



treasure trove

An artist and serial renovator turned to a trusted architect to craft a unique masterpiece: a family space that displays a beloved collection

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ARTWORK (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) UNREADABLE PAINTING, LEONIE MANSBRIDGE. THREE ROCKS PAINTING, LINDSAY HARRIS. POT/SCULPTURE, NGAHINA HOHAIA. PRINT (FRAMED), ANTONI TAPIES. PAINTING, ANGELA STEWARD. PAINTING, TEELAH GEORGE. HEART STONE (FRAMED), JUDY WATSON. PICTURE (FRAMED), JOHN REYNOLDS. (STILL LIFE PAINTINGS) MARKET FINDS FROM CALIFORNIA, USA. (OPPOSITE, ABOVE TROLLEY & ON BLACK WALL) LEONIE MANSBRIDGE




cheat sheet

Who lives here: Leonie Mansbridge, an artist who is studying for a PhD; her husband Paul, an electrician who runs his own electrical contracting company; and Jimmy, the spoodle. The couple's four grown-up children Joanna, Tabitha, Sascha and Ben, along with eight grandchildren, are frequent visitors.

Style of home: A modern two-storey self-contained extension, built in the back garden of a 1930s heritage cottage.

 Planning took 12 months and the build took nine months.

 The total build cost \$330k including architect fees.

LIVING AREA (opposite) The armchairs have been upholstered with fabric picked up on overseas trips. "I bought the blue material in San Francisco about 10 years ago and the yellow fabric came from New York," says Leonie. **STUDY NOOK** The hardworking Pirelli rubber floor is softened by layered vintage rugs.



When

serial renovators Leonie (pictured above) and Paul Mansbridge moved into their Fremantle semi, they were adamant that their renovating days were behind them.

Previously living in a warehouse they'd renovated in the centre of town, the couple were attracted to the single-storey house as it only needed a cosmetic makeover and had a space that artist Leonie could use as a studio. "We were finally going to stay put," says Leonie, who with Paul, has renovated and sold eight properties in the city. "We'd spent all our lives renovating – I don't think our children ever lived in a fully-finished home."

When a 'For Sale' board went up on a 1930s Art Deco cottage up the road, despite their best intentions, the couple couldn't help but take a peek. "But we were only going for a sticky beak," says Leonie. "We had no intention of buying and renovating again."

However, it seemed the house, which sat on a fairly large 650-square-metre block, had other ideas. After being unable to get it out of their heads (and having just sold their holiday house), the couple eventually threw in a "crazy offer" that was accepted. "I think my initial response was 'Bugger!'," says Leonie.

Once the shock of taking on another project wore off, Leonie wasted no time in developing a grand plan for the site. From the

outset, she envisaged utilising the large back garden and building a modern self-contained home which, although linked to the original house, could be closed off when the latter was being used as an Airbnb rental or as accommodation for extended family.

She also had a clear vision of how the extension should look. "I wasn't into replicating the traditional cottage at the front," she says. "I wanted a distinctive contemporary space out the back."

Auckland-born Leonie also wanted a black box, reminiscent of the holiday shacks – or baches – she stayed in while growing up in New Zealand. "Kiwis have a great make-do attitude and a lot of the original baches were made out of plywood boxes used to ship cars over, which were then stained with black creosote," says Leonie. "I always loved the idea of these black boxes surrounded by the bush, and that's what I wanted to replicate here."

Local architect Philip Stejskal, who had worked with the couple's daughter Sascha on her own renovation, was engaged to bring Leonie's vision to life. "It can be hard for other people to understand an image in your head but Phil totally understood where I was coming from," says Leonie.

Constructed with innovative structural insulated panels, the resulting extension features an open-plan kitchen/dining/living area plus a bedroom, study nook and ensuite on the ground floor with Leonie's all-important studio, kitchenette and bathroom upstairs.

