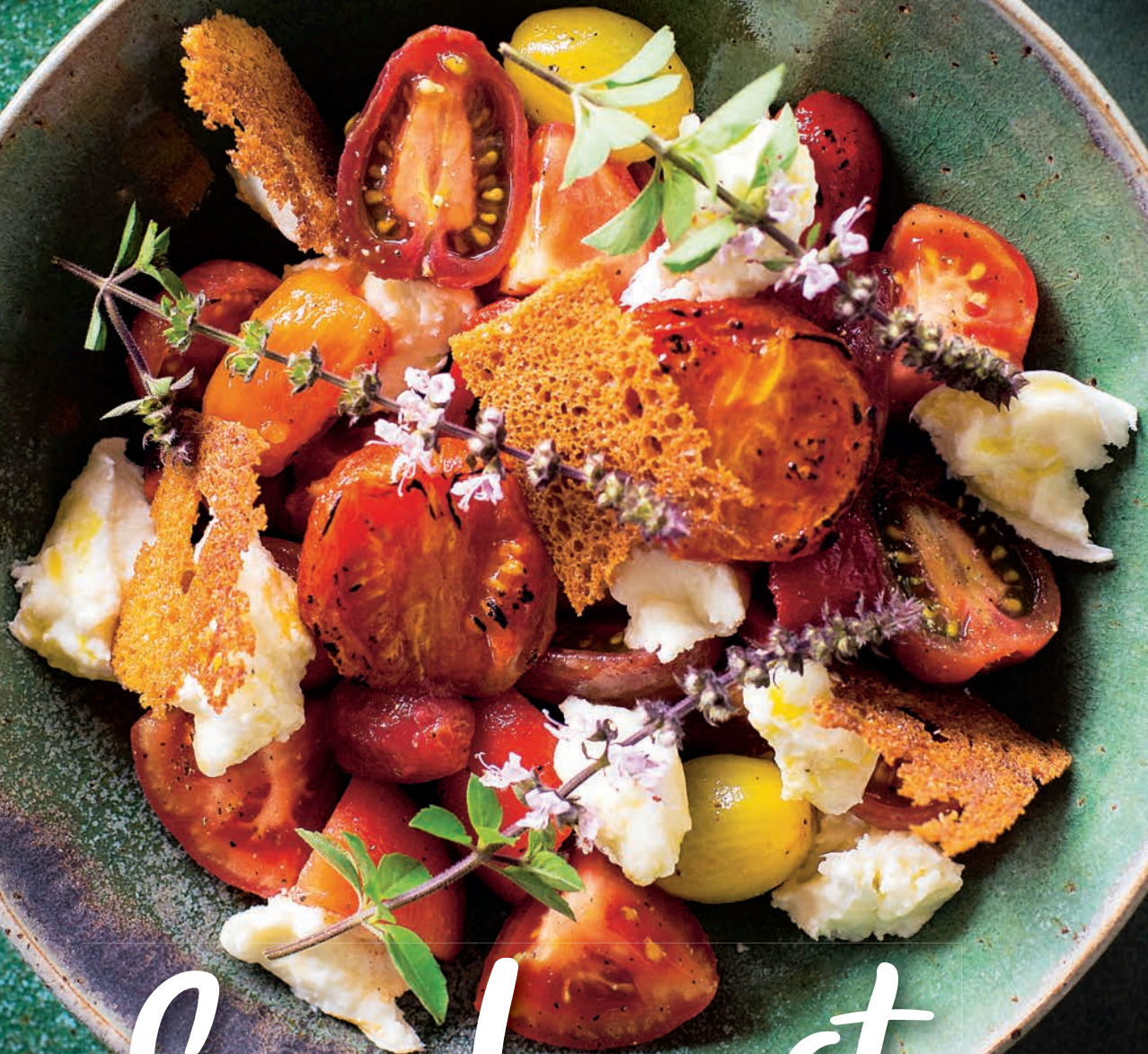


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West side storey

A double-height outdoor living space and a central pool create a home for all seasons for a family of five

By Tonya Turner

There are plenty of ways to make the most of a west-facing backyard. Just ask architect Mathieu Levesque, who recently transformed a family of five's three-bedroom, two-bathroom, 14-year-old replica Queenslander in Stafford into a brighter, cooler, bigger and better connected home with a swimming pool.

