

# ON A MISSION

Family life spills outdoors in this breezy Melbourne home

Words Louise Smithers Photography Tatjana Plitt



Pops of black modernise the kitchen



## THE SOCIAL AREAS ARE “CARVED OUT” OF ONE FLUID SPACE, MADE DISTINCT BY STEP-DOWNS AND GREY HAND-PAINTED CEILINGS

Courtyard Deck House comprises the restoration and addition of a Spanish Mission-style home in Hampton. Sited at the front of the block, the home was all cream bricks and terracotta roof (in other words, it was well past its expiration date and needed a facelift). It boasted a large north-facing rear garden and an add-on laundry and sunroom that was detached from the outdoors.

Enamoured with the coastal site and local climate, the young family who owned the property handed over a refreshing, if unusual, brief. Rather than a list of rooms and spaces, they provided an insight into their family life, how they related to the existing house and site, and the kind of environment they would like to live in.

A trio of sons under eight years old meant the new design needed to provide interactive elements, like a racetrack and native garden. Spoiler alert: the racetrack

didn't make the final cut! At its core, the brief called for a “home where the kids could drag the outside inside and always have sticky fingers”.

Flexibility of spaces, connected landscaping that promotes outdoor living and a laid-back beach house aesthetic rounded out the informative brief. “All internal spaces in the new addition have a direct view to the outdoors and the landscape,” says Zoë Geyer, principal architect at ZGA STUDIO. “The addition sits in line with the existing house, and below its terracotta-tiled roofline, so there is no visible change from the street.”

A linking passage stretches from the original house out to the garden, ending with the two-bedroom addition. The new layout has fashioned a central and sheltered area featuring a courtyard deck, a garden deck to the north and an outdoor dining patio. “Sliding glazed doors draw the deck inside, to be used as an extended living space in summer,” states Zoë. “A dining area separates the two wings of the addition, with a combined



Step-downs help define each area

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Outdoor living never looked  
so good, or more convenient

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– Zoë Geyer





Sliding doors provide easy access to the alfresco zones



## ed's fave

### THE STRONG CONNECTION AND EASY ACCESS TO OUTDOOR SPACES

kitchen and living, and kids' bedroom wing on the west." The original sunroom was sacrificed for the sake of a new bathroom and laundry, while the old kitchen has transformed into a library. The design essentially produces two key zones within the house: the original home as a quiet zone and retreat, and the addition and garden beyond as somewhere for family life to unfold. The courtyard deck separates these two zones and provides breathing space, connection to the outdoors and natural light in the new "centre" of the house.

Internally the residence comprises white walls to reflect light, and floor-to-ceiling glass sliding doors to dissolve the boundary between inside and out. The social areas are "carved out" of one fluid space, made distinct by step-downs and grey hand-painted ceilings.



Curves soften the bathroom





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The lower ceiling along the linking passage is painted a light grey, barely discernible from the white walls, but adding to a layering of tones and textures within the spaces. "It was a conscious decision to avoid a stark environment," Zoë explains. "The recycled timber floors and limed timber cabinets create warmth."

Hints of black provide a contemporary edge: a black kicker in the kitchen; black-stained frames to the windows in the living space and children's bedrooms; black framing around the mirrors in the bathroom.

"The experience of being in this house is unique," Zoë reveals. "Each social space has a glass wall that looks out to a different experience of the outdoors: deck, garden, courtyard, patio. The openness of the plan means that at any location in the house you can look through another space and glimpse multiple experiences."

Often overlooked but essential to a functioning family home, outdoor spaces can make or break a home. In this case, the central courtyard deck is the centrepiece connecting old and new, and encouraging external dalliances that will become cherished family memories.

**HD** [zga.com.au](http://zga.com.au)

**OPPOSITE** The kitchen is family-friendly and architecturally stunning