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Sunday Times, Perth

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Your complete guide to WA property

Sunday Times

HOME

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FLIPSIDE

SMOOTH OPERATOR

Commercial-grade materials give a superior, spotless finish



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COOL, CALM AND COLLECTED

On the surface this contemporary Ardross home is the epitome of minimalism, yet the story behind its design and construction is anything but streamlined or simple

WHEN architect Bernard Lim and his wife Melissa, an architectural graduate who has worked in the building design industry for more than 10 years, embarked on this project, the odds were stacked against them.

The husband-and-wife team had to come up with a suitable design for a 9m-wide block, and get the plans and materials approved by council, while their first baby was on the way – all of which presented potential obstacles.

Nevertheless, the creative dynamos not only overcame the roadblocks, they also raised the bar in residential architecture thanks to their innovative use of obscure materials, including a concrete product commonly used for wheat silos.

“We wanted a house that had excellent access to natural light, with simple, clutter-free spaces and able to cater for family growth and visiting relatives within a compact footprint,” Bernard says.

“We wanted materials that have some form of factory finish to reduce labour on site as well as have good insulation properties.”

Their two-storey success story is the result of a collaborative effort between the couple, their builder, Andrew Tulloch, and structural engineer, Joe Car.

Sitting on a 360sq m block, the 217sq m four-bedroom, three-bathroom residence has an open-plan living, dining and kitchen area and two activity zones.

Bernard says he was inspired by his roots in industrial architecture and sought out commercial materials for his unassuming panelled design.

“The panels are manufactured in quality-controlled environments to achieve more accurate proprietary connection details which allows for rapid installation and better water proofing outcome,” he says.

“The factory finishing process provides a superior finish and reduces labour on site.”

Insulated concrete walls with an exposed concrete finish have been used on the ground floor. A mix of smooth and textured finishes enhances the modern meets robust feel.

An insulated foam sandwich wall and roof panel with metal cladding has a metallic finish that changes in appearance depending on the location of the sun.

However, it's the translucent insulated polycarbonate panels, manufactured in WA, that form one of the most surprising yet stunning features. Typically used as an alfresco skylight material, the panels allow plenty of light to stream through the sections of the home where it has been installed in the wall, particularly in the open-plan living and dining area.

“This provides diffused natural light, privacy, negates the use of blinds and reduces heat gain,” Bernard says.

The interior design scheme reflects the couple's relaxed demeanour, with its clean and clutter-free aesthetic.

Large storage spaces allow for any “mess” to be hidden – and Bernard says they deliberately focus on buying less.

Their daughter Macy, now 18 months old, is also able to burn off her bundles of energy inside this spotless home without the risk of knocking over any breakables during her adventures.

JADE JUREWICZ



BUILD



Bernard and Melissa Lim with daughter Macy inside their industrial architecture-inspired Ardross home.

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FAST FACTS

- * The total build time, from earthworks to full interior completion, was only eight months.
- * Innovative, highly insulated materials have been used to reduce labour costs and time spent on site.
- * The 217sq m home, plus its 50sq m garage, sits on a 360sq m block.

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