Although the couple had planned the new extension to span the full width of the backyard, Mathieu presented them with a narrower north-facing alternative with internal living spaces positioned in an "L" shape around the pool and a double-height outdoor room.

"Once we talked them through our initial sketches they both saw the benefits. This narrower floor plate gave us better control over the western afternoon sun and provided more opportunities for cross ventilation and winter sun penetration," Mathieu says.

The design also allowed the swimming pool to be located more centrally, boosting its connection to the living spaces and privacy from the neighbours.

"They wanted the swimming pool to be central to the design, not just a secondary or forgotten element in the backyard," Mathieu says.

Several small but crucial details were used to unify the internal living areas and the swimming pool: the pool fences were detailed without brackets so they would look "invisible"; dedicated pool fencing was reduced by using external walls and boundary fences; door thresholds were flush; and corner sliding stacking doors were introduced to create a large unobstructed opening between the internal areas and the pool.

The double-height outdoor area was key.

"On the most basic level it is a simple outdoor space designed to be comfortable and useable throughout the year.

"The reason we introduced a high roof over the outdoor room is that we didn't want this western-facing space to get too hot and we didn't want the roof over this space to reflect heat and glare into the upper floor areas.

"The room also acts as a central gathering space that helps to connect all of the living spaces together," Mathieu says.



QUICK DIP ... The central pool is a refreshing spot for friends and family.

Operable aluminium shutters around the outdoor living area can be adjusted to provide shade from the western sun in the afternoons and opened the rest of the time to allow for ventilation and views.

Inside the home, the owners felt they were outgrowing the floorplan in

terms of both size and functionality.

"The upper-floor living spaces and deck were also facing west and were not protected from the afternoon sun which made them uncomfortable, especially in summer. Conversely in winter, there was no opportunity for warming sunlight as the living spaces



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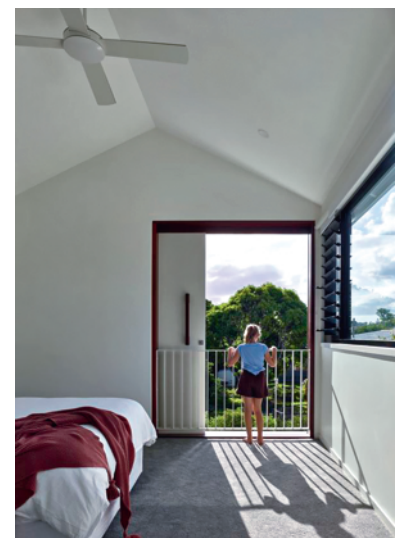
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This narrower floor plate gave us better control over the western sun



BRING ON THE HEAT ... Parents and children alike enjoy their new poolside living area downstairs and separate bedroom suites upstairs in their Stafford home.

had no windows or openings to the north,” Mathieu says.

Along with the primary problem of the disconnect between the backyard and the house, the issues were resolved by moving the kitchen and living spaces to the ground level. Solid sliding timber panels also proved to be

a cost-effective way to achieve large openings facing west that could be opened and closed as needed.

Also on the brief was a second living room to separate the children’s toys from the parents’ leisure space. Moving the kitchen and main living spaces to the ground level meant the

upper level could become a kids’ zone with separate living room and children’s bedrooms. A new master bedroom and ensuite on the other side of the upper level provides a parents’ retreat that didn’t involve walking over toys to get to. It was a win-win, and both the parents and

children couldn’t be happier with their new, improved living spaces and pool, just in time for summer.

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Builder: Petro Builders, ph: 3432 9102
Pictures: Scott Burrows



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