

# A LEAFY RETREAT TRANSFORMED

STORY MARILYN COLLINS

**A** work relocation to the Hunter Valley from Victoria, for what the family thought was to be a few years, has evolved into a love affair with the region lasting seventeen years, so much so the owners of this property have lavished their time, energy and money in creating a dramatic transformation.

Initially renting a home on their arrival the owners stumbled on a unique park like two-acre battle axe block with a dam and lots of trees. "I first thought the land was a public park as the local kids obviously were using it as a play ground," she said.

"The 'For Sale' sign was on the ground and so I called the number and discovered the block was on the market privately with the owner." ►

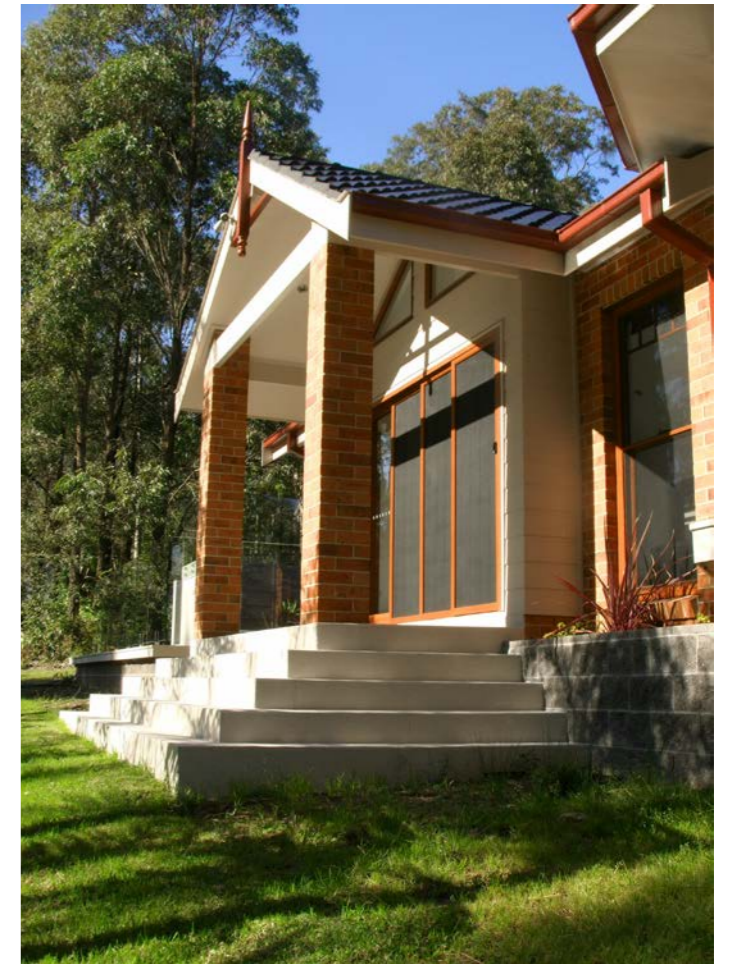


Being an engineer himself the owner worked with architects to develop the concept to a set of plans and engaged Proctor Building Solutions of Morpeth as the project builder.

The completed project was such an outstanding success, so much so, that Proctor Building Solutions won the recent MBA 2011 Building Awards of Excellence for the category: Alterations, Additions, Renovations and Restorations over \$500,000 for the extension.

The owner wanted to create a workable open plan kitchen which would command full view of the newly created outdoor living space and in ground swimming pool.

Panelle Kitchens devised a plan which saw the kitchen being opened completely by knocking out a wall creating an extension for a formal dining room. The sparkling white kitchen features a sparkling white curved island work area fitted with a double sink, induction moulded wok cook top and induction hotplates with a range hood overhead. Behind recessed into the wall of cupboards is a set of four of the latest SMEG stainless steel cooking appliances – a steaming oven with plate warming tray, an oven, coffee making machine and a microwave with inbuilt griller ideal for cooking pizza. ►



The couple built their four-level family home, accessed by a private driveway, and raised their two sons. The location perfectly suited family life being close to East Maitland shopping centre, within an easy 35-minute drive to Newcastle beaches and near to sporting activities as the boys became involved in team sports.

“After our sons left home to pursue their own studies and careers, we realised the home was in need of a major update so I started looking at properties for sale,” said the owner.

