



# HEARTLAND

Sitting in harmony with its stunning surrounds, this family home combines rural simplicity with chic modern design

STORY ALEXANDRA CARLTON STYLING LOUISE OWENS PHOTOGRAPHY CRAIG WALL



Amid the picturesque hills of Berry, NSW, Sherinah and Nathan Peck have built their dream home, combining sustainability with family-friendly design. Among the home's fans are the couple's youngest daughters {opposite}, Shenae (left) and Kallie. ATRIUM {this page} A 'Montigo' tan leather armchair and ottoman sit alongside a quirky faux-antler lamp base, all from Freedom, providing a comfortable spot to read a book or listen to music. The colour palette of the space is kept intact with a selection of serendipitous finds, including a cowhide handbag found on eBay and a retro orange radio picked up at Big W. Lording over it all is a much-loved deer figurine from Domayne, one of several deer motifs throughout the home. >



**When Sherinah Peck** got to thinking about how she wanted her brand-new family home in Berry, NSW, to look, she went straight to the experts. *Home Beautiful*, to be exact! The mother of four took one of our Style Safari shopping tours in June 2008 in the hope that it would give her the jolt of inspiration she needed. "It really opened my eyes," she remembers. "I found the perfect paint colour as a starting point [Porter's Paints' Redbank], then the team showed us cushions from Chee Soon & Fitzgerald and Cloth in the perfect colour scheme, and the rest just fell into place."

Not that Sherinah needed a lot of help after the initial nudge. Along with her husband, builder Nathan, she runs Impeckable Constructions, a NSW-based building company that focuses on building architecturally designed, environmentally sustainable homes. While Nathan takes care of the bricks and mortar, Sherinah manages the projects and helps clients choose finishes and design elements for their interiors, so putting her expertise to work in her own place was a breeze. "Most of our furniture is from Freedom – it's easy, practical, cost-effective and it's great for kids," says Sherinah, "and the rest is just stuff we love."

The most striking decorative element of all is the elevated view. Built on a hillside overlooking Wedding Cake Mountain and Bundewallah Valley, the home is cleverly designed to both enhance the surrounding



environment and blend in with it. "A rich palette of earthy colours is complemented by timber framing, slotting, panelling and refined details," explains architect Colin Irwin from BHI Architects. It is, he says, "the perfect place for relaxing and enjoying nature's wonders." Sherinah notes that the house is barely visible from the street or surrounding areas – the exterior cladding is painted in Dulux's Nile Clay to help it blend in – which is all part of the couple's commitment to enhancing the natural area in which they live.

Of course, the environment has its own ideas on occasion, particularly during construction of the home. "Rain, rain, rain!" remembers Nathan, when asked to name the toughest part of the building process. Sherinah recalls trying to remove the acres of lantana that had taken over the site before construction began. "I was a bit ambitious – I thought I could get rid of it with a bit of weed spray," she laughs. In the end, machines were called in to tame the weeds.

Now, they agree, things have settled down. "This is the perfect place for us," says Sherinah. "Seven Mile Beach is just 10 minutes away, the kids love finding echidnas and blue tongue lizards in the garden and the home itself has a rural feel without being too rustic or country." Nathan adds, "I wanted the home to 'sit well' on the land, which it does." And the family sits well within it.

**LIVING AREA (top left)** "I like having the lounge, dining and kitchen open plan," says Sherinah. Her secret to keeping the space family-friendly is to keep the television separate; an LCD television has been recessed into the wall above the fireplace, but TV watching is largely done in the home theatre, leaving the main living area for cooking, eating and spending time together. The wooden feature that curves across the ceiling and down the hall is one of Sherinah's favourite architectural touches. Made from cost-effective stained plywood, it adds interest and absorbs noise. The furnishings are in warm, autumnal shades, including the 'Urban' sofa in Essence Bark from Freedom.

**FIREPLACE (top right)** "The architect suggested we get gas heating because no one can ever be bothered to fetch wood," says Sherinah. "But I think it's essential to have a wood fire in a rural property." Ducted airconditioning heats the house quickly, as an alternative to the Heatmaster fire.

