

## PERSPECTIVES

Frank Platell



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# Active for passive-solar

**D**AVID JORDAN admits that he was sceptical about a passive-solar home being requested by his environmentally friendly wife, Sue.

But after living in it he is converted, and loud in his praise. "It's the only way to go," he said. "My energy costs are down by more than half. The gas bill is zilch and the electricity amounts to about \$50 every two months.

"When the outdoor temperature drops to low single figures on a winter's night, I can still walk around comfortably indoors in light clothing, even go barefoot. Tiled floors are still radiating heat soaked up during the day.

"It has a lot of my wife's ideas and we are very happy with the two-storey design. It's the feel when we come inside, how it all functions in harmony and it all flows."

David said it was not an easy project, with a narrow site steeply sloping down from a busy road in Mosman Park. He wanted a balcony off the main bedroom upstairs for a sou'-westerly glimpse of the ocean.

The balcony has proved to be a significant contributor to the cross-ventilation of the whole house. David admitted to the home having a cyclone net rating for storms off the sea — he had already seen the force with flying roofs locally.

Window walls to the back face north on to a wide, elevated timber deck. The winter sun shines well indoors between two big trees. A loured pergola which has coped with the summer sun is now just allowing it to peek through to main outdoor and indoor living spaces, reaching 4m indoors in June.

The couple had read about architect Garry Baverstock's expertise in solar homes and approached him for an energy-efficient, low-maintenance home. It was purpose-built for their lifestyle and also caters efficiently for visiting children.

The home, which exploits a zero lot line on one side, makes a play on big volumes, where vaulted ceilings in main areas can peak 4.5m up. A dramatic play on space is made in the central kitchen, where a raked pine-board ceiling soars up to a mezzanine-style window wall to the home office, allowing working owners to remain in touch.

This detail allows sunlight to filter through from a clerestory window upstairs and softly lights the main work area.

Sue needed a big kitchen where two or three people could work in comfort. Her love of cupboards is reflected in almost 8m of bench cabinets with beech doors and postformed laminated tops.

Adjoining is a dining area, able to seat up to 10, and related to the back deck. There is a separate sitting room for the big television, and it is virtually self-contained with a cocktail bar and kitchenette facilities in one corner.

"Shut the door and no one knows I am in here," David said.

Upstairs is the main bedroom and the adjoining home office, both with vaulted ceilings. The former has a 4.5m-long walk-in wardrobe, extensively fitted out with adjustable shelves, drawers and hanging space. There is a traditional ensuite, but with facilities for making a cup of coffee in the morning.

**The home is not open for inspection but details can be discussed with architect Garry Baverstock, phone 9386 3888.**



PICTURES: LEE GRIFFITH



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