

This page The sensational curves at the rear are in striking contrast to the four-square lines of the front of the house. 'Livorno' outdoor table from GlobeWest with vintage chairs from Ici Et Là. ClassiCon 'Corker No. 1' cork stool from Anibou. Cassina 'Cab' dining chairs from Mobilia. Vintage standard lamp from Smith Street Bazaar. Landscaping by Sophie McLean Landscape Design. Builder, LBA Construction Group.

Opposite page The curves continue in the informal living area, with its sculptural fireplace. B&B Italia 'Tufty-Time' sofa from Space. Hay 'Bowler' side table from Cult. 'Chromatic' rug from Halcyon Lake. Leather seat pad and bolster made by Vogue Upholstery. Venetian plaster walls in Dulux 'Natural White'. Bench seat in custom concrete. Ceiling in off-form concrete. 'White Smoked Oak' flooring from Royal Oak Flooring.



LIQUID

A luminous, airy extension has elevated a boxy, ho-hum home into an organic showpiece for its owners.

ASSETS



Words **CHRIS PEARSON**
Photography **LISA COHEN**

This page and opposite page, bottom An ingenious concrete plinth running along two walls of the living area morphs from handy seating to a hearth, to a display shelf and back to seating. B&B Italia 'Tufty-Time' sofa from Space. Vintage chair from Castarina & Co. Hay 'Bowler' side table and 'Tray' table both from Cult. Saarinen 'Tulip' stool from De De Ce. ClassiCon 'Corker No. 1' cork stool from Anibou. Vintage floor lamp from Smith Street Bazaar. Serralunga 'Cassero' planter from Space. Chromatic rug from Halcyon Lake. Leather seat pads and bolsters by Vogue Upholstery. 'Hourglass' and 'Cameo Plate' wall lights by Anna Charlesworth. Photographs by Naomi Hobson. **Opposite page, top** Ferm Living 'Desert' chair from In Good Company.



Expect the unexpected with this home in Melbourne's southeast. With a four-square, rendered-brick facade that gives no clue to what lies beyond, stepping into the hallway becomes a revelation. Arches beckon you towards a brand-new extension with organic curves that seductively wind themselves around you. There the paradoxical properties of concrete, fluid and malleable when wet, solid when set, have been explored to their full expressive potential.

When architect Michael Leeton of Leeton Pointon first encountered the two-storey postwar home in 2016 it was "dark, inward looking, boxy and unprepossessing." But for the owners, a couple with two children now teenagers, there was still plenty to love when they bought it three years earlier. "The house was spacious, but not oversized," says the owner. "We liked the elevation above the street at the front, while the generous site meant we could have a great garden. A separate pool house screamed perfection for teenage children. And then there were the features inside – a great staircase, steel-framed windows, terrazzo entrance and a northerly aspect with lots of sunshine. It had plenty of that scary word – potential."

Scary indeed for these first-time renovators, who called in Michael and interior designer Karyne Murphy of Karyne Murphy Studio to help them realise that potential. "We loved Michael's simple and elegant approach – how he uses curves, explores light and blends the old with the new was exactly what we needed," says the owner. "We wanted a lot of light and the spaces to work well for entertaining, be that large family moments, dinners with friends or just for our teenage children, but it also had to work when it was just ourselves. And we wanted an incredible garden to be part of the house, blending inside with out."

"The brief was for something open, generous and light to reflect both personalities," says Michael, who dramatically transformed the home with a brand-new extension that wallows in the northern light. Conceived as a garden room, the open plan links to a lush, landscaped setting, masterminded by Sophie McLean of Sophie McLean Landscape Design, with garden and home in total harmony. >



