

# Custom Designed Lifestyle

STORY AND IMAGES MARILYN COLLINS

Personalised design to the very last detail won this residence top accolades, resultant from a building team which prides itself on being with the client from conception to completion, fine tuning each detail to perfection. ▶







All four bedrooms are accessed along the main hallway – all double sized.

Throughout the property is the extensive use of joinery using New Guinea Rosewood for windows, external doors and louvred shutters.

The windows themselves are traditional double hung with rope pulleys and weighted balances.

The spacious lounge room has been decorated simply with the polished floors and a spectacular orange cowhide rug offsetting the chocolate-brown leather theatre-style lounge suite with reclining armchairs at each end.

Stunning heavy drapes can be pulled across the floor-to-ceiling windows during chilly nights, yet by day the room is filled with northerly sunlight.

During winter the home is well and truly heated by a Superheat 850 single-sided fire insert into the brick chimney as well as ducted air conditioning.

The open-plan kitchen is sparkling white with a dramatic touch of red from the hand-blown German glass pendant lights which overhang the kitchen island bench. The design created by Osbornes Kitchens of Maitland features Smeg kitchen appliances and two pack polyurethane cabinetry with 30-millimetre CaesarStone “Snow” bench tops including waterfall ends to island bench, a Zip Chill water dispenser and Starfire glass splashback. ▶

Narromine-raised couple Rechelle and Andrew grew up on the land at their respective family homes. Naturally they wanted to create a similar country lifestyle for their three sons to grow up with – somewhere they could safely ride their trail bikes, enjoy the river, tend to chooks and animals and have their friends come and stay weekends and enjoy holidays. All the above encompasses a country-style family life.

Around 2005, the couple purchased an ideal country property of 40 acres at Gosforth, an outlying district from Rutherford only nine minutes to Maitland, yet you would think you were really “out in the country” surrounded by rural properties in a quiet, no-through end of a valley.

The property already had an adequate four-bedroom twenty-year-old family home which suited a family of young growing children with a swimming pool and a few out buildings set on the high point of the acreage capturing spectacular district views and landscape.

“We always had intentions of one day building our dream home,” said Rechelle. “On regular daily trips to school I would drive around estates, and I watched with interest a massive country-style residence being built at Oakhampton by Singleton builders Stibbard, so I contacted them.

“Our original brief was to design and construct a new residence that would sit comfortably alongside an existing dwelling and in-ground swimming pool,” said Samantha Stibbard.

The link between the two buildings was to be a generous covered outdoor entertaining area which would take advantage of the rural outlook but also provide protection from the west with sliding screens when required.

Rechelle said she wanted a floor plan which would allow open space for the family to be together, whether watching television, eating or simply playing out-of-doors in the covered entertaining space.

Entry to the residence is from the portico stepping into a wide hallway. Overhead is an Etnica glass pendant light in the entrance hall.

Easy care, clear-finished tongue-and-groove blackbutt flooring flows through the home, with the exception of the carpeted bedrooms and tiled wet areas. The main bathroom is appointed with a Marbletrend Merge freestanding bath and en suite off the master bedroom. Whimsy gloss white rectified wall tiles were chosen for the bathroom and en suite, with Glass Acido feature wall tiles for the bathroom and Cubica Marfill feature wall tiles for the en suite and Coffee Espresso floor tiles for wet areas.



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There is no doubt that the couple's dream family home has been achieved, giving their sons a wonderful environment in which to live in and enjoy the same carefree lifestyle their parents now appreciate and well remember.

Off the kitchen is a spacious walk-in pantry with copious shelving ensuring the pantry is always well stocked for those unexpected guests.

Down the hallway from the kitchen is a generous laundry, again with ample storage space and easy access to the old-style prop clothes line at the rear of the property. A white Firenze Carrara Blanco wall tile finishes off the laundry, which handles the copious amount of washing, thanks to three growing sons Hugh, Toby and Maxwell.

It had been eighteen months since my last visit to the property to photograph the home on completion for an entry into the 2011 MBA Awards of Building Excellence and at that stage the landscaping had only just commenced.

The sandstone feature walls around the front of the residence now accommodate beds of country cottage plants sprawling over the flagstone pathways leading from the carport along the edge of the residence, poolside and along to the original residence.

These plants were obviously chosen due to their ability to adapt to a climate where they could be self-sufficient, as the property is reliant on tank water. A curved concrete wall centres on a brick fire pit which will add a touch of warmth to winter entertaining.

The original swimming pool was given an updated look by building retaining walls, improving drainage, paving the surrounds and fencing the perimeter with a glass and stainless steel fence.

The existing residence was also given some attention during the construction period of ten months, during which the family lived on site.

The external walls were given a bagged finish with Wattyl Sahara double-strength "Dune" paint finish to match the new residence. The existing roof was re-pitched to compliment the roof of the new building and sheeted with Zincalume roofing – evocative of traditional Australian roofing material. ►







Pictured: The seamless connection between the original home and the new residence.


