

Domain

NEW LIVING

13141 NOVEMBER 2017



CALM & COLLECTED

Making room to breathe

Darren Palmer
ACROSS ERAS
Page 8

Lucy Feagins
STRONG BONES
Page 10

Neighbourhoods
BACKING A WINNER
Page 13

COVER STORY

Words by KATE JONES | Photos by DEREK SWALWELL



STYLIST BEK SHEPPARD

Keeping the best plans in check



Point Lonsdale residence by InForm Design, top and above.

OUR COVER

Point Lonsdale residence by InForm Design
Photographed by Derek Swalwell.
Styling by Bek Sheppard.

Somewhere on the way to better home design, Australian floor plans can take a wrong turn. Down this treacherous path lies cavernous open-plan spaces, superfluous bathrooms and bedrooms where giants could easily make themselves comfortable.

In the constant manoeuvring for space, it's easy to get greedy. But overestimating dimensions in search of extra room can lead to monster floor plans that gobble up most of a site.

It's a conundrum architect Simon Perkins, principal of Pleyzier Perkins, confronts in almost every initial briefing with clients.

"Every first briefing meeting we have I give my spiel about quality over quantity," he explains.

"Over the last 10 years building costs have gone up massively and so there's now a massive premium on space and how it's used and that's the fundamental shift as well.

"Often clients come to the table with the brief that requires a lot of space.

"But after discussion, some discipline about what's actually really needed and after learning a bit more about what big square metres cost, there's a common thread among all projects these days – how do you make space with a bit more flexibility and how to be efficient with it."

Some may assume they can wear the financial pain of a costly build if it buys them more square metres. However, the costs don't stop once the construction ends.

Larger spaces require heating, cooling and cleaning. "Often my main ambition early is to convince clients to consider reducing the amount of space they build so that the house is more efficient, more sustainable and it works just as well as a big house without the excess flab," Perkins says.

"With good design one can achieve a sense of space and a perception of space that doesn't require vast vacuous interior spaces in reality."

If bigger is not always better, what is the solution?

Pleyzier Perkins, working closely with design and construction company InForm, has found the answer in an outdoor living concept made famous by Italians centuries ago.

DESIGN FEATURES THAT CELEBRATE SPRING/SUMMER



Loggia

There's nothing like an open-air space with all the trappings of an indoor room. Loggias, which are covered, open-walled rooms, let you enjoy the sun and fresh air without being too exposed to the elements.



Outdoor kitchen

If food and sun bring people together, why not combine them? Outdoor kitchens can be as large (think built-in fridges) or as modest as you like.

Courtyards



Interior courtyards that can be seen from multiple angles inside the house create a faultless indoor-outdoor flow. These spaces act as excellent private retreats.

RODGER CUMMINS / ISTOCK / URBAN ANGLES



InForm's Brighton 5 residence, left, above and below.

Loggias, Italian for "lodge", are al fresco areas with more architectural form than a verandah. The Oxford dictionary defines a loggia as "a gallery or room with one or more open sides, especially one that forms part of a house and has one side open to the garden".

Loggias typically flow from an interior living area and lead to an adjacent garden. If the materials used inside the house are used in the loggia, they can seamlessly extend a home's practical space.

"Outdoor spaces are fundamental and if you have a large covered area beyond your meals zone, it creates its own shade internally," Perkins says.

"We believe that the kitchen meals area is the central hub of the house and family life, and it's that space

that needs to flow to the exterior and it's that space that needs to have a generous open link to the garden.

"Combined with that is the need for some covered protected outdoor living space because we can't sit out in the middle of the garden in summer without any sun protection."

Loggias are luxuriously fitted to blend the internal and external. Materials and fittings can include timber-lined ceilings, built-in kitchen spaces and open fireplaces. Critically, they need to provide light and air circulation into the house.

Another floor plan efficiency comes in the form of full height windows, but with a less is more approach to ceiling heights.

"People want three metre or 3.3 metre ceiling heights, and at the

end of the day it's the client's choice. However, the better outcome is to have 2.7 metres with full height glass rather than three metres or 3.3 metres with windows that don't come to the ceiling," Perkins says.

"It's the full height windows that gives that sense of spatial continuity that makes the house feel generous.

"So we talk about it and clients appreciate the conversation because they've never thought about it deeply, they just come to the table saying 'I want this size because everyone's told me three-metre ceilings are great'.

"But when I explain the principles of space and design and working on a house in a cost efficient way and using money wisely – don't spend the money on a three-metre ceiling just leave it at 2.7 and spend the money on full-height glass – they appreciate that conversation."

Smart design is a balance of knowing when to maximise and when to minimise space. This depends on catering to the household's needs and knowing how best to capitalise on the surrounds.

This all hinges on a personalised design, which comes from close consultation with clients, says Chris McKimm, director at InForm.

"Our company has a really strong personal relationship with our clients," he says.

"I think about it often because three of my kids are in the business now and we'd rather spend a bit more money on a house to make it a better house than worry about the last few hundred dollars profit.

"We're design driven, we love architectural design whereas a lot of builders pop things out to be cheap and do volume; they don't give a damn about the outcome." ■



"With good design one can achieve a sense of space that doesn't require vast vacuous interior spaces in reality."