

# Room service

A smart renovation has this family feeling like pampered guests in their own home

Remodelling a house can unlock its potential, but what if the alterations and additions also uncover a hidden side to the renovator's personality? Take the owners of this Holland Park house as an example. There was no question that they loved entertaining friends and family but, perhaps oddly for residents of the subtropics, they never considered themselves "deck people".

That was until they renovated the house they had lived in for seven years and architect Tania Coward designed the "bonus" of a rear veranda on the second of the two storeys. Now it's one of many spots in the house they love.

"What is now the formal dining room used to be the living room and the only room we could entertain in," says Mark who, with his wife Carolyn, embarked on the renovation in stages, starting in 2006. Their brief to Tania asked for

a more practical house and, considering Mark conducts his guitar teaching business, Mark Joe Hope Music, from home, they have achieved this and more. Mark says everyday life now has a touch of luxury.

"We often say about the house, 'We like this hotel,'" he says. And like any good hotel, this one has a pool, a playground for the kids - Mark and Carolyn's two boys love their art and craft bench in the laundry - and a terrace where the house band stages musical soirées. Recently, Mark held a jazz day for his students and music buddies on the poolside terrace, which is covered by the upstairs deck and doubles as a waiting area for students before they have their lessons in the soundproof teaching studio.

"The good thing about the terrace," says Tania, "is that it has an entry from the street, so when visitors arrive they don't have to go anywhere near the private, family area upstairs."



WE OFTEN SAY ABOUT THE HOUSE WE LIKE THIS HOTEL



In that family zone, the bedrooms run down one side of the house. There's Carolyn and Mark's bedroom and ensuite at the rear, then the guest bedroom, the main bathroom and at the front, the boys' room. This bedroom has a refreshing outlook - through a large, fixed pane flanked on both sides by an awning window - to the front garden where there's a small courtyard and the barbecue.

The formal dining room opens to an enclosed veranda at the front of the house, where boxes of toys and a chalkboard easel are the telltale signs of another playroom for the boys.

"The kids, like us adults, actually enjoy having their own spaces they can retreat to, such as the art and craft area downstairs. They don't always want to be hanging around us," says Mark.

With an extra 177sq m of floor space post-renovation, there is more than enough room to play.

Tania says one of the tricky issues in getting the additional space was designing the roof line for the extension. "It's a tiled roof, which can be quite hard to extend, especially in this older, pitched roof style," she says.

While it's a challenge to alter a character home, Tania relishes working with the detail and finishes in these types of houses.

"Look at those cornices, they're just gorgeous," she says with clear delight at how well the carpenter has seamlessly matched the original pattern in the new areas. Modern updates, however, save the renovation from becoming twee. The internal staircase, for example, is a stunning, minimalistic feature with windows on one side of the void providing a view to the



DECKED OUT ... the new look features extra outdoor living areas. PHOTOGRAPHS • Richard Waugh



pool while allowing breezes and natural light to enter both upper and lower levels.

When in the pool, Mark says he and Carolyn love looking up at that side of the house because of the way Tania has stepped the exterior walls, creating niches that provide extra surface area for fenestration.

"It's not a big, blank wall, like you would see on a poorly designed block of flats," says Mark. "It makes for a nice vista while you are relaxing in the pool." Seems hotel management is very pleased indeed.

ARCHITECT • Tania Coward, ph: 3892 3449. BUILDER • Terry O'Connor Builders, ph: 3252 9900.

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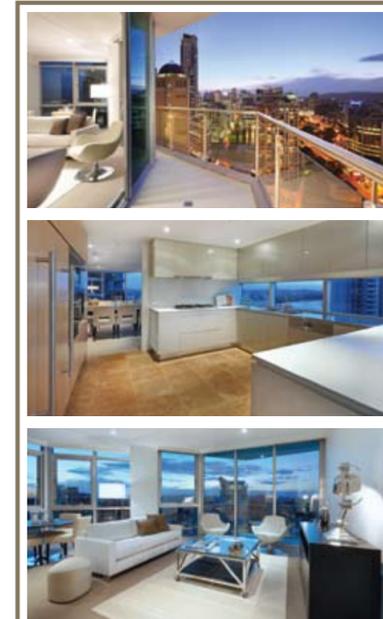
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