

MID-CENTURY MAGNIFICENCE

A mid-century modernist build comes alive thanks to a design reminiscent of the era

■ WORDS / Tatyana Leonov
■ PHOTOGRAPHY / Rhiannon Slatter

The space flows seamlessly from the kitchen to the outdoor area, where the architecturally designed skylight lets in an abundance of light

The kitchen features minimal furnishings paired with original brickwork on the splashback



The stairwell incorporates timber steps and the stylish Spillray pendant light by Studio Luce



HOUSE Brighton '60s House
LOCATION Brighton, Victoria
COST Approximately \$3 million
DATE COMPLETED August 2011
EPISODE 1 SERIES 2

Childhood sweethearts Nick and Anna McKimm were looking to build a 1960s resort-style home for themselves, their three children—Lola, Ted and Jonty—and Border Collie, Maddie. “We were inspired by our love of architecture and design from the 1960s,” Anna explains. “We love that the architecture favours a relaxed, open style of living that brings the outdoors in.”

With Nick’s building background spanning more than 20 years, the McKimms had a head start. Nick formed his own building company, mckimm, more than 20 years ago. Over the past five years, the company has seen substantial growth and today offers a full design and construction service. Nick’s knowledge and expertise, combined with his and Anna’s personal experience (together they’ve worked on approximately 10 houses varying in size, design and complexity), meant that they had an understanding of the processes, timelines and budgets involved.

Nick was essentially the designer, builder, project manager and client, and this was his first 1960s-styled house, ironically built on a street where Nick has already constructed six replica homes. The Palm Springs-style residence they envisioned was bound to stand out among the Edwardian and Georgian houses.

The spirit of an era was the basis for the design. “Every time we saw great mid-century original pieces or inspired works, be it on holidays, in restaurants, bars, hotels, in magazines, or in much-coveted furniture, we were always in awe and that inspired and motivated us,” Anna explains. “We love that it’s understated but makes a statement.”

Mid-century houses are depicted by an abundance of glass, flat roofs and long eaves surrounding the building. Though the ceilings are generally low, a feeling of openness is attained through the clean and long lines of sight. By putting a modern spin on this type of home, Nick and Anna designed a house with mid-1960s architecture as a foundation. True to the style of the era, the façade was designed to appear modest with the biggest impact felt once you venture inside.

As you step through the front door you are greeted with a clear line of vision to the very rear of the dwelling and an abundance of natural light. Dominated by a striking planted atrium that opens to the sky, the whole front area is bathed in light. The kids’ bedrooms, all serviced with ensuites, flank the light-filled atrium, as does a living space on the opposite side.

The entrance is dominated by the abundance of glass and light — a theme that was central to the build



■ *Dominated by a striking planted atrium that opens to the sky, the whole front area is bathed in light* ■



The centre of the house showcases a striking planted atrium that opens to the sky, bathing many of the internal rooms in light



The rear of the house pays the biggest homage to the period. Two separate wings (one housing a rumpus room, the other a kitchen) frame the enticing saltwater swimming pool, providing an open oasis for the family.

Expansive sliding glass doors throughout the structure aid in making the skinny cantilevered roof appear as if it is floating effortlessly; this is a fundamental design element of mid-century architecture. The alfresco area, featuring a cabana and tennis court, is further enhanced by clever and innovative design, with most of the half-acre block dedicated to outdoor living.

While few changes were made once construction had begun, the design stage itself was very fluid and changes were introduced regularly and discussed by designer Lorenzo Garizio, Nick and Anna. "It was a very open and frank forum where any suggestion could be made and honest appraisals were forthcoming," says Anna. "We often presented our ideas to Lorenzo as amateur pencil sketches on baking paper."

