



HUNTER HOMES

Par Excellence

story and images Marilyn Collins

Excellence is not a luxury, a principle demonstrated in one of Stibbard Homes' latest creations.

The owners of this impressive property have invested in a lifestyle of relaxation, recreation and refinement on The Vintage Golf Estate, Pokolbin, surrounded by a world-class 18-hole championship golf course designed by Greg Norman.

The Vintage Golf Estate has been cleverly designed to ensure that each of its 482 home sites has generous views of the championship golf course, and parkland or the surrounding countryside, with large corridors of green space throughout the community embracing the unique Hunter Valley environment.

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above The open living area features the curved wall of the entry stairwell and displays a massive hand-woven tapestry similar to others throughout the home.

The home's concept was designed for the owners, who are avid entertainers and world travellers and busy professional people and it boasts timeless design and features and all the elements required for modern-day living.

It is really classic, and provides the perfect showcase for the owners' extensive collection of French and European antique furniture, treasured hand-woven tapestries and collectable artworks which are defined at night with downlighting.

"Like the majority of our prospective clients, a referral came from a couple we had previously built for in the area," said Singleton-based Stibbard Homes' managing director, Neil Albert - the home's designer and builder.

"The couple visited their home and was particularly impressed with the kitchen-pantry layout and wanted to incorporate a similar layout in her proposed new home.

"Their desire to have a curved staircase featured at the entry and a request for generous entertaining areas formed the starting point for the home's design. The challenge was then to provide the required indoor and outdoor entertaining areas within the allotted building envelope of a relatively small block of land.

"The selected building site further impacted the final design with the Vintage Golf course Estate's restrictions on building height, external wall lengths, roof pitch, construction materials, external colours and landscaping." >







It's no doubt that the inspiration for this design came straight from the Mediterranean, bringing with it a spacious, sunlit interior and ultra-luxurious styling.

The exterior colours of Reed Bed Polymer render on walls and Bushland Colorbond roof, surfmist colour on the windows and external timberwork and garage panel, reflect the bushland surroundings.

The ample outdoor space has been allowed to come inside, where the effect is almost as overwhelming with so much interior space at call, simply by opening three sets of folding doors and stepping out into a screened entertaining room.

Across the ground-floor level spreads a massive, open-plan area that looks to the first floor and above to soaring ceilings.

A large portion of the design is immediately visible on entering the foyer, where guests step onto tiled floors and into the cathedral-like foyer while natural light floods in through clear-glass panels surrounding the entry door.

A massive wrought-iron chandelier hangs impressively over the curved staircase with wrought-iron balusters and timber handrail, which at night is simply spectacular when uplighting and downlighting come into play to make a defined statement for the front entry. Similar chandeliers feature throughout the living area of the home. >



above Entertaining is made easy with extensive shelving in the walk-through pantry, ample bench space and a commercial cool room.

right The master bedroom suite, with walk-through en-suite bathroom with spa bath, resembles a luxury hotel.



Off the foyer is the formal lounge room, which has been decorated traditionally with Chesterfield leather lounges, leather armchair and the owners' prized possession, an 1840's original French baker's rack.

Next is the library/study, which could be easily converted to a fifth bedroom if required, with an en suite located at the end of the corridor.

At present, the room is used as a quiet retreat for when the owners want to read or relax, or simply gaze out the window at the leafy vista.

Upstairs is the master suite, with massive walk-through en-suite bathroom with spa bath that resembles a luxury hotel and reflects the defining characteristics of the whole home; that every concession to comfort is made. There is floor-to-ceiling tiling with a blue-hued lime wash tile and across the corridor are the three guest bedrooms and a main bathroom.

Concealed toilet cisterns give a modern, yet functional look to all bathrooms and the powder room. >







The sparkling, white, open-plan kitchen would be any home chef's delight, with a stunning glass splashback behind the kitchen bench and a Smeg upright stove. Behind this wall is pantry shelving made to the clients' specifications including a workbench area perfect for preparing food when entertaining, as well as a commercial cool room which would rival any restaurant's.

An outstanding feature is the cellar room – behind a full wall of glass visible from the kitchen and dining room. The owners sourced a western red cedar wine racking system in kit form, capable of holding 950 bottles of wine.

The dining area is capable of accommodating the three-metre, 12-seat French provincial oregon timber dining table, crafted by Hungarian craftsmen in Victoria, exclusively for Peppers Creek Antiques at Pokolbin, which has been a great source of most of the furnishings and décor pieces for the owner. The chairs have ladder backs with woven seats.

The internal colour scheme from Dulux's Direction in White range provides a muted colour scheme which allows artworks and tapestries to be displayed to their fullest potential.

The dining room features the curved back wall of the entry stairwell and displays a massive hand-woven tapestry similar to many others, located throughout the home, which were sourced direct from the world-recognized Gobelins Factory

near Paris, which has been producing tapestries since 1420, for the succession of Louis Kings.

Throughout the tiled surfaces are silk-on-silk or silk-on-cotton colourful rugs which the couple acquired on a trip to Istanbul. Also evident throughout are memorable pieces either sourced from Peppers Creek Antiques or collected during extensive overseas travel.

Every corner and every nook has a story to tell, as does the impressive collection of artworks, mostly by leading Hunter artists such as Frances and Chris Fussell.

The outside entertaining area evolves around the in-ground swimming pool and the screened sunroom, which is a favourite place for the owners and friends to relax, especially on a summer's day or night. Planted around the perimeter of the rear garden are small, leafed lilly pilli.

Folding doors open from the two living areas into the gauzed room, which opens the living space of the home entirely to allow for the largest gathering.

The exterior of the residence has been enhanced by plantings of Chinese elms, blueberry ash, orange jessamine, viburnum, French lavender, coastal rosemary, gymea lily, silver gazania, swamp foxtail, oyster plant and kangaroo paw.

From its architectural details to its expertly designed garden, this couple's home was built to create a lasting impression. 