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Made to measure

When Patricia and Kevin Wilson employed an architect to design their dream home, the brief was simple – clean lines, an open-plan layout and scope for seamless indoor/outdoor living.

STORY MARILYN RODRIGUES PHOTOGRAPHY TONY POTTER STYLING JUSTINE WILSON



PREVIOUS PAGE: Glass doors fold back and open the house to its lovely surroundings.

ABOVE: The streamlined kitchen is easy to clean and an opaque splashback reflects the view of the bay.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Soft white and neutral colours are an elegant backdrop for the family's collection of art and pieces on display.



“This is our first brand-new house,” says Patricia, beaming, “and the fact that we could put our own stamp on it took a bit of getting used to. However, we were very happy with our architect, Steve Kennedy, and the builder, David Reid – you couldn’t fault David’s workmanship! The quality is the same for the visible areas and the parts you don’t see – like the floors of storage areas. And he was very easy to deal with as well.”

Kevin had owned the old fibro holiday house at Taren Point on Botany Bay in Sydney’s south for 20 years, and fully intended to rebuild there one day. Then, when the couple decided to create a family home and move from nearby Oyster Bay with their daughter, Lisa, at first they looked at several project homes to put on the site. But a drainage easement through the property meant it had a fairly narrow ‘footprint’ and they realised that consulting an architect was the only way to go.

