



A The front of the house **B** Architect Felix Antonius with builder/owner Benjamin Peat **C** Various heights and voids add interest **D** The entertainment space flows on to the open-plan kitchen



FACT FILE

THE BRIEF

Expand and overhaul a Californian bungalow to create a family home with an industrial feel

THE OWNER

Benjamin and Catherine Peat

THE BUILDER

Benjamin Peat, Benja Build

THE ARCHITECT

Felix Antonius, Antonius + Associates



Industrial theme ticks all the boxes

Visible steel, different heights and a large void create drama and a dream come true



He spends his days realising other people's housing dreams, so when it came to his own, house builder Benjamin Peat knew exactly what he wanted. Benjamin chose to work with architect Felix Antonius from Antonius + Associates, who he had worked with on a previous job, because they share a similar aesthetic style.

Added advantage

Felix says that having a client with an expert knowledge of the building world is a help rather than a hindrance. "It's definitely a help," he says. "Ben's a great builder, he knows what he wants. We have similar styles and it's great when you have that working relationship with a builder and you say, 'This is what I'm thinking,' and he gets it straight away. It was a compromise between what he wants and what we want. But in the end it worked out pretty well." Benjamin and his wife Catherine bought the single-story, double-brick Californian bungalow in Woolooware with the intention of creating a family

home, with their two children, Isabella, 11, and Kaden, 7.

They did consider knocking down the house but in the end decided to renovate.

"We had to keep part of the original house at the front because we wanted to save on costs," Felix says.

"So what we did was design the whole house around the staircase, making the staircase the front feature

"I use raw materials and don't dress things up, just let them be what they want to be"

as you enter the house. What we tried to do as well was create different spaces from the existing part of the house to new part of the house."

Playing with different heights and voids within the house helped create some drama.

"When you move through the space you feel the sense of, 'wow, this is quite grand', because there are different scales within the house," he says.

Benjamin was very specific about

what he wanted, so Felix worked closely with him to achieve his goals.

"This was a unique brief, because the owner is a builder and his brief to me was that he wanted something that would showcase his work," Felix says.

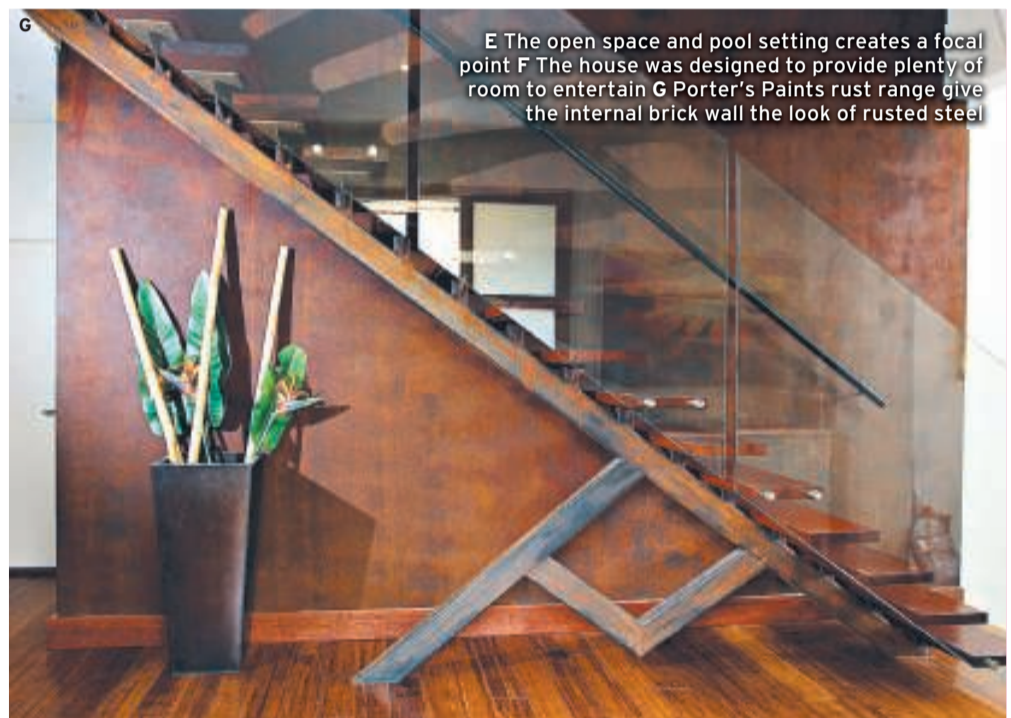
Big and open

The industrial feel of the house and elements such as the visible steel brace across the living room and warehouse-style lights were touches that Benjamin included to fit in with the pared-back aesthetic that he favours.