“Every property I saw was in need of a similar update, the floor plan didn’t suit, or the location was overlooked by other properties and not too private. We soon realised we had the best of all worlds with an unique dam-water feature containing silver perch, prolific birdlife, views to the Brokenback Mountains and seclusion from the busy world outside.”

It was then the couple decided to remain on their leafy, private location and develop the property to its fullest potential. So often is the case that people do not appreciate their own home until they start exploring what is available on the property market and many make a similar decision to stay put and invest in the known!

More than two years ago the owners started to give thought to how the house could be renovated to take full advantage of the leafy surrounds, the dam and as well as the morning sunlight. The owners considered many alternative ideas before settling on a concept.



A floor-to-ceiling window gives the chef an uninterrupted view of the outdoor living space. A built-in breakfast is connected to the island bench and is well suited for casual meals for two or four.

It took seven weeks for the kitchen to be fitted and during that time the downstairs laundry and living room was converted into a makeshift kitchen and living space. "I stored all the crockery, appliances, cutlery and dry pantry foods into plastic containers to keep them free of dust etc.", she said.

The adjoining tiled floor dining room captures the views of the leafy side garden and dam.

Glass bifold cedar-look aluminium doors reveal a step down tile floored lounge room. At the far end is a chimney housing a wall-hung television and underneath a gas log fireplace for winter warmth. Simple black blinds are fitted to the windows to be drawn as required when watching television, however, the room is so completely private they are rarely used. This room boasts views of the water feature, the side garden, terrace and pool.

Doors which can be completely opened on the pool side allow easy access when entertaining a crowd opening onto the spectacular outdoor area which is centred around the in ground swimming pool, two covered pergola dining areas and spacious open terraces for sunbaking. ►



The owner was dedicated to the task of researching and sourcing new furniture that would harmonise with the chosen white canvas selecting black as the main colour accentuated with silver and colourful decor pieces.

Another supplier was Langford Windows who has had a close working relationship with Proctor Building over many years. The window and door series chosen for this project were Langford's Magnum Series, a combination of their top line residential and designer series.

These products achieve very high wind and water ratings when closed as they fully seal providing maximum comfort both from the elements and acoustically.

The sliding doors were the 618 series four-panel fully screened stacker doors with three of the four panels sliding to allow 75% opening.

The windows from the 614 series were double hung windows. A feature of this sashed window is that they tilt inwards to allow easy cleaning of both sides of the glass from the inside.

The powder coat surface finish on all the window units was decorative imaging wood grain giving a western red cedar

timber finish with all the additional benefits of high performance powder coated aluminium windows.

The pool was a collaborative design between Vision Pools and Debra McKendry Hunt Architects to

Integrate the pool, outdoor entertainment area and house extensions. The outdoor entertaining area was recently recognised as winner of the HIA Best Outdoor Residential Project for 2011.

The low maintenance Vision Pools glass pool interior has an in-floor cleaning system built into the pool as it would have been be a difficult shaped pool to clean with a conventional suction cleaner.

The features are stepping stones and water spouts and a gas heated spa which can be heated to spa temperatures within 30 minutes.

The owner selected a mix of Bisazza glass tiles supplied by Jocoba Tiles and laid with epoxy grout and created their own original colour palette which gives off a special sparkle when the sun shines. ►






Both the pool and spa are fully automated to make for simple operation including the control of heating , pool and spa operation, lighting and water features.

A relatively new and revolutionary Magna Pool sanitation and filtration system was installed. A mix of magnesium and potassium in the pool water is ideal for people with skin allergies to chlorine or salt water and is good for your skin and provides for low maintenance operation. "We have found the water to be really soft, gentle on the skin and odourless which is a great factor when using the pool," said the owner.

The home has now been adapted to the owners needs who now believe their decision to renovate and invest in the addition was well founded having created a perfect ambience to enjoy and share the best of life's pleasures with their visiting family and circle of friends.

The next project for this keen renovator is tackling the revamping of the bathrooms and laying new carpet early next year and then the home's transformation will be complete. 

- Builder: **Proctor Homes**  
02 4934 1808
- Pool: **Vision Pools**  
02 4952 7023
- Kitchen: **Panelle Kitchens**  
02 4926 1557
- Tiles: **Jacoba Tiles**  
02 4933 9311
- Windows: **Langford Windows**  
02 4953 5000

