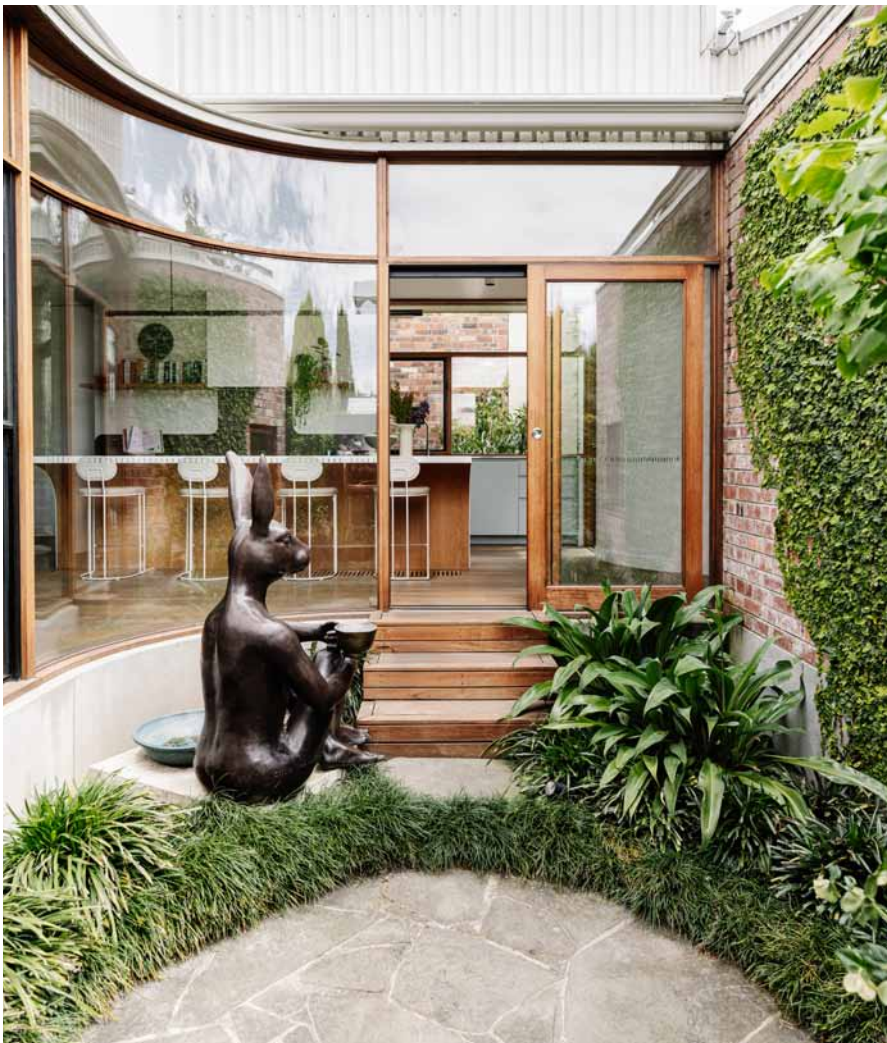




Outdoor rooms provide further places for the family to enjoy their home, both together and alone



THOUGHTFUL INTIMACY

Thoughtful design creates a series of intimate spaces within this home, promoting meaningful connection for the family within

Words Lauren Clarke Photography Marnie Hawson



A whimsical stone path leads to the studio out the back of the property, which shall eventually be used as a retreat space for the children



“The materials chosen are warm, natural and inviting, avoiding anything overly glossy or trendy. We’ve selected timeless colours that harmonise with the garden and landscaping”

— Emilio Fuscaldo

Looking at the old and new photos of Chatterbox House, one could be forgiven for thinking they are entirely different properties. This home in Fitzroy North has a fabulous location and sunny north-facing backyard — but the interior used to feel sparse and didn’t meet the future needs of the homeowners, who wanted to create a home that would suit their growing family.

Enter Emilio Fuscaldo of Nest Architects and Silvia Roldan of Studio Esar, the architect and interior designer who transformed this home into a character-filled dwelling that will delight the owners for many years to come. “The condition of the existing dwelling was very poor and dated. While the original bungalow had some lovely features, it had been poorly extended, leaving the house cold, draughty and dark,” Emilio says. “Although the block provided wonderful access to a generous rear yard, the connection to this space was severely compromised.”

A design solution for this was created by dividing the house into distinct areas with internal light courts. “This allowed light and air to flow through the length of the house while creating separate zones and rooms. We aimed to avoid a simple, large open-plan layout, recognising that our clients desired curated spaces. They wanted the house to tell a story and gradually reveal itself,

A streamlined kitchen draws the homeowner outdoors, making a feature of the garden beyond



The kitchen's design is simple, with streamlined under-counter storage and display shelves overhead, allowing the family to inject their own sense of changing style

ed's fave

THE USE OF
NATURAL LIGHT
IN THE HOME IS
SECOND TO NONE,
WITH THIS CURVED
WALL OF GLAZING
AN ABSOLUTE
HERO



The window seat directs focus to the yard, enhancing the connection to nature

“Our clients loved blue and green, so when creating the palette for furniture and styling, we selected colours that complemented and contrasted these two primary colours”

— Silvia Roldan

rather than being viewed at once,” Emilio says. “Similarly, we positioned the living room to feel nestled into the site, instead of spilling into the backyard. This design approach created framed views of the yard, making it more significant in the overall layout.”