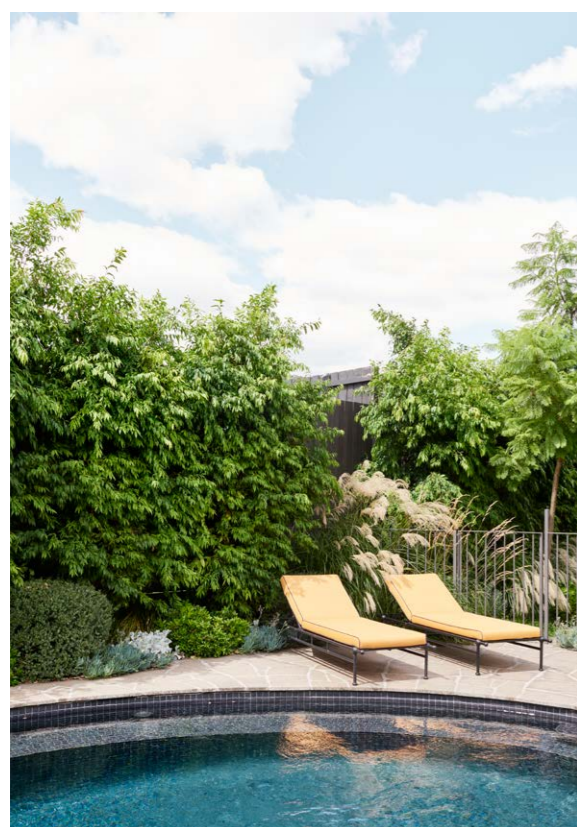


« Structurally, the original section was largely untouched by Michael, the notable exception being the insertion of French doors in the formal lounge at the front to let in more light. He shifted a bedroom from the top floor to the ground floor, shared with the new extension, so both children's bedrooms are there, making the top floor one massive main bedroom suite, a parents' retreat complete with dressing room and study.

But most striking of all is that luminous, breezy extension. "As you enter your eyes are drawn through an arched opening to the light-filled pavilion and garden beyond," says Michael. "The original house had a curved staircase with a lovely decorative steel balustrade, which provides the perfect segue to the new extension, where you are immediately surrounded by light, space and a view into the garden. Because the original house was so inward-looking we wanted the extension to be like stepping into another world, creating an element of surprise."

Generous overhangs protect the open plan from summer heat, while letting in the winter sun and oculi skylights draw dramatic pools of light into the space while also framing tantalising glimpses of sky. "The expressive curved concrete roof and flowing internal planning create a delicate balance between mass and weightlessness," he says. "Concrete creates the aqueous roof form and provides thermal mass. The house elevates rudimentary concrete construction to a textured and highly expressive form. Those curves soften the edges, so that inside and out become blurred and the garden becomes part of the building."

Karyne countered any coldness of concrete with a warm, natural palette punctuated by primaries and natural materials, used in some novel ways. For example, wide-gauge American oak floorboards grace the entry. "They create a sense of arrival, but are laid on the »



This page and opposite page, bottom right A round skylight crafted into the concrete ceiling creates a wonderful halo effect above the informal eating area. Cappellini 'Hi Pad' barstools from Cult. Luceplan 'Counterbalance' wall light from JSB Lighting. Benchtops in honed Pietra Grigio stone and travertine on the serving area, both from Corsi & Nicolai. Joinery in Duropal timber laminate from Bench Top City. Gloss splashback tiles in Sage from Signorino. Kitchen ceiling in 'White Smoked Oak' veneer from Royal Oak Flooring and custom concrete. Appliances from Fisher & Paykel. Kitchen mixer from Astra Walker. Accessories from In Good Company. Opposite page, top The original bricks have been rendered over. Gubi 'Bohemian 72' chair and planter from In Good Company. Compact wall light from Snelling Studio. Existing original terrazzo flooring. Opposite page, bottom left Tectona '1800' sunloungers from Classic with a Twist.

This page New curves in the entry give tantalising clues as to what lies beyond. Vintage sconce from Nicholas & Alistair. Existing balustrade restored by builder. Wool/sisal runner from Don Currie Carpets. **Opposite page, clockwise from top** USM sideboard from Anibou with Flos 'Snoopy' table lamp from Euroluce. Artwork by Makinti Napanangka. Vase by Mark Douglass Design. Walls in Dulux 'Grand Piano'. 'Flotation' pendant light by Ingo Maurer from Space. Vintage timber side table from Kazari. Custom steel plate fireplace with hearth in Rosso Alicante marble from Corsi & Nicolai. In the main bedroom, rug from Cadrys. Saarinen 'Tulip' side table from De De Ce. ClassiCon 'Roattino' floor lamp by Eileen Gray from Anibou. 'Orla' bedside table from Grazia&Co. Custom bedhead by Vogue Upholstery. E15 'Colour' table light by Daniel Rybakken + Andreas Engesvik. Bedlinen from Cultiver. Walls in Dulux 'Natural White'. Wool sisal carpet from Don Currie Carpets. The pink and terracotta hues warm the children's bathroom. Rug from Cadrys. New Volumes side table and 'Colour Studio' floor tiles in Malt from Artedomus. Walls in Venetian plaster. Rosso Alicante stone on joinery from Corsi & Nicolai. Wall-mounted brass mixers from Astra Walker.