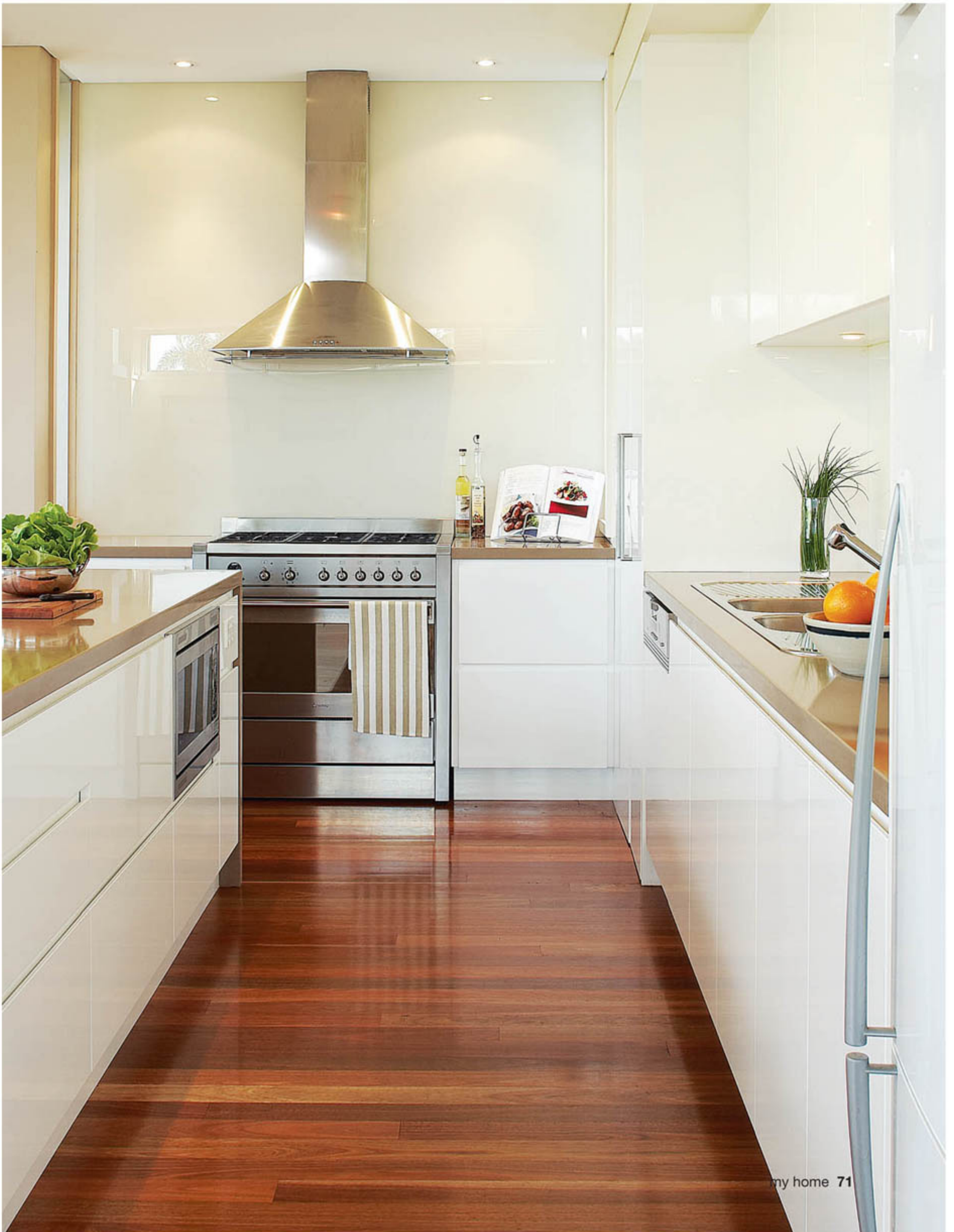
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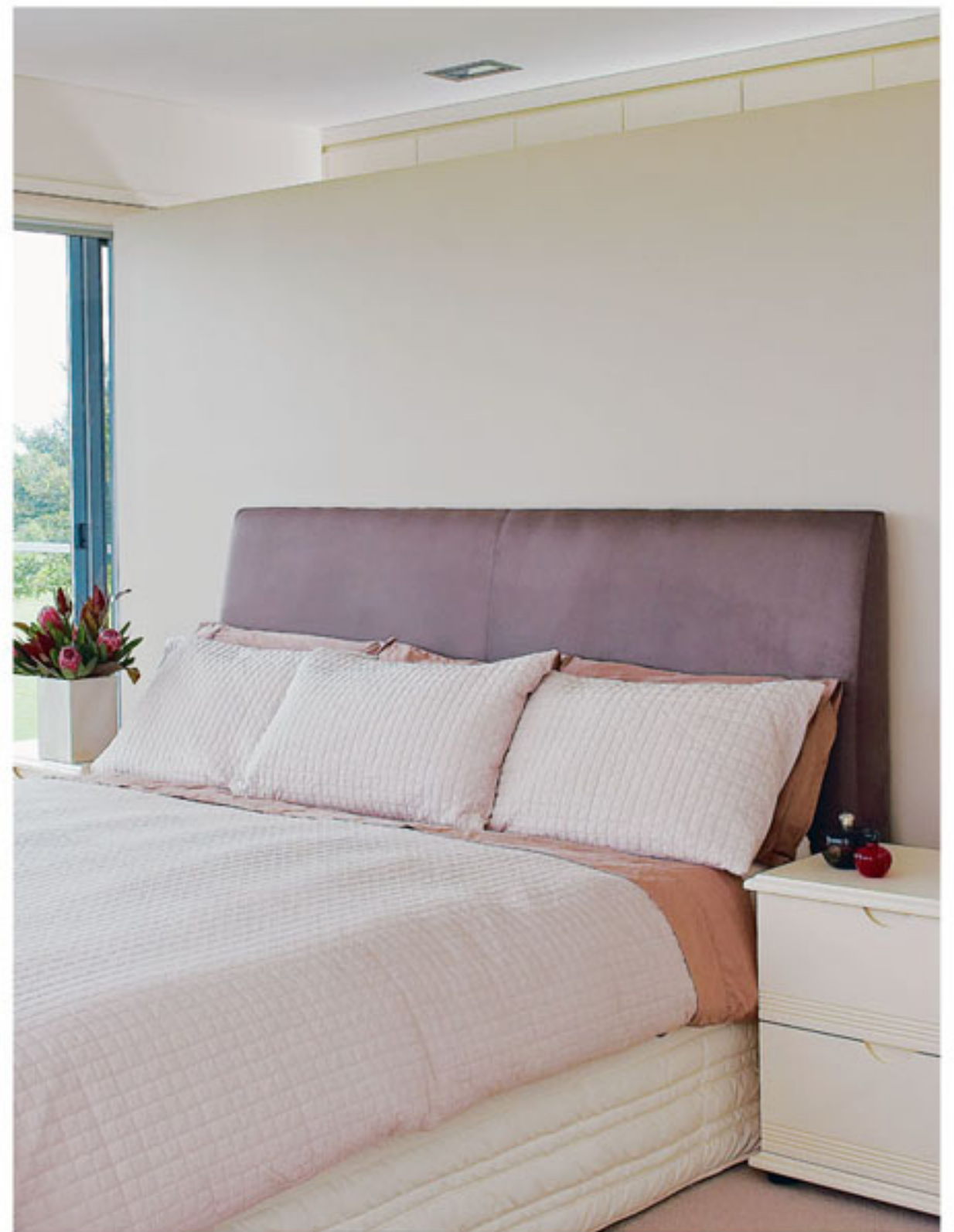
When you walk in, you’re confronted with the view through the house to the quiet reserve and sparkling bay beyond. The entrance has the feel of an atrium, thanks to the open space on two levels and three skylights overhead. A guestroom and bathroom, study and laundry complete the lower level, while there are three more bedrooms and a TV room upstairs.