This bold challenge of contemporary trends that favour open-plan living has not only created a series of intimate spaces that foster connection throughout the home, but has also resulted in a surprising yet satisfying enhanced connection to nature. “The design deliberately avoids a simplistic, seamless threshold between the interior and exterior, opting instead for defined boundaries that help integrate the house into the garden. This thoughtful delineation fosters a harmonious relationship



Walnut used in the dining room provides sharp contrast to the oak featured elsewhere

“They are not merely basic outdoor areas; instead, they function as inviting rooms in their own right. These courtyards can host lush greenery, comfortable seating and even decorative elements, creating an oasis”
— Emilio Fuscald

with nature, inviting the outside in while simultaneously embracing the immersive beauty of the surrounding landscape,” Emilio explains.

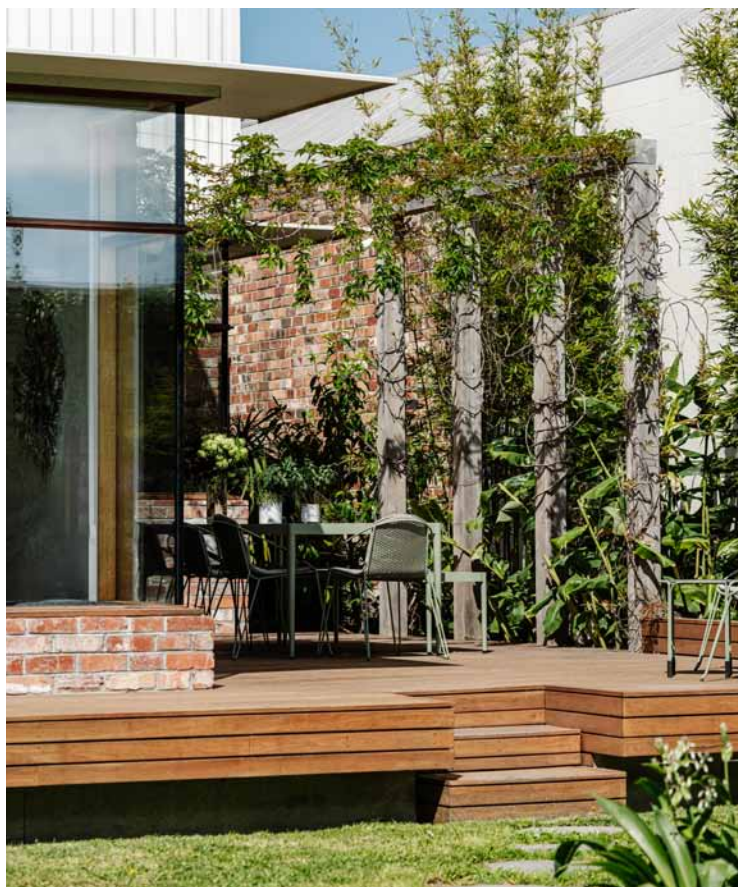
This relationship is further enhanced by the furniture choices from Studio Esar, which add an additional layer and element to the overall design to create a unified and holistic effect. “When working in spaces where there is an integration between the interiors and the surrounding landscape, designer elements can be integrated to create a harmonious environment,” Silvia says.

This is evident in the use of natural materials throughout the home. Oak was used in a lot of material finishes, however, when the homeowners were seeking a different timber finish to provide a sharp contrast, Silvia suggested a warmer timber, with walnut in the dining room and some softer muted lime-washed timbers in the living room.

When it came to the colour scheme, Silvia was guided by the homeowners. “Our clients loved blue and green so when creating the palette for furniture and styling, we selected colours that complemented and contrasted these two primary colours,” Silvia says. “The lavender rug and green sofa are a fab combination in the living room, as is the cactus sculpture, which has become a talking point for the clients’ friends.”

Plants are scattered throughout the home to further celebrate the homeowners’ love of nature, as well as some of their existing vintage or eclectic furniture pieces to create a look that is bespoke to the family.

This reuse of existing pieces wasn’t the only environmental consideration made during the build. A 6kW roof-top solar PV was incorporated, as well as heat-pump hot water, double-glazed windows and a 5000-litre water tank connected to the toilets and garden taps.



we love
THE WAY THE HOME FRAMES THE OUTDOORS, INVITING THE FAMILY TO VIEW NATURE'S BEAUTY INSTEAD OF SPILLING OUT INTO IT



And the garden itself is an area of the home worth celebrating. Verdant vines, grasses and shrubs skirt the yard and provide valuable screening, while still capturing that sense of wildness. A lush green carpet of grass coats the ground, with a whimsical stone path running through it and leading to another of the home's heroes — the pool room. "The separate pool room at the rear of the block would have to be our favourite space," Silvia enthuses. "There's an abundance of colour in this room, from the pale-blue joinery to the dark-green rug and the myriad rainbow-coloured scatter cushions. The bar table and stools are a fun addition and add to the playful ambience of this space."

Silvia and her team also updated the built-in bench seat with some fun scatter cushions in joyous colours, as this room will eventually be where the teenage children have friends over and hang out. There's also a boucle textured rug, which not only looks fantastic but is also made for the outdoors — meaning it can be hosed down outside if needed. This is yet another consideration to detail that ensures this home's renovation will be loved for many years to come. **HD**
studioesar.com.au; nestarchitects.com.au



The tile work in the bathroom adds subtle interest to the space