

cheat sheet

Who lives here: Nicole Lucas, a flight attendant; her husband Tim, who has a business manufacturing plumbing supplies; and their two daughters, Charlotte, 16, and Hannah, 14.

Style of house: An old Queensland cottage in Brisbane, transformed into an open three-bedroom home.

🕒 After 12 months of planning and seeking council approval, the build took 15 months.

💰 Nicole and Tim spent around \$1 million on the project.

element of SURPRISE

Thinking outside the box has led to a refined yet relaxed family home that embraces a bold palette

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Curated cool

When the Lucas family moved from the country to a smaller home on the river in Brisbane, they enlisted the help of interior designer Melissa Blight of Twofold Studio. "I didn't want minimal," says homeowner Nicole, "and I wanted to display the blue-and-white china I've collected over the years from Europe and Japan." Melissa and Nicole chose Bonnie And Neil plywood tiles as a colourful backdrop. "The hand-printed tiles give interesting imperfections," says Melissa. A Zuster 'Stella' table and Volker Haug 'Mega Wow' pendant light complete the look.

Tip: Play up the contrast between old and new and make a vintage collection modern with unexpected pattern.



2 mood lighting

The island bench was originally designed to seat two, but Nicole purchased an extra pair of Artek 'K65' chairs to accommodate the whole family, who love sitting near the action. Interior designer Melissa used a timber box feature to lower the high ceiling visually, and added a group of hanging timber 'Bright Beads' pendant lights by Australian design studio Marz Designs for inviting, elegant light. The island benchtop is a Neolith 'Basalt' slab, while the working benchtop and splashback is stainless steel.

Tip: Hang a cluster of pendant lights at different heights in the kitchen as a functional focal point.

3 down to earth

"We decided on a simple, raw palette for the floor, walls and joinery," says Melissa of the living area, which features rich timber cabinetry and door frames. The earthy brick and terracotta accents were driven by the colours in the circular Akira Isogawa rug from Designer Rugs. "The colours add punch and personality to an otherwise restrained palette," says Melissa. A pair of vintage timber and rattan chairs, inherited from Nicole's German grandparents, were re-covered to match the new scheme. They sit alongside the generous Jordan 'Nook' modular sofa in a muted grey.

Tip: Combine neutral tones and textures with warm colour and natural timber to give your space a cosy feel.



 A flexible light, such as the Tolomeo 'Mega' floor lamp from Artemide, is the perfect match for a sectional sofa - just swing the arm where it's needed to illuminate a personalised reading spot. Keep it streamlined with a power outlet set into the floor.



4 open & shut

A mix of open shelving and closed cupboards works well in the bathroom, allowing personal items to be hidden and plenty of room for decoration and display. The signature timber elements contrast with the cool grey tiles and white fixtures. The entire home is designed to be open, with doors used only on the bedrooms and the girls' bathroom. Glass louvres on the tall window open to catch the breeze.

Tip: Use a mix of baskets and vessels as both handy storage and decorative features in exposed shelving.



5 work the room

Owner Tim often works from home at the purpose-built desk, complete with a bright lemon-yellow armchair by Charles and Ray Eames and a Tolomeo 'Basculante' wall light from Artemide. "The joinery was one of the most expensive parts of the project," says Nicole, "but I love the amount of storage we have. This house is smaller than our last one, but I haven't managed to fill all the cupboards yet!" Rather than hide the adjacent laundry from view, Melissa chose beautiful finishes and left the space open to match the home's breezy feel.

Tip: Look for unused areas of your floorplan to fit in a desk and chair. Remember to include multiple power outlets and allow for internet access.

6 high society

In 16-year-old Charlotte's room, the key is flexibility. An IKEA loft bed is set up to give plenty of space for sleepovers, with a daybed made from pallets and a mattress doubling as a hang-out area during the day. A clip-on cage light can be moved as needed and high wall-mounted shelves mean night-time essentials have a safe place to live. On the other side of the room, a built-in desk and cupboards mean mess can be cleared away.

Tip: Double the space in a room with a loft bed, using the area below alternatively as a study. A wall shelf offers storage up high.



7 bathing beauty

Tim and Nicole's ensuite features a spacious shower lined with Sicis mosaic tiles. "I love the beautiful gradated colour tile detail, which isn't immediately obvious when you walk into the bathroom," says Nicole. Perhaps that's because all eyes are on the generous bath perched outside on timber supports with a view of the river. "Planting and screening will grow in, adding further privacy," says Melissa.

Tip: An outdoor tub allows for extra bathroom floor space, but check sight lines from the neighbours' place first!



8 on show

In Nicole's dressing area, built-in cupboards hide away everyday clothes, while necklaces hang from wall hooks and a 'Crystal Bulb' pendant light by British designer Lee Broom adds a refined feel. An Adnet circular mirror with leather strap from Cult balances the wall display. The timber used throughout the house was chosen to match the recycled ironbark in the home's entry, sourced by Tim from the demolition of the old Hornibrook Bridge, a local landmark.

Tip: Display jewellery, scarves or hats on hooks or rails to personalise your space while keeping surfaces clear.

9 the great divide

A wall between Tim and Nicole's bed and the open ensuite is covered in intricate

Mokum 'Antique Lace' wallpaper by Catherine Martin, from Porter's Paints, so no bedhead is needed. "This grounds the bed and provides a focal point in the bedroom," says Melissa. Sheridan bedlinen in calming blues and greys completes the picture, with delicate 'Mega Bulb' pendant lights from Great Dane hanging above

'Habibi' tray tables from Living Edge. *Find out more about Melissa's work at twofoldstudio.com.au.*

Tip: Transform a structural feature into a decorative element by adding a hit of colour or pattern (or both!) 10