"Basically, I like glass, steel ... and I like industrial types of things," Benjamin says.

"I've got a small factory. If I could have bought a factory and lived in it, I would have. I don't think things need to be dressed up too much. See all the windows – there are no architraves. You've got stone, brick; it's all as it is. It doesn't need to be painted; if it's going to rust it will rust.

"I use raw materials and don't dress things up, just let them be what they want to be. It's big and open; you don't feel like anything's closed in on you."



Photos: Bob Barker

The five-bedroom house has ample indoor and outdoor entertaining space that flows on from the open-plan kitchen, which has a CaesarStone-topped island bench, a contrast to the dark bamboo floors.

Benjamin says that he was keen to include a decent-sized area to accommodate visitors.

“Yeah, just so everyone could enjoy it. We had probably 80 people here for a party at Christmas time. It’s there to be enjoyed, also just for ourselves. We sit outside all the time; we’re outdoor people. We cook on the barbecue all the time,” he says.

Critical factors

The staircase, the steel brace and the pool area are Benjamin’s favourite features of the house.

“We’re not on the waterfront and we can’t see any water, but the best thing is you’re creating a view. You can see the pool and it feels like you’re on the water. It’s private too.

“I also used Porter’s Paints rust [range] on everything. The paint’s got iron filings in it. The big wall that goes through the middle of the house is brick, but it looks like rusted steel.”

Being a builder – Benjamin and his brother Chris are partners in Benja Build – he says one of the biggest challenges of the project, which took about a year to build and was finished a year ago, was taking time away from his other jobs to finish it.

“Yeah, we built 17 other places. You just do it at night time and we had two young guys here. The disappointing thing is you can’t just stop all the other jobs; you’ve got to

keep working. But there were no dramas, everything went really well,” Benjamin says.

The orientation of the site created some problems for Felix when he was drawing up the plans, as north – where you would ideally place most of your windows – is facing the side boundary.

“We had problems trying to reduce the building so we weren’t over-shadowing the adjoining properties,” he says.

“And determining where the entertaining space would be to get northern light and to make that entertaining space a nice space in the northern section of the house was quite critical to us as well.”

So how did he resolve the issues?

“We designed a pergola – it’s not finished yet. We envisioned slats running through and external louvres, which still need to be implemented into the design,” Benjamin says.

Felix nominates the swimming pool, the large void and the openness of the spaces as his favourite design elements.

“I love that staircase that divides your entertaining space from your private space. So if you walk around the stairs, that’s where all your amenities are,” he says.

“Also, wherever you are in your house there’s always a feature.” ■

Alice Wasley

● **MORE INFORMATION**

Antonius + Associates
9262 9922, antonius.com.au
Benja Build 9531 0915,
benjabuild.com

E The open space and pool setting creates a focal point F The house was designed to provide plenty of room to entertain G Porter’s Paints rust range give the internal brick wall the look of rusted steel

GET THE LOOK

SIT BACK, TAKE IT EASY

Freedom’s Rani wicker chairs are made from hand-woven, poly-wicker fibre with aluminium frame. The package, which includes two chairs and glass-topped table, is \$999.

● **MORE INFORMATION**
Freedom, 1300 135 588,
freedom.com.au



WELCOME TO THE IRON AGE

To pick up on the industrial feel of the house, the owners have chosen homewares with a slightly weathered look. Urban Balcony’s Iron Aged Open Jars have a rusted appearance and can be used indoors or outdoors as planters, a vase or as a feature on their own. They come in various sizes and can also be quite effective grouped together. The medium-sized jar is 77cm high x 48cm in diameter and costs \$500.

● **MORE INFORMATION**
Urban Balcony, 8021 6456, urbanbalcony.com.au

