



Gentle touch

Colour can redefine the mood of a room completely. In this home, a neutral background and colourful artwork create a look that's easy to update

A dramatic dash of colour can give an interior a whole new look. But simply painting your walls to match the latest fashions can leave you with an out-of-date interior in no time at all. By introducing colour in more subtle ways, you can create an enduring effect that's easy to change should the mood of a room need revamping.

One method of introducing a moveable feast of colour is through the careful placement of art. With a collection of contemporary Australian art waiting to line the

walls, the owners of this newly completed home requested a design that would help to showcase the works. Architect Caroline Pidcock and interior designer David Swan worked to bring this request to fruition. The design process began with the placement of the home on the site and the development of the relationship the interiors would have to the landscape.

One of the most significant landscaping features is the lap pool that runs 24m down one side of the house. A small semi-circular area halfway down the length of



Above: This informal living and kitchen space occupies one end of a house designed by architect Caroline Pidcock. The house divides formal areas from informal areas, and interior designer David Swan has given each space its own flavour.

Left: This courtyard overlooks the lap pool that runs along one side of the house. As well as providing a sheltered outdoor space, the courtyard lets morning light into the house.



the pool adjoins a courtyard that marks the midpoint of the house. The courtyard cuts into the footprint of the building itself, dividing the formal and informal areas of the house and allowing natural light into the central spaces. Other design devices used to create different zones within the house include sliding doors and a long central corridor, the uniform look of which is softened by the curved staircase rising to the second floor.

These physical divisions between the formal and informal spaces are reflected in

David Swan's interior design, which gives each portion of the home its own style. Despite these distinctions, the design still has a cohesive feel, as a relaxed palette of neutral tones and texture for visual interest is evident throughout.

The continuity of this warm and subtle use of colour was an important consideration in terms of the owners' art collection. It was essential that as pieces of art were moved around the house, adjoining furniture or nearby colours would never overwhelm them. With the art taking

centre stage, other elements of strong colour were brought into the mix via cushions, upholstery, decorative pieces such as ceramics and, in the case of the bedrooms, through curtains.

The owners' also had a collection of furniture in an eclectic range of styles. To amalgamate this collection with new pieces selected for the home, some items were reupholstered. The furniture was thus brought into the base palette of warm neutral tones. Colour highlights were added in items that are easy to move if a change is required.



The art-driven nature of the design also found expression in the creation of the balustrade for the curved staircase. This custom-made piece took on a sculptural form of its own thanks to patterns and shapes devised by the owners' children and included by David Swan.

This level of consideration for how art would be presented did have an effect on the selection of materials. However, it didn't preclude the owners' desire for materials that would add richness to the design and also stand up to family use.

Materials used include solid timber, honed limestone and composite marble slabs. These provide a well finished look, and offer the strength and easy maintenance required in a household with three children. As natural materials, they also tie in well with the colour scheme.

Other practical design considerations included scaling down the size of the kitchen to suit the needs of the owners. To accommodate this, kitchen benchtops and cupboards are set at a lower level than normal to make them easier to reach.

Facing page: Furniture in this room features neutral tones that blend together, while textured fabrics add detail and distinctiveness to each piece.

Above: A key feature of the kitchen is its scale, with benches and cupboards placed lower than usual to suit the owners.

Following pages: A relaxed look is apparent even in the more formal areas. Part of the brief for David Swan was to provide a suitable setting for the owners' contemporary Australian art. Highlights of colour are injected into the mostly neutral design via the works of art, ornamentation and fabrics.





Architect: Caroline Pidcock Architects (East Sydney, NSW)
Interior designer: David Swan Interior Design (Woolahra, NSW)
Main contractor: Sandlik Construction
Kitchen manufacturer: Andrews Custom Kitchens
Window joinery: Custom timber
Window treatments: Artech Blinds
Tiling: Isernia Stone from Artedomus
Flooring: Recycled blackbutt from Ironwood
Paints: Dulux
Lighting: Tangent Central
Furniture: Ashco Corporate Culture and Ke Zu
Upholstery fabrics: South Pacific Fabrics

Kitchen cabinetry: Custom-made polyurethane and American walnut
Splashback: White-backed glass
Oven: Smeg
Stove: Gaggenau
Bathroom cabinetry: American walnut and Canadian maple; polyurethane
Shower fittings: Hansgrohe
Bath: Kaldewei
Taps: Appeal from Accent
Flooring: Isernia Stone from Artedomus
Tiles: Gloss White from Purcell Tiles
Accessories: Stella from Designer Hardware
Photography by Simon Kenny

Facing page: A curved staircase with a decorative balustrade leads to the upper level. The custom-made balustrade was designed to give the stairway a sculptural feel.

Top and above, left: In both the master bedroom and the children's bedrooms, a dash of colour has been introduced through fabrics.

Top and above, right: Each bedroom has its own bathroom. Use of materials such as composite marble slabs and tiles ensures reasonably easy cleaning, especially in the areas used by the children.