

How to maximise apartment living P120

real living

Our *stylish*
guide to buying
& serving
Australian gin

A city staycation
by designer
Sarah Ellison

IN THE
DETAILS
DECORATIVE
PIECES TO
SHOP &
SHOW OFF
plus sophisticated
ways to layer texture

COSY SPACES

Homes with *warm white* interiors & visual calm

Starting blocks Concrete bricks were used inside and outside this home in Beaumaris, Victoria. They provide structural strength and subtle texture, informing the rest of the restrained material palette so the outside garden is the star. *Turn over to see more.* →



OUTSIDE

photography shannon mcgrath words stephanie hope

Soul focus The central courtyard connects the home's main living spaces – kitchen, living, sitting and dining – providing the family who live here with a constant view to the outside. Evergreen olive trees (*Olea europaea*) thrive in the sunlit courtyard and tie in aesthetically with other native species selected for the landscaping. "Their subtle green and grey tones work perfectly against the material palette," adds Annabelle Berryman, director of Studiofour. →

BEST

KEPT

SECRET

Looking at this home from the street, you would never guess there is a hidden oasis within its walls. And that was exactly what its design team had in mind



Room to expand The Studiofour team purposely chose not to include an outdoor setting in the courtyard, instead utilising retractable glass doors to connect the kitchen to this space.
Easy breezy The simple sliding door system wraps around the courtyard, allowing for excellent cross ventilation. "The landscape, and its movement and shadows, provides a calming effect that permeates the whole house," Annabelle adds.



meet the designers

Annabelle Berryman and Sarah Henry from Studiofour oversaw the design and landscaping for this stunning home and outdoor space.
Studiofour.net.au | @studiofour.net.au →

A HOME THAT PROVIDES a framework for living mindfully and minimally while enjoying a constant connection with the outdoors – that was the brief for this Beaumaris home in Victoria, which was so skillfully devised by Sarah Henry and Annabelle Berryman from holistic architectural firm Studiofour. "It was important to the owners, a couple in their forties with two daughters aged five and two, that their young kids could grow up experiencing the outdoors within a secure and private environment," explains Annabelle. "We sought to design a house that would promote a strong connection with nature and an awareness of its seasonality," Sarah adds.

Space was scarce, with the subdivided site slightly smaller than your average suburban block. To give the family ample living area as well as that much-desired outside connection, Annabelle and Sarah contrived a single-level residence that envelops an internal garden. This central courtyard lined with a blanket of pebbles and dotted with verdant olive trees is the "heart and focus of the home", says Annabelle. The kitchen, living, dining and sitting areas all open onto this retreat via retractable glass doors, making it a natural extension to the indoors. "Being a compact house, every inch of indoor space has a purpose, and this stackable system creates openness without impeding on floor space," explains Sarah.

Indeed, the internal courtyard is used as an extra room, "a place to read, listen to music or sit in the sun", Annabelle says. In their inner sanctum, the family enjoy views of towering cedars in the distance while being hidden from surrounding neighbours. It's also incredibly secure. "Even when the house is unoccupied, the doors to the courtyard can be left open for fresh air," Annabelle adds.

Entertaining is made easy, with the kitchen so closely aligned with the outdoor area – its restrained materials palette of concrete, timber and steel is a subtle backdrop to the greenery outside. The generous island provides ample room for meal prep and seating for six, while a long bench along the rear wall has a nifty recess where seasonal plants and potted herbs provide vibrant colour.

As Annabelle explains, the indoor-outdoor connection has always been core to the Studiofour philosophy. "Studies show that when we look out a window and see our natural environment, our stress levels drop instantly. And the introduction of the landscape into our homes is critical for connecting with our surrounds." ●

Come inside The front entrance hints of things to come. Concrete bricks from Boral match those inside and sit subtly within the surrounding landscape, while outdoor pebbles from Lilydale Toppings carry through to the courtyard. Coastal rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*) is a local endemic species with dense, fast-growing foliage and prolific mauve or white flowers to attract birds and bees. It works well as a groundcover, in formal hedges, box gardens, retaining walls or as an ornamental shrub, and doesn't turn woody like other rosemary varieties.



“Natural materials like concrete and timber become the backdrop to the surrounding coastal natives, creating the ultimate synergy”
– Sarah Henry, Studiofour



Ever green The kitchen was designed as a communal space where the family could gather, with one continuous timber tabletop ideal for cooking, doing homework, working or just having a chat. The recess to the rear is filled with potted plants – herbs for cooking, along with seasonal greenery from the garden – once again enhancing that indoor-outdoor connection.