

Out of office

For one Canberra family, creating the perfect work/life balance was high on the agenda. And they found the solution at home.

STORY & STYLING MEREDITH McKENDRY | PHOTOGRAPHY MAREE HOMER

This is the life

With two young girls and a dog, robust, easy-care materials were always top of the shopping list when this family was designing their dream house. "Easy living, low-maintenance, love it," says homeowner Tina. Today, the home is a sophisticated mix of the grown up and the family friendly. The playroom, for example, has a large corner window, so goings on can be viewed from elsewhere in the house. "I can be in the kitchen and see into the playroom," says Tina. "It's great."

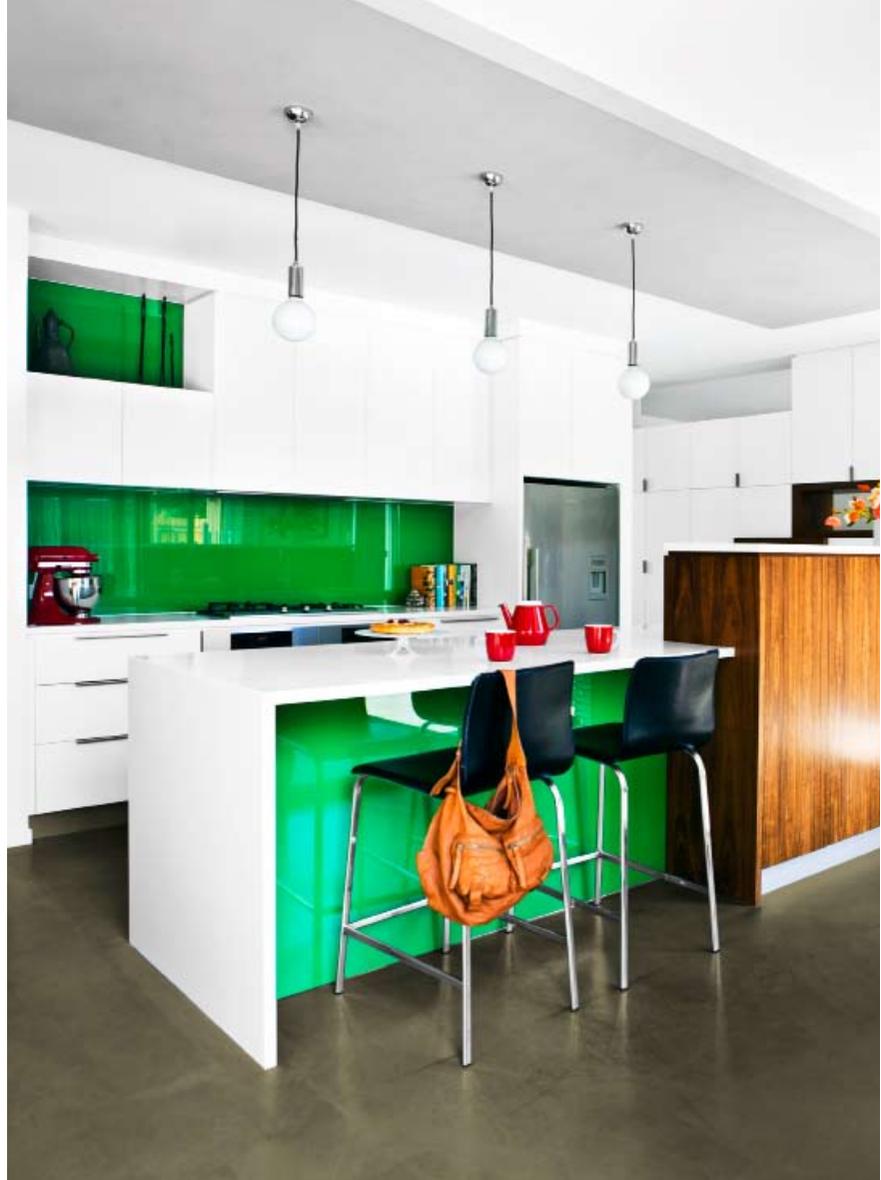


Four-year-old Ella enjoys playtime in the garden of her family's new home. Pool by Aurora Landscaping and Pools. Pool fence designed by Adam Hobill. For Where to Buy, see page 210.

‘This is a home we wanted to give ourselves the opportunity to grow into over 15 or 20 years.’ ADAM



Adam prepares a treat for Ella. Benchtops in Laminex Freestyle in Ice. Pendant lights bought in Adelaide. Appliances from Miele. Joinery by Braithwaite Innovative Joinery. **OPPOSITE LEFT** Cut-outs in the partition wall separating the kitchen and dining room ensure the cook is privy to the action. The dining setting was bought while on a family holiday in Noosa. Prints from Born Vintage Collectables & Old Wares. Pendant light from Home by Creations. **OPPOSITE RIGHT** The slick kitchen is the most-used room in the house, says Tina. Stools from Freedom. For Where to Buy, see page 210.