A key stylistic element in mid-century architectural style is the way the roof is disengaged with the walls below. If completed correctly, the result is a roof that appears to float



ABOVE Glass windows that run throughout the home allow light to stream into every room

OPPOSITE TOP The sunken lounge area is a perfect representation of the '60s, with its statement curved sofa and shagpile rug

OPPOSITE BOTTOM The '60s theme continues into the bathroom with its freestanding tub and wooden cabinets with large handles

above the ground. For the design to pay homage to the mid-century era, the roof and ceiling also need to look flat, as if they are reaching out and extending onto the landscape. "The roof line was one of our biggest challenges," Anna explains. "We needed to make something so complex and detailed look simple, but remain true to the mid-century inspiration."

Nick and Anna spent hours with Lorenzo working on making the interwoven steel and timber flat roof work. A flat roof has no run-off for water and with Melbourne's intermittent weather it was necessary to create a roof that would have the capability to withstand wet weather conditions. Together with Lorenzo, Nick and Anna created a one-degree fall to avoid roof flooding. The result is one that looks simplistic and fits in with the aesthetic of the era.

One of the other challenges during the build was the concrete floor. "Once we were sure that we wanted to continue the concrete out to the pool and outdoor areas, choosing the concrete became really important," Anna explains, citing

colour and aggregate components as pivotal elements in the decision-making process. "Every batch can vary, so you only see the finished product once it's poured, honed and treated. That's fairly intense given there's no second chance with concrete. The wait is long! Luckily, the team took time and care with every corner and the many difficult areas to work with, such as the concrete stairs down to the sunken lounge and around the pool. The result is amazing. With the slab heating underneath, it's a fabulous floor to live on — and skateboard on, as it turns out."

Keeping the environment in mind, Anna and Nick converted the pool from the original house into a 65,000-litre water tank that catches rainwater that pours off the tennis court and the expansive roof. They also installed solar heating panels on the roof of the outdoor gym and bar area, as well as double-glazed windows to make use of the natural sun to warm the home and protect it from the cold in winter. The large skylight above the kitchen was made even larger during the building process to allow more natural

light, and the different areas around the house are cleverly zoned to take advantage of the north-facing block.

Statement pieces that are true to the period were selected as furnishing items; the kooky sunken lounge in the living room, for example, is perfectly reminiscent of the period and is complemented beautifully by the shagpile rug. A tree was positioned just off-centre and today dictates lines of sight.

Though the kids were involved from day one with site visits it's still new and exciting for them. "It was more like an adventure playground for them and they didn't comprehend the concept of what was being built," Anna laughs. "To keep them interested and involved with the project, we got them to create artworks for their bedrooms. With the fabulous help of Dellwyn Apted at Meart, Lola, Ted and Jonty each painted wonderful unique paintings on canvas and these have become the centrepieces of their bedrooms."

Like the artworks in the bedrooms, it could be said that each area in the house features





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an abstract focal point. The core of these is the open-plan style that's at the heart of the design, promoting family interaction.

By putting a modern spin on mid-century architecture, the McKimms were able to create their ultimate suburban paradise. "We wanted to see a series of pavilions and that's the feeling we have out there," Nick says. "It's magnificent to live in."

"I can see the kids in the pool from the kitchen and beyond," Anna adds. "The house has terrific transparency. I also love the tree in the middle of the house — it has such a beautiful, sculptural look and I'm looking forward to seeing it change throughout the seasons."

For Nick, just standing at the home's entry and looking through the internal courtyard to the pool is already a favourite pastime. Simple in design yet absolutely divine. 🌿

ABOVE Nick and Anna's design incorporates a flat roof that seems to float — a concept that was central to the build and the '60s theme
OPPOSITE TOP An expansive skylight allows the sunlight to shine down close to the saltwater swimming pool
OPPOSITE BOTTOM The children were encouraged to get involved with the build by creating their own artworks, which ended up forming the centrepieces of their bedrooms