A key requirement was space to hang Leonie's extensive art collection – and that the interior design was simple so as not to compete with the many colourful artworks, books, globes and

ARTWORK (OPPOSITE): X PIECE; LEONIE MANSBRIDGE; OLD MARKET SIGN & 'M' LETTER; LUCKY FINDS

KITCHEN "I love stainless steel," says Leonie. "I used to be a nurse so there's always been something about the material for me." **DINING AREA** Leonie's custom 16-seat stainless-steel table was made by Perth's Ferguson Corporation. They also made the bookcases and benchtops, as well as the kitchen and bathroom cabinetry.



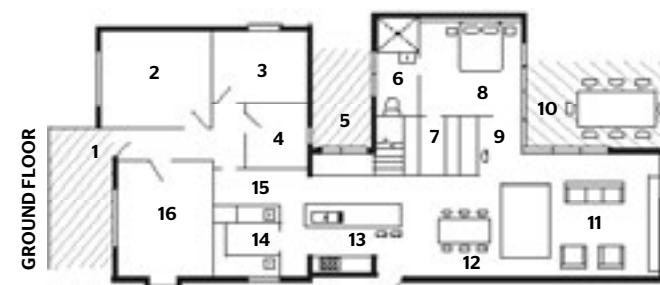
knick-knacks that the self-confessed collector has amassed over the years. "I didn't want fussy, I didn't want curves," she says. "I wanted straight lines and simplicity because I knew my art would be quite overwhelming so it was important that the architecture didn't take over."

The interior fittings, including a polished concrete floor, island bench and a stainless-steel table, also had to be robust enough to withstand the rigours of Leonie and Paul's younger grandchildren. "The kids can ride their bikes around the house and it's all good," says Leonie. "That's what a house is for – it's not a show home."

As keen entertainers, the house copes well with large functions, such as get-togethers at Christmas and a hula-themed party for Paul's 60th birthday, where 100 people packed the house and courtyard. There were also thousands of visitors when the house morphed into a gallery as part of 2015's Artist Open House Fremantle. "But the space doesn't feel overwhelming when it's just Paul, Jimmy and I, either, so it's very versatile," says Leonie.

Despite leaving all the design decisions to his wife ("We work really well together, I come up with the ideas and he implements them," says Leonie), Paul is equally enthused with his second 'forever' home. So much so, that this time around, there's definitely no chance of another renovation. "This is it," says Leonie. "Paul says they can carry us out." **LD**

See more of architect Philip's work at architectureps.com.



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|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Entry | 11. Living area |
| 2. Bedroom | 12. Dining area |
| 3. Bedroom | 13. Kitchen |
| 4. Bathroom | 14. Butler's pantry |
| 5. Deck | 15. Laundry |
| 6. Master ensuite | 16. Living/kitchen area |
| 7. Walk-in robe | 17. Studio |
| 8. Master bedroom | 18. Bathroom |
| 9. Study nook | 19. Kitchenette |
| 10. Deck | 20. Deck |

ARTWORK (LEFT TO RIGHT, FROM TOP LEFT): BLACK PICTURE, LEONIE MANSBRIDGE, PICTURE (FRAMED), TAINA LEE, SMALL PICTURE, DAVID LEDGER, DARK PAINTING, FRANCES HANSEN, UNSIGNED PRINT (FRAMED), PICASSO, COLOURFUL, PAINTING, UNKNOWN, COLOURFUL SQUARE, ARTWORK, GEORGE, LARGE DARK PAINTING (FRAMED), JOHN, TESCHENDORFF, FLUORO PAINTING (FRAMED), TRACEY, TAWHIAO, PRINT (WHITE FRAMED), ANNETTE, SEEMAN, PAINTING (ON SHELF), PATRICK MILLER, UNREADABLE PAINTING, LEONIE MANSBRIDGE, THREE ROCKS PAINTING, LINDSAY HARRIS, POI SCULPTURE, ANGINA HO-HAIA, PRINT (FRAMED), ANTONI TAPIES, (MIRROR) ANNETTE SEEMAN, PRINT (FRAMED), RAKAI KARAITIANA, SMALL PAINTING (WHITE FRAMED), PENNY COSS, SMALL PAINTING (TIMBER FRAMED), MAREE HASS, MEDIUM DARK PAINTING, AROHA LEWIN, WHITE RECTANGLE, MAREE WILSON, SMALL STRIPED CANVAS, EVELINE KOTAL, PICTURE (BLACK FRAMED), SHAUN TAN