**KITCHEN** A keen cook, Sherinah likes to have her family around her while she creates, so an island bench with seating was essential. The CaesarStone bench in Haze is complemented by four white 'Sune' bar stools from Ikea, which fit snugly underneath. "I didn't want to trip over them," says Sherinah. Her only regret is the polyurethane cabinetry, which she discovered, after installation, isn't the most eco-friendly option. "Next time I'd go for recycled timber or sustainable timber veneer," she says. >





**ENTRY (top left)** Due to its steep hillside setting, the entrance to the home incorporates a stairway leading up to the main living area. The staircase features spotted gum treads with a steel spine powder-coated in Dulux's Titanium Pearl. Under the stairs, a discreet nook with a low bench is cleverly utilised for storing shoes or bags. A backdrop of textured wallpaper from Orson & Blake and an antler chandelier from Freedom hanging above add interest.

**BATHROOM (left & top right)** The rectangular bath is Sherinah's special hideaway. "I like to light candles, put on some music and just have some 'me' time," she says. The elegantly curved floor tap (available at Renovation D; visit [www.renovationd.com.au](http://www.renovationd.com.au)) is one of Sherinah's favourite features; she had trouble finding just the right freestanding spout with a rectangular base to match the bath, before finally spotting this one on eBay. Sherinah explains that double basins were also a must. "Nathan and I like having our own spaces in the bathroom – and yes, mine is always full of more stuff!"

**DINING ROOM (opposite)** The long timber dining table is another Freedom find, matched with white 'Gilbert' chairs from Ikea. The narrow slit window in the west wall was deliberately placed to let bright sunlight pour in and offers an unexpected view to those sitting at the table. >

"I used to BUY THINGS JUST FOR THE SAKE OF IT AND THEN I REALISED A HOME IS SO MUCH EASIER TO LIVE IN IF IT'S NOT CLUTTERED"



# Inside story

**Who lives here?** Sherinah Peck, 35, and her husband Nathan, 37, who run NSW-based building company Impeckable Constructions; and their four children, Monique, 16, Liam, 14, Shenae, five, and Kallie, four.

**Where's the place to be in your house?** Sherinah: "The area we call 'conversation corner' – the two armchairs in the main living space (below). It's an awesome place to talk. When the kids are in bed, Nathan and I sit down and talk about our day."

**Do you think it's important to have a big family home?** "It's got to be big enough for everyone, but I don't like monstrosities. People are moving towards homes that are easy to heat and cool, like ours. I don't like wasted space – our home is well thought out."

**Best tip when building your own home?** "Consult an architect. They're professionals – they know what they're doing. Yes, it may cost \$20,000 but you get it back and then some. You'll be happier with the result."

**What's the quickest way to brighten a home?** "Flowers. I love natives, especially kangaroo paw, which I buy from Always Flowers in Kiama – they have the most gorgeous range."

**Any tips for keeping a family home elegant?** "Have less stuff. I used to buy things just for the sake of it and then I realised a home is so much easier to live in if it's not cluttered. Only buy what you really love."



*Love find*  
This piece was found at Freedom, which is now out of stock. Get the look with the Vlaemsch 'Moose Head', \$397.50, De De Ce Plus.

MONIQUE'S ROOM Admittedly, 16-year-old Monique is not the biggest fan of the plywood deer head above her bed, but Sherinah was keen to keep her deer theme running throughout the house, plus it works well with the bed's birch veneer. Simple bedlinen from Domayne keeps the room calm and chic.

