

BUILD

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

This stunning slice of modern architecture reunited two old school friends – with spectacular results

WITH the surname he was born with, architect Kris Keen was always destined to stand out – but not necessarily for the reasons he'd hoped. Reel off a joke about his family name and he'll cringe at it, but there's no denying it's also given him some handy advantages in his burgeoning career.

Even though he branched away from his multi-award-winning father Gary Keen's building design company, Kris's name is intrinsically tied with the reputable business his dad built up over 31 years.

Keen Architecture is now treading its own path and the owner of this Claremont property was as "keen as mustard" to be a part of the new venture.

"Kris and I were mates from school and had kept in touch socially throughout the years," the owner says.

"Kris was always vocal about his passion for architecture from both an aesthetic and functional perspective. This coupled with his experience working with difficult spaces in Melbourne and his commercial acumen meant he was the ideal man for the job."

The owner and his girlfriend – he's in the technology industry and she's a full-time law student – approached Kris to create an entertainer's home that stood out, but that was also low-maintenance.

"With a block size of just over 200sq m, jammed between two parapet walls, maximising light and space without sacrificing the aesthetic were other key priorities," the owner says.

"I have always warmed to earthy tones and organic materials, so Kris used extensive amounts of timber and concrete to create a warm and extremely functional home. He nailed the brief."

The home, which sits on a super-slim 6.7m-wide site, is instantly alluring from the street because of the striking cedar timber box and steel frame of the facade.

To fulfil the owner's "entertainer's" brief in a secure and narrow shell, Kris played with layout and level.

The central courtyard nestled between the kitchen and dining areas is an inclusive, natural light-filled space that can be also be closed off when needed.

Kris incorporated a car stacker into the design so the property could have two secure car bays.

"Our client can rest easy knowing that his house and cars are safe and secure when he goes away," Kris says.

"And when he's at home he has a house that creates intimate spaces for entertaining and socialising. Financially, it has been a quality investment for him, according to the valuers and agents."

Perth's hottest rooftop bar, exclusively used by the owner's friends and family, takes full advantage of city views to the east and river glimpses to the south.

Judging by the gushing responses over the final result, Kris has clearly done his family name and growing firm justice.

"I love this house," the owner says.

"From the internal courtyard that connects the kitchen to the living area and creates a singular space across the ground floor, to the magic piece of machinery that stacks cars, the house in an architectural gem."

JADE JUREWICZ



The central courtyard is a light-filled space connecting the living area and the kitchen.



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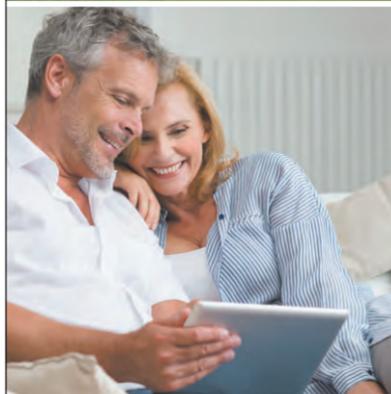
- * The 298sq m home sits on a 203sq m block.
- * A car stacker was engineered for the garage to allow two cars to be parked securely on the narrow site.
- * The home has a roof deck with views to the city and river.

get the look

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