“It’s always bright and airy,” explains Patricia, “and we wanted to bring the outside in and give the interior access to the outdoors. So it’s all clear lines of sight in the house and there’s very little ‘stuff’ around to block the views – the whole thing just flows.”









Indeed, the Wilsons have been remarkably restrained in their choice of furnishings. In the area downstairs, apart from the streamlined kitchen and bench, there are simply two low leather lounges, a glass-topped coffee table and a dining suite.

Similarly, colours are kept to a minimum with walls painted in Dulux Warm Neutral and Snow White Cream, and light furnishings and reflective surfaces were the choice throughout. The effect is uplifting and soothing, with an air of space and light. "We really enjoy the place," says Patricia, "especially when it's a lovely day and we open the doors at the back."

OUT OF SIGHT

The couple has a few neat tricks for maintaining the streamlined, uncluttered environment.

For instance, the lounges were custom-made locally, with broad flat armrests and backs that serve as extra seating. "We wanted that so that when we have parties or a lot of people over, we don't have to bring in more chairs," she explains.

Near the dining area, some attractive cupboards and a sideboard are built into the wall, and the Bose infra-red remote-controlled sound system is concealed in another cupboard – with speakers in the ceiling and above the outdoor deck.

TOP LEFT: Generous expanses of glass, space and a row of skylights combine to make an impressive atrium.

TOP RIGHT: The false wall behind the bed conceals the walk-in robe and dressing area.

LEFT: A retractable section of wall in the TV room makes the space flexible.



"WHAT ATTRACTED US TO IT
WAS ITS TRANQUIL FEEL"



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The semitranslucent blinds recessed in the ceiling are motorised and disappear completely. "I didn't want curtains because they take up so much space when you pull them back," says Patricia. The master bedroom has its own ensuite as well as an enviable walk-in wardrobe and a dressing area – complete with dressing table built-in – behind a false wall.

Patricia finds the TV room is such a peaceful spot with its wraparound balcony and stunning views. "It's a great place to sit and read," she says, adding, "I do my ironing up there."

Part of the wall is retractable which is a clever touch, making it possible to close the room off as a theatre.

THINK GLOBAL – ACT LOCAL

"To meet the council's requirements, everything had to have a 3.5-star energy efficiency at least," Patricia states. Thus the underfloor heating downstairs and in the bathroom is solar-powered, and – another environmentally friendly arrangement – rainwater tanks supply the toilets and the garden. And in addition

to that, the windows are glazed in such a way as to reduce the need for heating and cooling.

The couple is also committed to supporting Australian industry as far as possible and they make an effort to source fittings and furniture locally. They even travelled to outback Western Australia, ostensibly to visit Kevin's sister who teaches in remote areas, but also to look for indigenous artworks to bring home. The pieces they chose now adorn the walls and include original works from WA and Fiji.

Patricia is an artist herself and makes unique bridal jewellery from home. She says she finds the atmosphere they have created with so much thought and planning inspires the work she does. "It's lovely to sit and be creative in such, relaxed surroundings," she declares.

ABOVE: The bathrooms were designed with comfort and easy cleaning in mind – the floor tiles are heated by solar power.