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LIFE & STYLE: COOKING WITH STEAM * HOW TO BUY ART * A TASTE OF SAN SEBASTIÁN

NEW CHAPTER

Author Alice Nelson and her husband Danny saw great potential in this Perth home. Their recent renovation is the latest update in a century-long tale of transformation.

STORY Sarah Pilkett STYLING Jo Cartwright PHOTOGRAPHY Judy Bailey



LIBRARY "My lifelong ambition was having floor-to-ceiling bookshelves and a reading nook, so it's nice to have achieved that!" says Alice. The ladder was made by husband Danny. *Charm Keen* and this lines from one of Alice's favourite Rilke poems engraved onto the metal. "When I'm away from Jordan, ICloud Series photograph by Trevor Meier. FRONT STEPS "Having been sold 14 years ago by many previous owners – one of whom bricked up the front window – we wanted to restore the house's 1930 facade as best we could." Crepe myrtles are planted on either side of the teal-painted bay window. ▶



Author Alice Nelson used to write in cramped studios and in noisy public libraries, always dreaming of having a library in her own home. It would be a peaceful space, where her favourite books would be to hand and creativity would come easily. Except it didn't quite work out like that. When Alice settled into the writing desk built into the steel-framed bay window of her freshly renovated Perth home, she found herself quite daunted. 'I now had such a lavish and beautiful room to write in I thought, "Wow, the pressure's really on to write a book worthy of this space."

She needn't have worried. Most of her novel *The Children's House* (published by Random House) was composed at her new desk and, upon release, the book was lauded as one of 2018's best Australian works of fiction. That Alice has such a beautiful space to work in is largely down to the intuitive understanding and skill architect David Hartree brought to this renovation.

LIBRARY above and opposite Alice at her writing desk, set across a window designed by architect David Hartree and fabricated in Melbourne by Steel Design. "In the entry courtyard, Alice's desk is nestled from the library and projects over the garden, into the trees and sky," says David. Alice's desk chair is a 'Showtime' dining chair with custom finish from Living Edge. Moroccan Berber rug from Loom Rugs. The library floor is original but was stained ebony after the restored jasmin boards came up too red. Miniature dachshund Gracie is curled up on the Monroe 'Rodondo' sofa from Hub Furniture. Elena Lysik photographs hang on the wall and the space is illuminated by a Serge Mouille 'Lampeiron' floor lamp. 'Shanghai Tip' green side table, Hub Furniture.

"When we met in 2013, David had read everything I'd written and had this real sense of who we were. We found ourselves immediately comfortable with him and how he saw our renovation taking shape," she says. "It was his idea to engrave lines of poetry into the treads of the sliding ladder in our library."

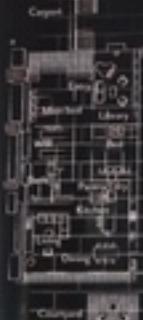
Alice and her psychiatrist husband Danny Shub bought the house in 2011 after admiring its presence and proximity to Cottesloe Beach. They lived in the house for a while to get a sense of it and then set about restoring some of the space and grace the original 1911 home would have had. "Over the years a number of rooms had been cut up into smaller rooms, and there was a bathroom where the library is now," says Alice. "Some very unusual changes had been made."

David came up with a simple floor plan that everyone agreed suited the house: the library to the left of the entry, the main bedroom to the right and a hall down the middle with a second ▶



'Alice and Danny are passionate about sustainability. They wanted the house to have the flexibility to respond to the climate shifts of the seasons.' David Hartree, architect

THE LAYOUT



LIVING AREA. A favourite perch for Alice (with Gracie) is her Marca 'Klara' chair from H&G. Furniture: long-haired miniature dachshund Toofy rests at her feet. Danny relaxes on one of the Marca 'Country' sofas. "We tried about 100 sofas before making our decision," says Alice, "but in the end the comfort and European styling of this design won out." The space is heated by an Oldeka fireplace and texture is delivered via the ceiling's jettison lining boards. The triangle sculpture is by Brahmson Peters and the paper bird sculpture was created by Anna-Wili Highfield. Topiary by Caroline Rammelkamp. Local kerri Austral 'Burleigh' glazed bricks in Charming Black, \$585/1000, Austral. ▶



THE PALETTE

Taupe
Mud Glaze
(exterior walls)

Fawn Weather
Proofed Clay in Black
(brickwork)

Dulux White Duck
quartz strength
(exterior walls)

H&G HOUSES



This is the life

Danny and Alice love the coast and enjoy living within easy walking distance of Perth's Cottesloe Beach. "Our neighbourhood is lovely and leafy, with everything we need close by. We don't use the car a lot because we can cycle everywhere," says Alice. The couple also travel frequently so coming home is always a relief. "It's very relaxed here," she says. "This house lends itself to lots of indolence – and a few gin and tonics."

FEATURE TREES & MATERIAL

Chinese weeping elm
(*Ulmus parvifolia*)

Ponytail palm
(*Beaucarnea recurvata*)

Dry stone wall in
Alpine Stone from
E&G Outdoor



COURTYARD Low garden furniture works well in the small but perfectly formed outdoor space. Kettal 'Mala' outdoor sofa and chairs and 'Vieques' coffee table, all Mobilia. Porfido split stone pavers, Attica. Steel doors custom made by Steel Design.

KITCHEN Alice and Danny opted for a solid slab of 'Bianco Antico' granite from Zuccari. It has a bronzed mirror base. Ebonised overhead cabinetry is 'Metro Recon' veneer in Black Gold from Amerind. Splashback, Academy Tiles. A pantry/bathroom is tucked away just off the kitchen. Tim Webber Design 'Wrap' stools, Cult. The lovely Lindsay Adelman 'Terrarium' pendant lights were shipped from New York. Painting by Agneta Ekholm. **DINING** Chairs in a natural finish and customised 'Corbusier' end chairs from Thonet are positioned around a 'Lysina' dining table by Melbourne firm Tjde Design. "We asked for it to be narrower and therefore more intimate," says Alice. *For Where to Buy, see page 190. H&G*