

Room for everyone!

Robert and Jennifer turned a modest beach house on the Central Coast into a heavenly holiday home that's perfect for all the family... including their 10 grandchildren.

Story Cornelia Schulze,
photography Mike Bell, Rawlife Studios

Beachside homes with a northerly aspect are rare on the Central Coast. But this house at Pearl Beach has even more to offer: facing north, it sits behind a headland that keeps the often stiff easterly winds at bay and protects the beach, making it a perfect place for a swim in calm ocean waters. It is one of just six houses in the area that have this perfect trifecta of location, orientation and protection.

Robert and Jennifer had been looking to buy the property next door when this house came on the market and while Jennifer would have been happy to keep it as it was, Robert had other plans: "I was prepared to buy it provided we could really make it our own. The house was built in the 1970s so a number of people have owned it and it went through various iterations. A couple of owners ago, something close to Hamptons style was introduced. We like that style, but we wanted to do it our own way and make it perfect for us."

"In the end, we kept the bones, but we replaced the roof and flooring, added skylights and changed the floorplan to open up the main living area and increase the size of the kitchen. We also redid the driveway and the landscaping."

However, Robert reveals that the biggest challenge was the electrical wiring. "There were a lot of issues and it was basically an accident waiting to happen and we had to completely re-wire the home. There were various other challenges, but in the end it all came together."

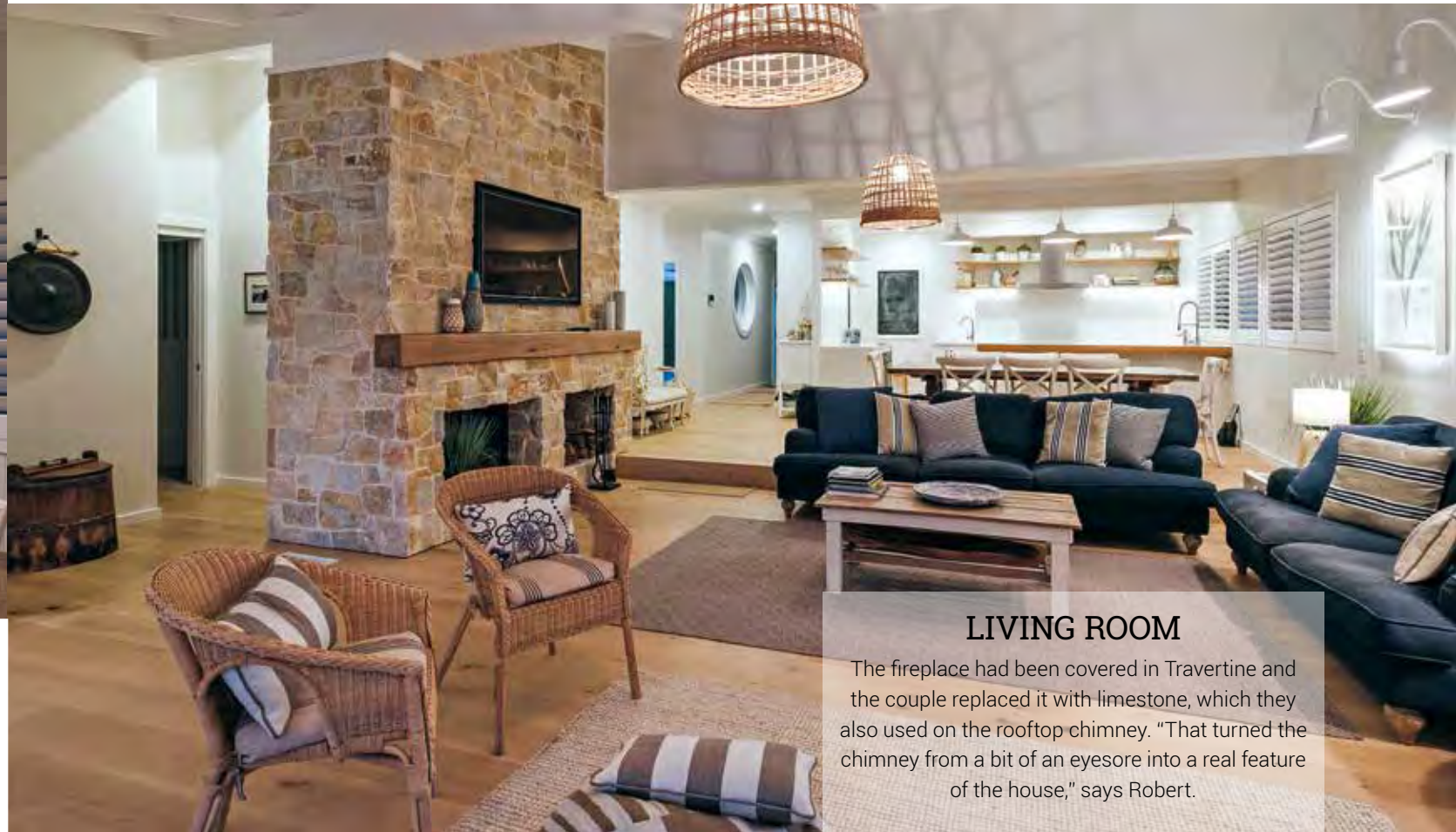
Going on tour

Before we go inside the house, Robert shows me what he calls the "pièce de résistance", his favourite place on the property. It turns out to be an outdoor shower that combines complete privacy with a 360 degree view of the beach, the ▶



THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is not large, yet it has two sinks, two ovens and two dishwashers and even separate spaces for two different sets of plates and cutlery. Robert and Jennifer keep kosher and separate milk and meat.



