

HOME / MELBOURNE

Change of Plans



Buying a property off-plan can be a prescriptive experience, delivered as it often is in a firm design language that doesn't permit much opportunity for change. So, it was a pleasant surprise that while the owners of this Melbourne residence purchased their house sight unseen, they were allowed a degree of malleability and flexibility that resulted in a deeply personal home.

Designed by Wald Architects, the 300-square-metre residence was already in development when its new owners enlisted sisters Lauren and Amanda Martin of locally based architecture and interiors firm Studio Martin. The two came on board just before construction began and were able to lightly reconfigure the footprint before the slab was poured, adjusting the plumbing and enhancing the spatial arrangement to better accommodate the needs of their clients.

'They saw a kitchen project we'd done floating around on Instagram and messaged us,' recalls Amanda. 'They were just about to start, so it was a fairly fast process from the start of the replanning and joinery to the fixtures and fittings later on. Working off the plan in this way was a rare opportunity for us, too.' The framework was reorganised to accommodate a new entrance, a kitchen zone with a hidden bar and a master bedroom and ensuite. Extra cabinetry was also added — expressed at low height in the lounge and floor-to-ceiling in the walk-in wardrobe — as a practicality to improve storage for the growing family.

'Our clients wanted to amplify the amenities but maintain a calm space where they could relax. They wanted clean lines and something that was quite simple and minimalist in its form but that still felt warm and soft,' says Lauren. Together, the designers composed a largely neutral palette with materials that resonated with the clients, using smooth spotted gum, limed-look French oak floorboards, sheer curtains and Carrara marble.

The joinery is refined, crafted with seamless, elongated lines. Vertical handles are both stylistic and functional, carved with concealed grooves for easier use. 'They're part of a cohesive journey that runs through the living and kitchen zones, right through to the timber robes in the master bedroom,' says Amanda of the silhouette. Echoing this design profile, the ensuite features a wall lined with timber panelling, the solidity of its form complemented by a heavy-set custom bath and crisp stone basin.

'Our design approach was holistic — the intention was to create a cohesive journey with solid materials that are gentle and tactile. We used timber wall panelling throughout the house to create a constant, consistent rhythm,' says Lauren. To further enhance the interiors, new artwork and furniture has been layered throughout — for example, with a navy version of Michel Ducaroy's iconic Togo sofa overlooked by the warm glow of a sculptural Herman Miller Nelson Saucer sconce, creating a romantic *mise en scène* at the heart of the home.

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In this reconfigured off-plan Melbourne home, Studio Martin created a narrative that's clean-lined and minimal but still personal and inviting. In the living area, timber panelling is matched by natural rattan seating by Sika Design from DOMO, with a plush Togo sofa by Michel Ducaroy for Ligne Roset anchoring the room

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The panelling is introduced at the entrance and continues throughout





The living and kitchen areas are cocooned in refined joinery, characterised by seamless vertical lines



White walls and soft linen curtains backdrop the inky tones of the Halcyon Lake rug, Togo sofa and Kateryna Sokolova's Oxydation tables for Ligne Roset



In the kitchen, oversized ceramic vessels by Alice Rosignoli for Ligne Roset and black barstools by DOMO complement the uniform materials. Behind a pocket door, a hidden timber-lined bar is stocked with vintage glassware and backed by a bronze mirror that reflects garden views into the home





The designers incorporated extra cabinetry throughout. In the main bedroom (left), a bookshelf is integrated into the wall panelling, while in the study (right), a shelf filled with vintage pieces collected by Studio Martin adds character, as does the painting by Australian artist Hannah Fox



Timber robes lead to the ensuite, where seating options include the playful TOY stool from HC28 and Arne Jacobsen's Charlottenborg rattan lounge chair for Sika Design. In the timber-lined ensuite, the Carrara marble bath and custom vanity are luxurious focal points