■ **STRUCTURE** Concrete Floors Mentone Pre Mix (mentonepremix.com.au) Joinery and Cabinetry Tibco Designs (0424 930 621) Pavers Anston Paving Stones (anston.com.au) Stair Builder Moorabbin Marble and Granite (03 9553 7221)
 ■ **FIXTURES AND FITTINGS** Blinds & Curtains Bergman Designer Blinds (03 9482 5800)
Concrete Benchtops Rutso Concreting (rutsoconcrete.com.au) **Light Fittings** Lighting Options (03 5975 0911) **Pool Fencing & Glazing** Chased Glazing (0419 541 152) **Tiles** Signorino Tile Gallery (signorino.com.au) **Windows** Designer Windows (designerwindowsanddoors.com.au)
 ■ **FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES** Audio-visual Urban Intelligence (urbanintel.com.au) **Children's Painting** Workshop Meart (meart.com.au) **Furniture** Custom-made by Dewhurst Furniture

(dewhurstfurniture.com.au) **Rugs & Carpets** Custom-made by RC&D — Rugs, Carpet & Design (rc-d.com.au)

■ **SERVICES** Electrical & C-Bus BRD Electrical (brdelectrical.com.au) **Landscaping** Gills Nursery (gillsnursery.com.au) **Painting** Kim Farrell Painting Services (0419 380 397)

PROJECT TEAM

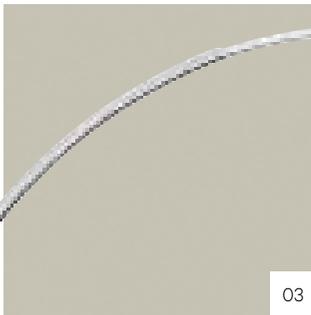
■ **DESIGNER/BUILDER** mckimm (mckimm.com.au)

GET THE LOOK

For that swinging '60s style, here's how to get the look



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03



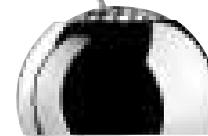
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01 Zuri bathtub by Rogerseller. rogerseller.com.au

02 Curvy Concerto by King Furniture. kingfurniture.com.au

03 Duck White by Dulux. dulux.com.au

04 Outdoor dining suite by House of Orange. house-of-orange.com.au

05 White on White by Dulux. dulux.com.au

06 Spillray by Mondo Luce. studioitalia.com.au



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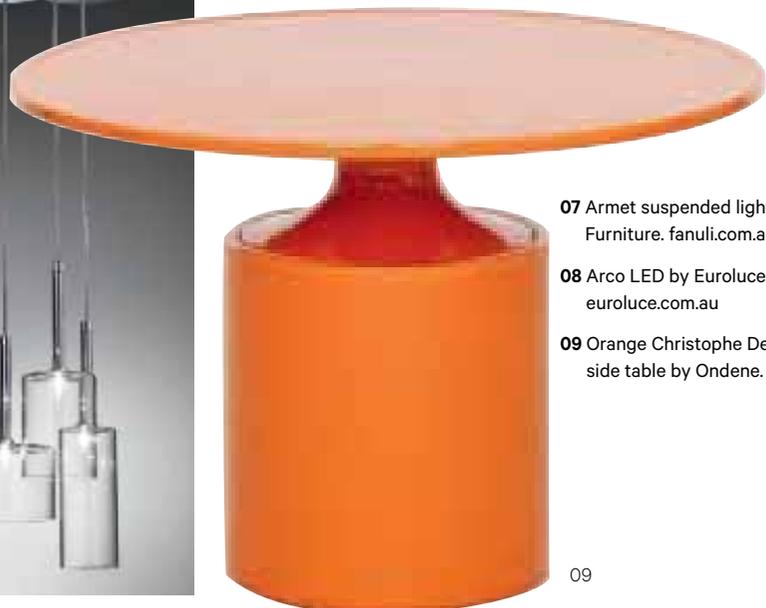
07 Armet suspended light by Fanuli Furniture. fanuli.com.au

08 Arco LED by Euroluce. euroluce.com.au

09 Orange Christophe Delcourt OUM side table by Ondene. ondene.com



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