LIVING ROOM

The fireplace had been covered in Travertine and the couple replaced it with limestone, which they also used on the rooftop chimney. "That turned the chimney from a bit of an eyesore into a real feature of the house," says Robert.



The joinery in the kitchen, including the curved shaker style cabinetry, was the work of the team at Seaside Joinery.

Above left: The main living area is warm and welcoming. Right: The antique chairs have been carefully bleached and reupholstered with new linen fabrics.

backyard and the house. "You've got the view," he smiles, "but nobody else does."

The lush backyard is completely fenced in, the first of many clues that this is a house with a lot of young visitors. "We have 10 grand children under the age of eight," Robert explains. "So everything has to be childproof." But this six-bedroom, six-bathroom home is a lot more than that. If anything, it's the perfect haven for grandkids.

We make our way back into the house, past some olive trees in gorgeous planting pots imported from Turkey and across a generously-sized undercover deck with a built-in barbecue and a dining table that easily sits 10 guests.

Collectables meets coastal

The wide French oak floors add warmth and texture to the bright and spacious main living area. Robert and Jennifer's

love for authentic, natural materials and a coastal colour scheme is obvious, yet there are pieces that are clearly not classic Hamptons. "These are all 18th century French antiques, which we recovered from my wife's parents," says Robert. What sounds like a rather eccentric styling mix, actually works perfectly and it's clear the couple have an eye for interiors. On the day of my visit Robert enthuses about their beautiful

new rug: "Look at the colours; there are the colours of the sea, the beach and even the grey that's in the stone of the fireplace. It really does tie it all together."

A larder and an internal wall had to be taken out in order to create enough space and open up the kitchen to the other parts of the house. The result is a highly functional kitchen where every inch of space is optimised. The island's original timber benchtop with its matte

polyurethane finish is a striking feature that Robert and Jennifer decided to keep.

The perfect children's wing

The kitchen and main living area are at the centre of the home and on the same level is the generous master suite, with ocean views and a massive ensuite containing two showers and a freestanding bath. Also here are a guest bedroom and ensuite and the children's

wing, complete with a TV room and one bedroom. However, this is no mere 'bedroom', it has four custom-built beds, each with their own lamps, bookshelf and drawers, and a gigantic wall-mounted scrabble board. Also, the doors open up to access the outside. "They can even ride their bikes in here," Robert laughs. "And just outside, in a corner off the driveway, there's a trampoline built into the ground." The driveway is another ▶

TALKING TRADES

Builder Daniel Syddall from **Construct Central Coast** specialises in high-end, architectural homes and is always up for a challenge. constructcentralcoast.com.au, 0412 503 233

Interior designer **Angelique Perak** loves authentic, natural materials. She works closely with her clients to establish the essence of what they want and need for their home. www.hitherconsulting.com.au, 0409 777 968

John Lappas from **Seaside Joinery** has been in the trade since 1997. He specialises in custom joinery for luxury homes and always aims to exceed his customers' expectations. seasidejoinery.com.au, (02) 4367 4403



Interior designer Angelique Perak designed the beds, shelving and lighting in the kids bedroom. Seaside Joinery executed her designs and built the bathroom vanities

one of his favourite features. "We used Filetti, an Italian stone, and every single piece is a different size and shape, which means they all had to be laid individually," he recalls. With another three bedrooms and three bathrooms upstairs, the house comfortably accommodates an incredible 18 people, yet still feels cosy and welcoming.

When it came to finding the right professionals for this renovation,

Robert knew what he wanted. Interior designer Angelique Perak made sure she understood what the couple were after before presenting her design suggestions, which included maximising the potential of the space that is now the children's bedroom. She even found the giant scrabble board. John Lappas from Seaside Joinery was responsible for most of the joinery in the house. The real estate agent recommended builder Dan

Syddall from Central Coast Construct and after speaking to Dan's former clients and looking at previous projects, Robert knew he had found the right builder.

Nothing like a firm deadline

But he still had one very specific condition that was non-negotiable: he needed Dan to complete the project by Christmas, which fortunately he agreed to. The build of this beautiful home went to plan.

"Dan was very communicative, open and transparent and he did an outstanding job," enthuses Robert. "He and his workers were excellent and they delivered everything to the highest quality – there were no short cuts with these guys." With the deadline met, what better way to celebrate a successful renovation than by having all 10 of your grandchildren over for the ultimate Aussie beach holiday... and a game of scrabble. ◇

Top: the verandah is well protected from the often stiff easterly winds and offers a spectacular ocean view. Above: the entrance to the home with the driveway with Italian Filetti.

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