The original four-bedroom residence is now a “home away from home” for the boys and father Andrew – somewhere to play their X Box and have boys’ time out – somewhere for guests to stay and sleep overs with friends of the boys.

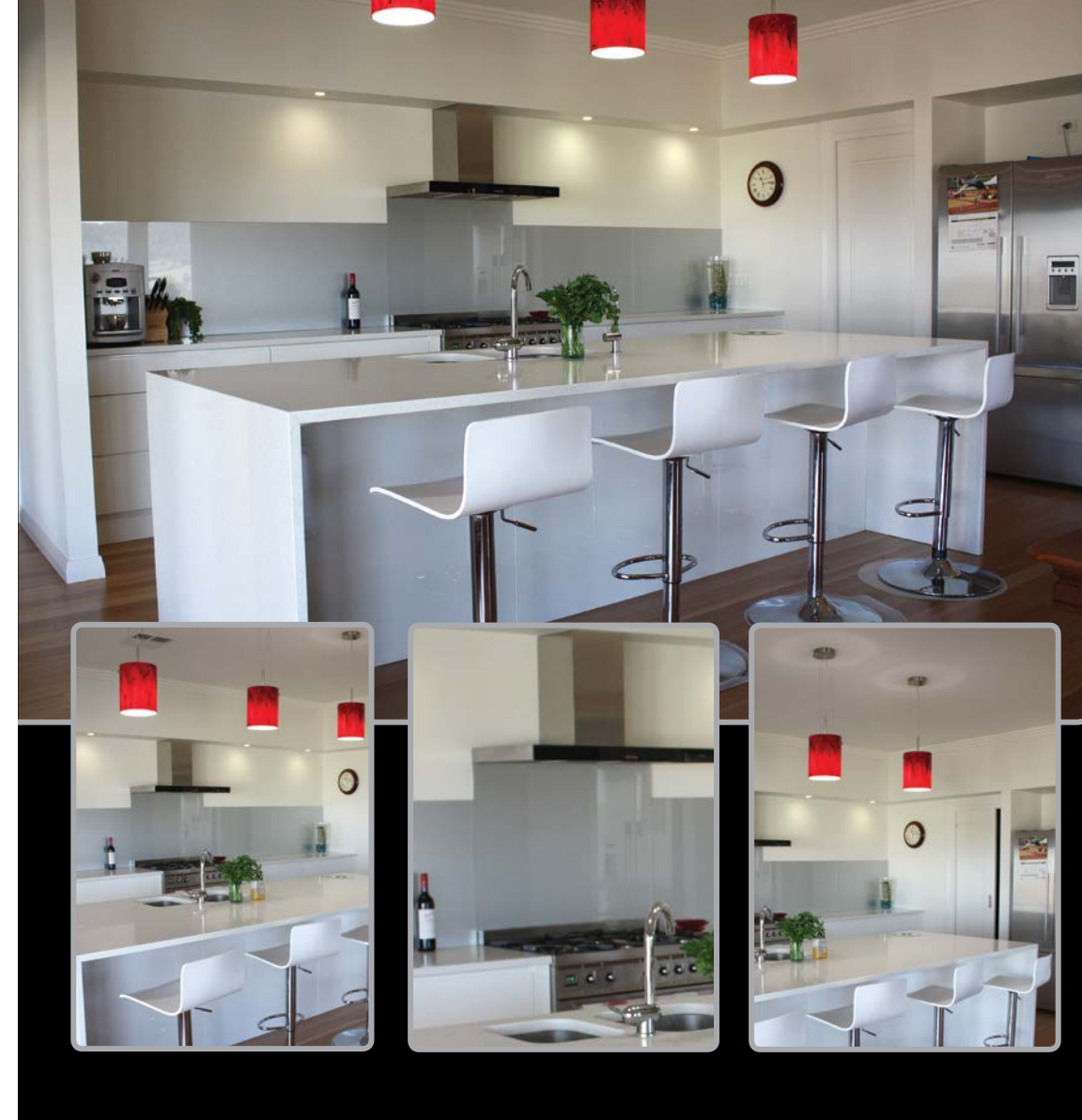
One of the projects on Rechelle’s long list of things for Andrew “to do” is to organise the removal of the old kitchen and painting inside so it will be more hospitable for everyone who visits.

There is no doubt that the couple’s dream family home has been achieved, giving their sons a wonderful environment in which to live in and enjoy the same carefree lifestyle their parents now appreciate and well remember.

The new residence has been successful in creating a home of generous proportions, which sits comfortably in its rural setting whilst still utilising the existing dwelling, pool and site facilities.

Samantha Stibbard said the owners were a pleasure to work with and very accommodating to tradesmen, especially as they were actually living on the building site during the entire construction period.

Stibbard has a proud lineage as award-winning builders and the owners were delighted when their residence was announced the 2011 MBA winner of “Custom Built Home \$750,000 to \$1m”. 



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