« diagonal so they draw you towards the arches and curves of the extension,” she says. In the kitchen, a chocolate travertine breakfast bar sits beneath a round skylight, while she has introduced subtle texture and colour in the sage tiled splashback, a counterpoint to the austere concrete ceiling. The children's bathroom boasts warm terracotta walls, teamed with ceramic tiles, brass taps and a tactile Marmorino finish on the walls.

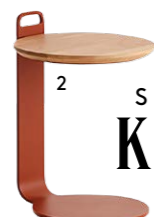
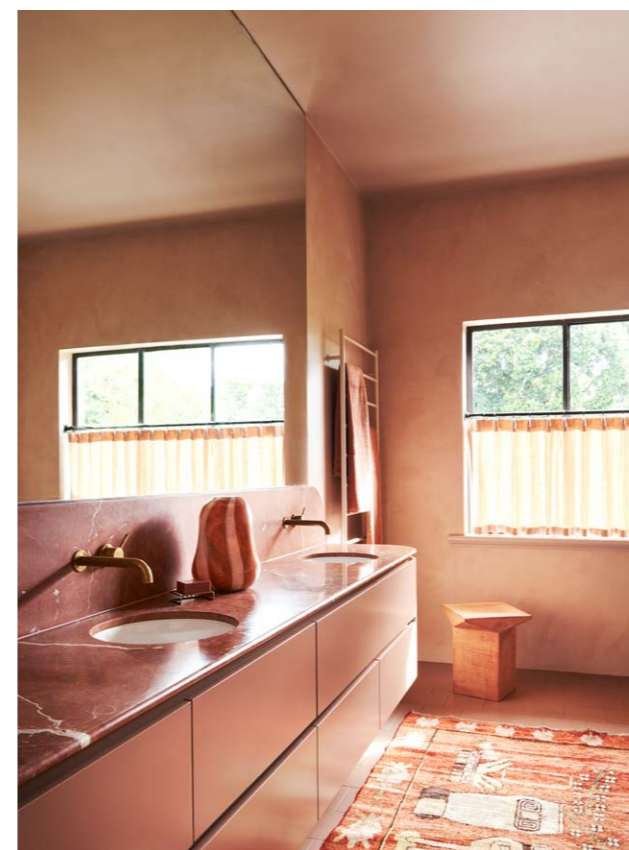
For the furniture, the owner specified “both vintage and new, eclectic, with a sense of the unexpected, not like a showroom,” says Karyne. “We hunted high and low for classic pieces with a twist.” One of the most striking finds is a vintage travertine table in the front room, Deco style, on which Karyne replaced the top with toughened glass, the perfect complement to a classic retro sofa. A USM modular storage unit in navy is “quite masculine and with the matching coffee table, it defines that room in palette and overall feel.” While a B&B Italia ‘Tufty-Time’ sofa graces the “garden room”, perhaps the most striking piece of furniture is the concrete bench that weaves around the room on two walls, evolving from bench seating to hearth and back to bench seating and even an informal meals area.

It's testament to the power of concrete and its adaptability, the perfect metaphor for a home that moulds itself to the lifestyle of its owners while also being solid and grounded at the same time. **15**

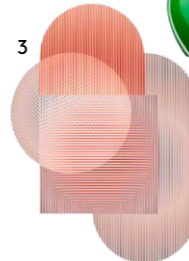
leetonpointon.com; [@karynemurphystudio](https://www.instagram.com/karynemurphystudio).

SPEED READ

» When the owners bought this postwar home in Melbourne's southeast, it was dark and boxy, but, with its generous site raised above the street and north-facing rear garden bathed in sunshine, they could see plenty of potential. » They hired architect Michael Leeton of Leeton Pointon to let in the light and relieve the home of its unrelenting boxiness. » He sliced off an old rear extension and replaced it with one moulded in concrete, which exploits that material, its fluidity and solidity, to the full, with plenty of curves. The concrete is both a structural and decorative element in a light-filled garden room, an open-plan living area at the rear. » Interior designer Karyne Murphy of Karyne Murphy Studio has softened all that concrete with a neutral palette, punctuated with primaries for warmth and visual impact and inspired furniture that combines vintage with the new.



**SIGNATURE STYLE
KEY PIECES**



1 USM 'Haller Media O2' storage unit, \$3305, from Anibou. 2 GAN 'Isla' side table, \$1975, from Hub. 3 Moooi 'Trichroic Dalston Shapes' rug, \$5590, from Space. 4 Flos 'Snoopy' table lamp, \$2706, from Living Edge. 5 Gubi 'Pacha' lounge armchair, \$5390, from Cult.