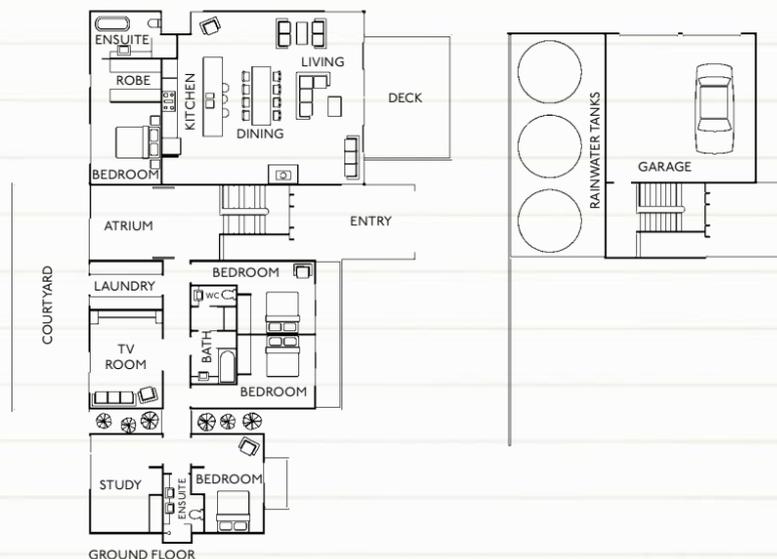


ILLUSTRATION WWW.KENZIEDSIGN.COM

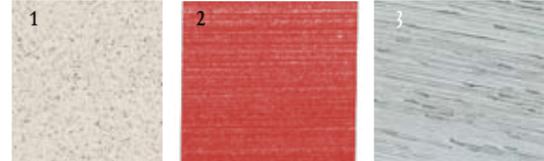


**DAYBED** The younger girls, Shenae and Kallie (pictured right), treat the outdoor area as a theatre, staging elaborate productions on the wooden daybed overlooking the valley. Sherinah thinks the expansive view calls for a wet-edge pool, an addition the family is considering.

*"I wanted the home TO 'SIT WELL' ON THE LAND, WHICH IT DOES."*

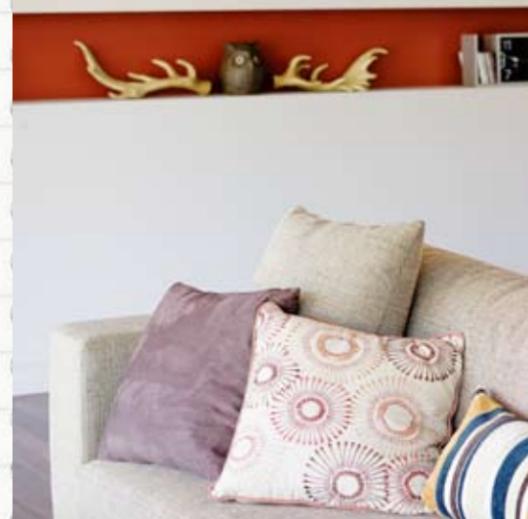
## we love...

**the deer motif >**  
Pretty deer-themed objects – from figurines to antlers – appear throughout the home, giving a nod to the rural surrounds without looking too 'country'. Nathan is a deer hunter and wanted to hang his trophies but Sherinah wouldn't hear of it, compromising instead with bargain finds from eBay and furniture stores. Our favourite? The faux antlers from Freedom that sit in the living area's recessed display space (below) – deer without being dear!



## great idea

**< recessed shelving**  
The display nook on the eastern wall of the living area was one of Sherinah's ideas. "I like symmetry, so I wanted something to complement the narrow windows opposite, but I don't like cabinets or display cases," she says. The shelf holds an owl and a pair of antlers from Freedom, and is lit with LED lights. The paint, a deep russet red reminiscent of an outback sunset, was the inspiration for the rest of Sherinah's natural colour scheme. More earthy hues of red, gold and plum appear in the plump cushions from Freedom.



## colour & materials

- 1 Benchtap** Quartz composite surface in Haze, \$550/metre, including installation, CaesarStone.
  - 2 Paint** Eggshell Acrylic in Redbank, \$41/litre, Porter's Paints.
  - 3 Wallpaper** Schumacher 'Tapan Raffia' wall covering in Straw, \$215/roll (minimum two rolls), Orson & Blake.
- CONTACT:** Impeckable Constructions, 0409 302 407 or [www.impeckableconstructions.com.au](http://www.impeckableconstructions.com.au); Colin Irwin of BHI Architects, 0416 212 583 or [www.bhia.com.au](http://www.bhia.com.au).  
Due to the printing process, actual paint colours may vary.