

NAKED AMBITION

WORDS PENNY YAP PHOTOGRAPHS PETER HOARE

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SALVAGE

Style follows substance in this rare architectural example, tucked out of sight down an eastern suburbs lane.



Below: The glass walls and large sliding doors bring the garden, and the swimming pool, into the living area, which is warmed by a combustion heater in winter. **Opposite:** The view through the home's multiple wide doorways, framed with Tasmanian oak, create a unique optical effect down the length of the home. **Opening pages:** The John Chappel-designed home wraps around a central swimming pool, with walls of north-facing glass looking onto the garden. An opening in the roof above the pool makes the space both indoors and outdoors, while the bare Besser block walls are identical on both internal and external surfaces.



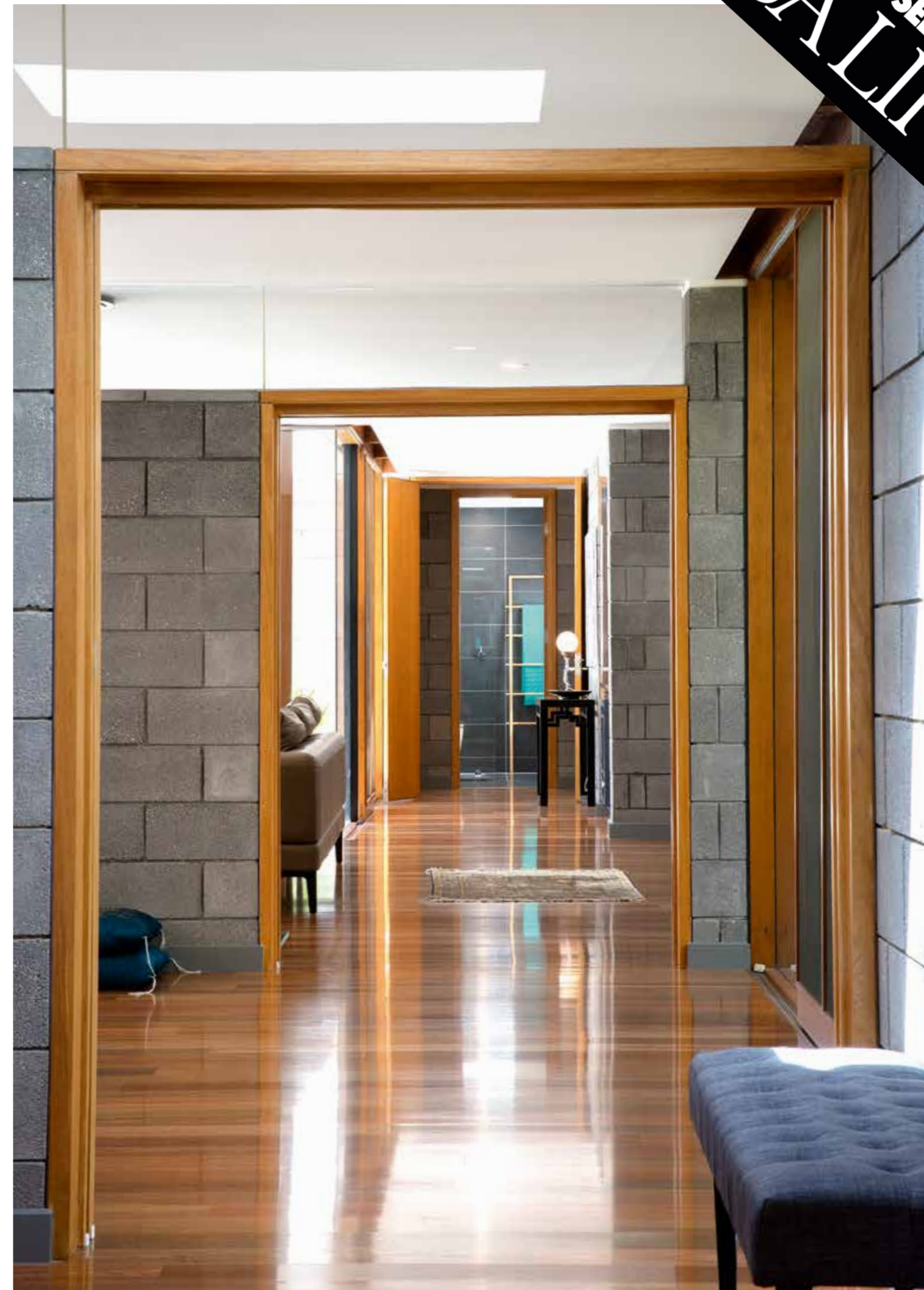
EXPOSED BRICK OR STONE IS A COMMONLY-USED motif in interior design. Rarely, however, does it extend to the entire surface of the internal walls. Built by architect John Chappel in 1990, the bold design of this unusual three-bedroom home exudes a stylish air of the Hollywood Hills. The dwelling is built on three of the boundary walls of its compact block, with the northern side opening through sliding glass doors onto the garden at the front of the home.

