

# DYNAMIC DUO

A Brisbane couple's courage and commitment has produced a unique home with great bones, old and new.

STORY *Laura Barry* | STYLING *Kate Nixon* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Maree Homer*

**EXTERIOR** "Our home has a deliberately dual appearance," says owner Carmel Gale. The family add the 'graffiti' on the boundary wall themselves. "Chair One" (cottage verandah) and "Polislide" (extension) outdoor chairs, Cult. ▶



Carmel and Antun Cule were contemplating moving house when the 1930s worker's cottage next door came to their attention. Just on the market, the three-bedroom home was rather small and not much to look at, but it sat on 809m<sup>2</sup> – twice the size of most blocks in their beloved inner-western suburb of Brisbane. The couple felt it could be the perfect family home for them and their children, Gabrielle, 14, Matthew, 12, and Michael, 10. They put in an offer and, to their delight, it was quickly accepted.

Carmel, an interior designer, and Antun, a builder, hired local architect Shaun Lockyer to help them plan a major renovation, which included refurbishing the cottage and adding an ultra-modern extension. All while maintaining the integrity of the original cottage, of course.

Preserving the home's character was relatively easy as only minor restoration to the exterior timberwork was required, although the verandah was replaced entirely. Inside, the cottage had a fairly typical Queenslander layout: a central hallway that

gave access to three bedrooms and led to the kitchen, living areas and bathroom, with a laundry and extra bathroom located in the undercroft.

While the sloping block enabled the Cules to build a double-storey addition, they were keen to keep all the communal areas on one level, says Shaun. The new layout forms an L shape, with the cottage at the knuckle. The lower-ground floor contains a home office, kitchenette, media/games room, bathroom and bag drop by the front door. The upper-ground floor accommodates the main bedroom suite (in the cottage), children's bedrooms, the kitchen, family and living/dining rooms, study nook and two bathrooms. In addition, the garden was raised to create a level lawn, pool area and covered courtyard that connects the kitchen and the main dining/living zone.

"The interior of the cottage was completely gutted so it could be incorporated as one with the extension," says Carmel. "We wanted open plan, large expanses of glass and minimal ornamentation, with off-form concrete." Indeed, concrete has

**ENTRANCE** Carmel is justifiably proud of what she and Antun have achieved. "It feels moody yet peaceful." Door, Ironfix by Robert Everingham. Off-form concrete (throughout), Trimform. Bluestone tiles (throughout), Eco Outdoor. **STAIRWELL** The bricks were laid in a pattern that is decorative and ensures good ventilation. "Bowler" bricks in Chillingham White, Austral Bricks. Metal balustrade, Ironfix by Robert Everingham; the American oak handrail was stained to match the floorboards. **ARTWORK** by David Bramley. **LIVING** "This room sums up our family and what we find enjoyment in," says Carmel. Armchair and floor lamp, Cult. Occasional tables, Domo. Rug, Spoce. **DESIGN CLASSIC**: Ligne Roset 'Togo' sofas in Alcantara, \$5675 (small), \$7325 (large), Domo.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

## THE PALETTE

Dulux Lexicon  
Hull (extension  
interior)

Dulux Black  
(interior doors  
and trims)

Dulux Complex  
Blue (cottage  
front door)

## This is the life

"We bought the property knowing we would renovate," says Carmel. "It was just too small for us as it was – three compact bedrooms, one bathroom, one living area. Now we can easily accommodate our whole family, which numbers more than 40, for birthday get-togethers or Christmas." The pool is a big hit with the kids; the Sonos built-in sound system (controlled via smartphone) is a favourite with the adults.



Light  
now pours  
in from the new  
skylights and  
celestery  
windows.

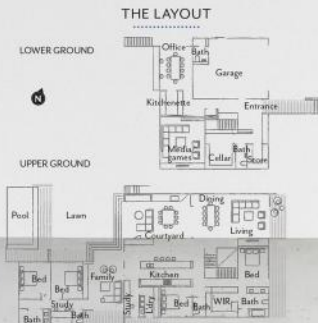
been used throughout the home and provides a striking contrast with the weatherboards of the cottage.

Natural materials - smoked oak, bluestone, porcelain and linen - help create an overall feeling of calm and balance. White brick is used as a feature in work zones such as the kitchen and on the stairwell; black steel is the thread that ties everything together. "The design is deliberately pared back to allow the raw materials to speak for themselves," says Carmel.

Shaun says his favourite feature is the new Velux skylights. "They're like punctuation marks between the heritage and modern parts, lovely little accents of light all over the house that are both practical and contemporary."

"Our brief to Shaun was to design a Modernist-leaning home that would accommodate an active family with children approaching their teens," says Carmel. "Shaun gave us exactly that, reviving the spirit of the cottage and updating it for the 21st century." ▶

**Shaun Lockyer Architects, Newstead, Queensland;**  
(07) 3257 7288 or lockyerarchitects.com.au. **Cule Constructions, Paddington, Queensland;** 0410 605 774 or ocule.constructions.



**KITCHEN** *this image and opposite top left* Carmel, pictured with Antun, Michael and Gabriel, chose 6mm porcelain panels from Arredomas for the benchtops. "It's UV-stable and eco-friendly, plus scratch-, heat-, stain- and mould-resistant," she says. Stools, Cule. Pendant lights, Fred International. Artwork by Kerry Armstrong.



**FAMILY ROOM** *above right* A sliding door between this room and the kitchen enables the children's wing to be closed off. Vintage 'Le Bambole' chair, Istidix. Sofa, Space. Coffee table, Cule. Wall light, Euruluxe. Rug, Armadillo & Co. Linen curtains, Warwick Fabrics. **MAIN ENSUITE** The aged-brass finish on the Astro Walker tapware references the original cottage. Zuster 'Zi' mirrors, Reeco. Porcelain benchtop in Calacatta Paragon, Arredomas. Bluestone wall-floor tiles, Eco Outdoor. Stool, Living Edge. **Smart buy:** Buster+Punch 'Heavy Metal' solid steel pendant lights, \$265 each, Arving Edge. **MAIN BEDROOM** "Most of our artworks - including this amazing piece by Leah Thiessen - are abstract and colourful, which is the perfect counterpoint for our minimalist interior," says Carmel. Eames 'LCW' chair, Living Edge. Engineered-oak flooring (throughout), Royal Oak Floors.





## RENO SNAPSHOTS

### Pivotal decision

"Engaging Shaun Lockyer Architects for the project. It couldn't have been better designed or planned," says Carmel.

### Unexpected blowout

"Additional carpentry after discovering the cottage's walls weren't straight."

**Where to save** "We had planned to use clear-stained teak for the garage door to match the exterior cladding, but the cost was astronomical. Instead, we opted for cedar, which we stained black. It reduced the cost significantly."

### Favourite room

"The front living area."

### Words of wisdom

"Allow for a substantial contingency—old homes can have unexpected structural issues." H&G

## FEATURE TREES & PLANTS

Fiddle leaf fig  
Illawarra flame tree  
Juniper  
Blue chalksticks  
Agave  
*Kalanchoe 'Gremlin'*  
Creeping boobialla  
(*Myoporum*)

**OUTDOOR ROOM** Ceiling-mounted heaters from Real Flame allow the family to dine alfresco year round. "Mistral" outdoor dining table, Cash Living. Hay "Hes" outdoor dining chairs and lounge chairs, DLM side table, Coco Flip pendant light, Gubi dining table and dining chairs, all Cult. Local hero: Bernabeffreman "Terrace" tables, \$690 (rectangle) and \$730 (square), Tail. *For Where to Buy, see page 196.*

