work began, family life was limited to a modest kitchen with limited natural light, part of an extension completed in the 1980s. Even worse, the house's best, northeasterly, aspect was given over to the bathroom and laundry, severing any connection between living spaces and the garden. Architect Matt Kennedy, of Arcke, came on board to orchestrate the renovation and to design new areas for living and cooking.

"The house has a great aspect so it was a no-brainer to open up to the backyard," Matt says. The living spaces sit beneath a soaring skillion roof. Below is a large opening to the terrace and garden.

"There was a lot of consideration for solar penetration and of the sun moving through the building at different times of year," Matt says.

Part of the new addition's success lies in its connection with the level backyard.



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"We are lucky in that this slope is opposite to lots of slopes in Brisbane (falling from the rear boundary down to the street) and it has a flat backyard. We wanted to make the most of that," the owner says.

The kitchen is designed to work in tandem with a striking pizza oven. An extended service bench reaches from inside all the way out to the oven and a double-sided window seat provides a place for family and friends to relax and watch the cooks at work. The pizza oven is an impressive structure. A commanding ziggurat with a domed brick interior, it provides a visual anchor and functions as both oven and fireplace for the home.

In the centre of the living space is the dining area. Next to the large sliding doors, it has the sense of being on a verandah.

A treasured piece of furniture – a table originally from Gympie Hospital – takes centre stage in the open-plan space.

"It was always going to stay, so we wanted to make sure that it fitted well in the space," Matt says. "The kitchen table is the gathering space for the house."

On the eastern side of the extension is the living and sitting room, cradled by a custom-built joinery wall housing bookshelves and artwork.

"A lot of it was trying to balance a really generous space like this with high ceilings with some smaller, more intimate spaces that are still generously proportioned," Matt says.

"These little nooks and crannies can help to break up what can be an overwhelming space."

A sensitivity for the historical aspects of architecture and an aptitude for using recycled materials are trademarks of Matt's work.

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"We reused the decking timbers from the original house in the new design," he says.

"You can't recreate that flawed character in materials and that is where the beauty is – in those imperfections of the brick or in the knots and nail holes in the timber."

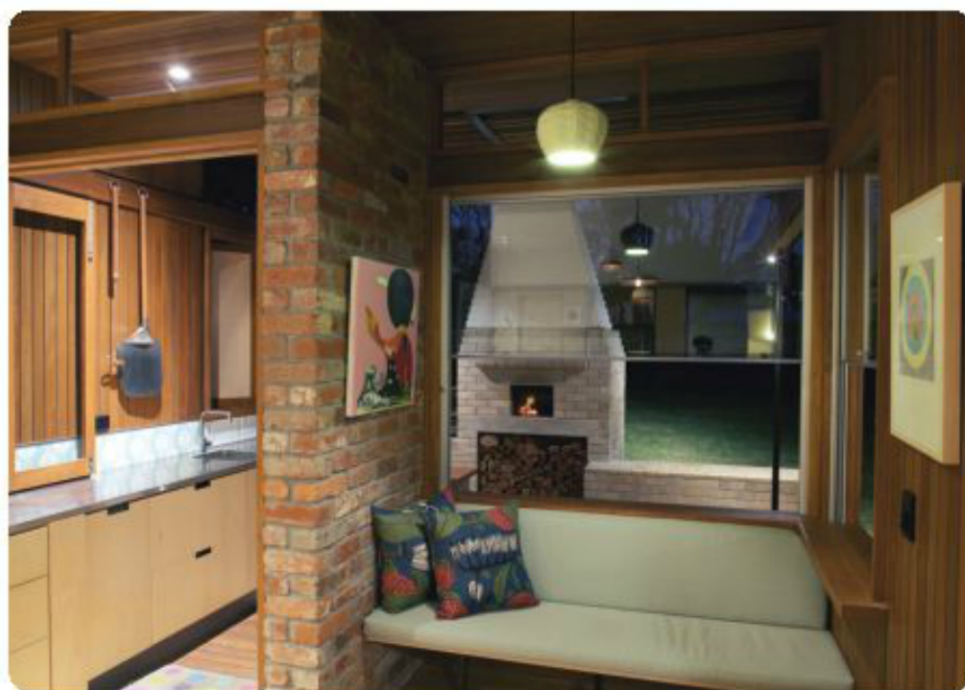
Plywood ceilings and joinery, combined with tiles of blue and green, bring character and interest to the space. Recycled brickwork, used both inside and outside, adds another layer of texture and variety.

"It feels very warm because of the timber," the owner says.

"What I liked when we moved in, is that it immediately felt lived in, and not precious."

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KITCHEN RULES ... Cooking and eating take centre stage. **PHOTOGRAPHS** • Matt Kennedy



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