



HAPPY TO BE HERE

The founders of Happy House children's accessories built such a people-friendly place in the back streets of Adelaide, they simply can't keep it to themselves

WORDS JANE FERGUSON PHOTOGRAPHS CHRIS CHEN PRODUCTION/STYLING MEGAN MORTON

previous pages Sliding glass doors in the living room access the courtyard and 15-metre lap pool. Cooper the cross-breed reflects the more sedate ambience of the space, which is furnished with a chocolate slab couch from Map Furniture, a Falkland lamp designed in 1964 by Bruno Munari, and an Enterprise chair from the House of Balscheit.

This page The white walls of the dining room lend themselves to works such as 'Flinders Lane', which Tiffany painted herself. Cans of Ligos sardines adorn the DuPont Corian island bench in the kitchen (opposite), while photographs of the packaging brighten the wall behind the stove, where David and Tiffany stand.



A stone's throw from the lively bistro and boutique strip of Hyde Park in Adelaide sits a maze of cul-de-sacs lined with old cottages and bland business premises. Opposite one of these lanes, the new three-bedroom home of David Buck and Tiffany Manuell is hidden behind a high wall of split-faced brick, offering them and their two children a life of blissful anonymity.

Tiffany is chief designer and director of Happy House, the company she and David established in 1995 (he is a director and administrator), which produces clothing, bedlinen and other gift items for girls aged eight to 16. Both contributed to the design of their home, spending several hours a week with architect John Eckert and his assistant, Ben Bolton. Yet it still took them a year to settle on what they wanted: a quiet haven that was light on maintenance and had plenty of space for their daughters – five-year-old Indigo and one-year-old Macy – to play.

This careful planning is evident in the light, airy, minimalist house, which is comfortable without being cluttered and incorporates materials that are easy to clean. "We like things to ➤





A lot of the furniture in the house was custom-made, including the leather ottoman in the family room adjoining the kitchen (opposite) and the kitchen stools (previous pages, right) by Now Furniture in Adelaide. Against the neutral scheme, Tiffany has hung abstract artworks for a vibrant splash of colour. The family area features a painting by South Australian artist Jamie Larson, while 'the red room' (this page) – aka study and soon-to-be home cinema – has a work by Kirsten Chambers. Indigo sits on a red beanbag from Freedom. ➔



Light floods into the ensuite (left) through a pane of frosted glass, while clear glass separates the large shower from the rest of the space. A strip of Victorian bluestone supports the laboratory basins and an Indonesian buddha. Bluestone also lines the hearth (on page 63). One of the most surprising features in the home is the bar (below left), where David prepares drinks. It's usually concealed behind folding doors along one wall of the living space. The main bedroom (opposite) is a contemporary dream: powder-coated bed on wheels with a white leather bedhead (both custom-made by Tait Enterprises), Delta reading lights and an untitled painting by Tiffany.

be practical and durable, rather than precious. Visitors love the house because it's such a fun place to be," says Tiffany. The floor plan combines large, open living spaces with a series of 'boxes' for the bedrooms and bathrooms. Light enters at the east and west through wide, curtain-free windows and glass sliding doors that are framed in anodised aluminium.

Tiffany and David chose white for the walls, ceilings and joinery, with a few doors and panels in soft grey as a contrast. Abstract paintings add splashes of colour. "Simplicity does not date," Tiffany explains. "White is clean, fresh, easy, and the best backdrop for everything. If we want to change a room, we simply move a painting." Except for the carpeted bedrooms, the flooring is a Spanish-made Azul sandstone, which complements all the spacious living areas.

In the kitchen and family room, signs of cooking and hobbies are tucked out of sight. The Smeg stainless-steel electric oven and Gaggenau hotplate sit neatly below a glass splash-back lined with photographs blown up to poster size. The sink is positioned discreetly at the end of an island bench custom-made in DuPont Corian. In the family room, deep cupboards conceal computers, a TV and a fold-out table.

The dining space, an alcove to one side of the living area, is furnished with white polypropylene chairs and an aluminium table topped with frosted glass. "I like objects that have function as well as form," says David. "We love the squares and sharp lines of modern architecture – we're not curvy people."

For the living area, Tiffany bought two long couches covered in soft leather – "one milky brown and the other smoky grey" – plus a matching grey ottoman. An Enterprise chair in white fibreglass turns its back on sliding glass doors that lead to the salt-water pool on the western side of the house.

The simplicity of this outdoor space echoes the clean lines inside. Rising above the pool, aluminium beams cast patterns of shade on the water, while agaves in pebble-topped beds edge the courtyard – a neat finish to an uncluttered home. ■