Owner Meredith Adam was drawn to the style of the home and its secluded laneway location, purchasing the property in April 2016. "I've always loved that Californian style of architecture, long before I saw this house. It's so hidden from the outside, you wouldn't even know it's here. I particularly liked it for the minimalist style and lots of light. It's built around the pool so the outside becomes the inside when you open the doors," she says.

The home was dated but serviceable, with one small drawback: with windows mostly confined to the northern side, some interior spaces were quite dark. The solution was to install a series of skylights, which flooded the rooms with daylight. The largest of these, over the kitchen, has been fitted with an automatic shade that can be closed to keep out the midday sun in summer.

"The house had been maintained, but not updated since 1990. It even had the original blue/green carpet, which was very good quality, but had seen the end of its days. I felt the house would respond beautifully to a makeover, so I updated all of the living areas, flooring and landscaping to make it more liveable, but without compromising the architectural design," says Meredith.

The home's two bathrooms – the en suite to the master bedroom and guest bathroom – lie at opposite ends of the home, so that one is visible from the other through the multiple wide



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Above: A large floral wallpaper feature makes the bedroom an inviting space, kept cool by a stylish Aerotron ceiling fan, with a view through to the walk-in robe, which was entirely sanded back to the natural Tasmanian oak. **Below:** An Art Ceram sink and Decina bathtub feature in the master en suite, with grey tiles echoing the Besser blocks in the rest of the home, and white side walls to reflect light back into the space.

doorways along the centre of the construction. White tiles on the side walls of each bathroom help to illuminate the space. One challenge was that the home's flat roof design made installing ducted heating and cooling almost impossible, so the bedrooms are furnished with split systems and ceiling fans, and the living room has been finished with a Stovax combustion heater, which was chosen for its modern silhouette. The glass hearth was custom made and can be removed when the fireplace isn't in use during the summer months.

Every piece of woodwork in the home had originally been lime washed, masking the natural beauty of the Tasmanian oak timber. The wooden doorframes, window frames and even the interior of the walk-in robe were sanded back to the natural wood. New floors of shimmering spotted gum run throughout the living area. "It took days to sand back the woodwork; it was a big job. I'd drop in every now and again to see how things were going and the poor painters would be covered in dust. But it was worth doing, it warms the interior up," she says.

"I looked at lots of samples for the flooring and got it down to spotted gum or blackbutt, but the spotted gum picked up the grey of the walls and the western red cedar of the external woodwork better."

The renovations were completed by Alexis Constructions in October last year. The original Besser block walls remain proudly bare, just as Chappel intended, so the interior living room wall is identical to the exterior wall immediately opposite behind the pool, bringing the whole space together as one.

The muted grey of the concrete blocks in fact makes a perfect backdrop for bold, colourful artworks. Meredith has embraced the retro stylings of the home, evoking the 1960s and '70s with her collection of vintage furniture and art pieces. The two light fittings above the kitchen bench are original pendants that once hung in her mother's home. "My mother replaced them years ago, but fortunately





Above: The original Noblett dining set and vintage sideboard fit perfectly with the exposed Besser block walls and the period feel of the home, while an internal courtyard brings light in from the south. **Opposite:** A set of replica Erik Buch stools, which tone beautifully with the gleaming spotted gum floors, stand at the under-lit kitchen bench, beneath two original 1960s light fittings, while the black mirror splashback reflects the garden. The classic Tretchikoff Chinese Girl print was unearthed in a Magill Road furniture store.

she kept them and I thought they'd be perfect for this house," she says. "I always liked this style and collected pieces along the way. The Noblett dining table and chairs were mum's as well, I think it suits the house. The sideboard I picked up second-hand to tie in."

The kitchen has been recreated in a sleek charcoal two-pack to echo the walls, with a smoky black mirror splashback and kick boards to reflect the garden and pool. An island bench in raw concrete Caesarstone adds another tonal element. The hot water tank has been moved from the former utility room to create room for an elegant butler's pantry, complete with concealed laundry. The very latest features in lighting have been incorporated into the

kitchen, including touch-operated downlights over the splashback and under the kitchen bench.

"The internal and external lighting at night is just fabulous; it gives the home even more beauty and character. I love the kitchen and living area, with the view over the pool and the warmth from the fireplace at night in winter, and you can open the wide sliding doors for a breeze in summer. You can look out to the garden while cooking or entertaining. It's a delightful home in which to live and entertain."

The project was among the winners of the MBASA Awards 2017 and the HIA Awards 2017. See more in SAHOMES & INTERIORS 2017.

