



# ABSTRACT BOX

With a flair for interiors, Warren Naylor found the perfect oversized box to display his vast collection of worldly possessions

Words KYLIE JACKES

As an interior designer and homewares buyer for Add+, Warren Naylor admits he has a penchant for unique houses and likes to chop and change. To this end he has lived in a Noosa Waters home by Frank Macchia, an ultra-modern corrugated beach house by Middap Ditchfield Architects and a house on acreage in Verrierdale.

So when the chance arose to buy a property in Elysium Noosa, a unique designer enclave packed with houses by eminent Australian architects such as Gabriel Poole, Elizabeth Watson Brown and Fairweather Proberts, he was like a kid in a designer candy store. But, rather than opt for the boldest design on the block, he was instead enticed by a more understated project by Brisbane architect Richard Kirk.

"I looked at most of them but really liked the simplicity of this one," Warren explains of the house, which resembles a giant timber crate from the street. "It was a beautiful blank clean form and I knew everything I had would fit into it." Essentially a carved-out, two-storey

box flooded with light, the open-plan lower level has a series of connected living spaces while the bedrooms and open-plan study on the second level were conceived by the architect as nests that float above the ground to provide a bird's eye view of the activity below. Enveloped in cedar cladding, the house has a distinct Asian feel, offset by a restrained palette of zinc and oxide renders and a heated lap pool finished with black tiles.

Inside, there is an abundance of crosscut maple timber, subtle shadow line detailing and timeless finishes, including travertine floors. But it is Warren's touches that truly give each room depth.

Wasting no time in stamping his refined style on the property, Warren says "I moved in on a Wednesday and had the artwork hung on the Thursday. Everything just fitted so well, people thought I bought the pieces especially," he continues, gesturing towards the oversized furniture that complements the spacious rooms.



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With a preference for classic pieces guaranteed to stand the test of time, the house features well-designed furniture and myriad Asian antiques, collectables and artworks Warren has procured over the years during buying trips to China, the Philippines, Italy and Indonesia. "The sofa in the front room is 30 years old, and the white leather dining chairs have been re-covered three times over the past 18 years," he points out. "I tell my clients good design will always last."

Restricting the colour palette to three shades — black, white and brown — the house is layered with beautiful textures. On the floor, travertine tiles are softened by Moroccan rugs while African mud cloth cushions embellish sofas. Several treasured pieces Warren has carted to every home include a pair of woven Zulu Berenguer-Topacio chairs, a matador water buffalo chair and a beautiful six-panel Japanese screen.

Various antique pieces throughout the house have also been reincarnated to serve a new purpose. On a lowset bench, large Ming vases have been topped with a black shade and converted into a lamp while an old, decorative Japanese door has been upturned and given legs to become a large coffee table. "It has been in beach houses, and danced on," he says.

With Warren's passion for collecting rare books, the small lowset drawers that wrap around the living room walls are filled with reading material, while large

coffee table books are left open for perusal. One that cannot be missed is a collector's copy of Helmut Newton's *Sumo*, whose staggering proportions (it weighs a whopping 30 kilograms) are supported on a Philippe Starck stand. "I originally bought three of them in 2000 but the other two have gone with houses I've sold and now I just have one," Warren says. "When I bought them, they were an extravagance at \$2000 each, but since Helmut has died they've gone up in value. I've seen them on Amazon (website) for \$US25,000. I didn't buy it as an investment, though. I just thought it was a fabulous big art book which would look great in my apartment."

With plenty of places in which to entertain, including a back deck with a built-in barbecue, backing on to a pocket of trees, Warren says the house is ideal for throwing a party. And, having lived in the bush before, he has learnt more than a few things about lighting. "Because the house is so open, I like to use a lot of candlelight instead of halogen lights, which attract all the bugs," he explains. "So, while candles look good, they are also very practical too."

Always on the lookout for houses that will stimulate his keen design sensibility, Warren admits he never stays in one place for too long, but adds, "This house is a favourite at the moment. Being low maintenance it is very easy to live in. It's a joy to be here." ■



## HOME TRUTHS

### Favourite spot

I love the whole house but the front living area is a favourite because it is the most intimate room in the house. It is where I have a lot of my favourite books and my water buffalo chairs.

### Design philosophy

Keep it simple, but make it quality and always earth (mix) new pieces with old.

### Next splurge

It will be a custom-upholstered Fendi bedhead. It is the last thing I am waiting for to finish off the house.



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