Adam Hobill designs other people's houses for a living. So when it came time to build his home in Canberra's leafy inner suburbs, he was understandably excited and energised by the process.

Loving the idea of living and working in the same place, Adam, a building designer, created a house large enough to incorporate five bedrooms, separate living and dining rooms and a self-contained home office.

"It was great to design something for ourselves without too many constraints," says Adam, who lives here with his wife Tina and daughters Ella, four, and Ruby, now one. "This is a home we wanted to give ourselves the opportunity to grow into over 15 or 20 years. And working from home really works for me and for us as a family."

As well as being a comfortable family home, the house is a showpiece for Adam's building design business and clients are often shown through for inspiration.

His signature style is sleek and modern with a variety of textures including timber, concrete, steel and glass. "All the materials are very raw and natural," says Adam. "The intention is that the blackbutt cladding [on the exterior] will naturally weather to grey. It all ties together nicely and should improve with age."

The home is organised into two wings – the playroom, guestroom and a bathroom are in one (to the north of the entrance); Adam's office, the main bedroom suite, dining room, kitchen and living room in the other. The layout is designed so that each room (except the bathrooms) has views to the pool or garden. >

FIRST FLOOR





< Upstairs are bedrooms for Ella and Ruby, plus a second guestroom for when their large extended family visits from interstate.

After living in an open-plan house where the noise carried, Adam and Tina wanted the rooms to be defined but still connected to the rest of the home. To achieve this, the playroom has a corner window so that it feels linked to the other rooms, and the dining room is open on one side with a timber cut-out in the wall dividing it from the kitchen.

"We wanted a dining room where, when it's family time, you're not tempted to eat while watching television," says Tina. "But at dinner parties, you can be in the kitchen and still have a conversation with someone in the dining room."

Ceiling-height windows maximise light and space and, keeping the focus on the outdoors, the colour scheme is grey and white, warmed up with timber furniture, spotted-gum panelling and splashes of vivid colour, especially green. "We chose green because no one else was using it at the time," says Tina.

The resort-style trappings – luxurious swimming pool, ample lawn for the girls to play on and a courtyard area for bikes and scooters – were inspired by frequent trips to Noosa, Queensland. "My aim was to create a holiday lifestyle at home," says Adam. >

Colour palette



Dulux Basil (kitchen, stairs)



Dulux White On White
(walls)



Porter's Paints
Shell Grey (living room,
kitchen accent)



Dulux Kiwi Fruit
(children's bathroom)



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes will allow.

Tina with baby Ruby.

OPPOSITE TOP Adam, Tina and Ella (with Chilli the spoodle) share a joke in the living room. Heirloom chairs. Cushion on chair from The Bodhi Leaf.

Sofas from Beyond Furniture. Florence Broadhurst cushions (on sofas) from Inside Story. Polished-concrete blocks (feature wall) from Adbri Masonry. Mirror from Ikea. Fireplace from Jetmaster. Rug from In Rugs. **OPPOSITE**

BOTTOM In the main bedroom, a paper lantern from Ikea leaves the bedside table free for fresh flowers and ornaments. Bed and bedside table from David Jones. Bedlinen from Bed Bath N' Table. **For Where to Buy, see page 210.**



< With a fire pit, vintage wire chairs and a long timber table, the courtyard is perfect for entertaining and is used throughout the year. Adam designed an outdoor kitchen, complete with built-in barbecue, sink, bar fridge and storage for tableware, so there's no need to use the inside kitchen at all when they have guests.

Sometimes people who work from home have a hard time switching off, but Adam says he finds it easy to maintain a healthy work/life balance. "It's brilliant. I can knock off work and be standing at the barbecue with a beer in my hand three minutes later," he says. "Where else can you do that?" **H&G**

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THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Paper butterflies from Melanie Swan Designs flutter across the wall in Ella's bedroom. Bed and bedside table from Domayne. In the playroom, a large storage unit from Ikea contains all the girls' toys and books. Zesty Dulux Kiwi Fruit is used on the cabinetry to liven up the girls' bathroom. Basin from Villeroy & Boch. Tapware from Rogerseller. Bath from Reece. Tiles from Rivoland Tiles. **OPPOSITE** The courtyard is designed for relaxing. Chairs from Born Vintage Collectables & Old Wares. Fire pit from Rodney's Plants Plus. Clock from Bliss Garden & Giftware. For Where to Buy, see page 210.

Save & splurge

Since they were building their 'forever' home, Adam and Tina were happy to include features they would love for a lifetime. "The pool was essential for me," says Adam. "Christmas in Canberra is hot!" For Tina, the sofa in the living room was "a little expensive, but a must-have. We'd spent years looking for the right sofa," she says. The couple also invested in solar panels and in-slab heating, features that will pay for themselves over time. Adam says that using concrete, in all its forms throughout, was very cost effective.