ARTWORK (LEFT TO RIGHT, FROM TOP LEFT): PHOTOGRAPH (FRAMED), BO WONG, LANDSCAPE PAINTING, MARKET FIND FROM PARIS, PAINTINGS (TRIPYCHY) R.J. BROWN, (SECOND ROW) PAINTING, JO DARBYSHIRE, DISH, TONY HARRINGTON, PAINTINGS (PAIR), LEONIE MANSBRIDGE, (THIRD ROW) SQUARE DOTS, TREVOR RICHARDS, PAINTING (WHITE FRAMED), DAVID LEDGER, PINK DOT, JUREK WYBRANIEC, PAINTING, ALEX SPREMBERG, YELLOW PIECE, MAX GIMBLETT, (BOTTOM ROW) PAINTING, TANISHA PERCIVAL, COLOURED DOTS, LEONIE MANSBRIDGE, PAINTING, JENNIFER EYLES, BROWN PAINTINGS (PAIR), SU BAKER



LIVING AREA (opposite) Resene's Black White paint provides a backdrop to the vast art collection. "It's such a great colour on which to display art because it greys off a bit, it's not a stark white. I've used it in all the houses I've lived in and now my kids use it, too," says Leonie. Ladder-backed Ib Kofod-Larsen dining chairs are from Fremantle's Hunters + Collectors Interiors. **STUDY NOOK** The walls here are lined with Samoan Tapa (bark) cloth. "I've had it for many years but was always short of enough wall space to hang it," says Leonie.

COLOUR STORY

Bold primary colours and earthy shades fill this industrial-look space. They don't compete for attention, due to the simple tones on the walls and floors.





COURTYARD The outdoor table and benches came from a local pub. "They were getting rid of them, so Paul gave them a sand and I got some cushions," says Leonie. **BEDROOM** (opposite, above) The bedside table is from Leonie's favourite vintage shop, Old Values. **BATHROOM** (opposite, below) Concrete blocks were used for the shower wall and kitchen island bench, which were then rendered in concrete. "It worked really well - people don't realise it's not poured concrete, which was more expensive," says Leonie. "I don't want to clean tiles and glass showerscreens."

LESSONS LEARNT

Consider your tolerance for mess before deciding to live through your reno

"EVEN THOUGH WE SEALED OFF THE BACK OF THE HOUSE, DUST GOT INTO EVERYTHING!"

LEONIE MANSBRIDGE, HOMEOWNER

Biggest regret: "I wish I'd made my studio bigger! It's a fantastic space but you can never have enough space as an artist, I could easily fill a studio that was twice the size."

Best decision: "The polished concrete floor. I love its simplicity and its thermal qualities. I also like the fact that you can go for a week without cleaning it and you can't see the dust."

Best tip: "Make a scrapbook of your ideas, whether it's a paper one or on a site like Pinterest. Every time you see something you like - for example, a tap or a light fitting - stick it in your scrapbook so you can show your architect or building designer. This will enable them to understand your design aesthetic and what you are trying to achieve."



ARTWORK: (ABOVE BED) TWO LARGE PAINTINGS, MARSE CODE SERIES, LEONIE MANSBRIDGE. (TOP ROW) OP-SHOP FINDS. (LOWER ROWS: LEFT TO RIGHT) PAINTING; FRANCIS HANSON, CARAVAN PAINTING; PETER MATULICH, PAINTING; LEONIE MANSBRIDGE, SQUARE CANVAS; TOM GIBBONS, PAINTING; FRANE LESSAC, OLD PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW ZEALAND, OP-SHOP CROSS-STITCH FIND. ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON

1 "UT" shelf trolley, \$1190, Industria X, industriax.com.au

3 GREAT FINDS

2 Suck UK cork globe, \$280, Top3 By Design, top3.com.au

3 "Camille" table lamp, \$49.95, Freedom, freedom.com.au

