

Sanctuary

MODERN GREEN HOMES

ISSUE
61

UNIVERSAL DESIGN
SPECIAL

PLUS: Three urban renos fit for the future; ecovillage home; upgrading to induction; design for active bushfire defence

DESIGN FOR EVERYONE

Accessible, flexible, sustainable

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A Benzina Zero City electric scooter valued at \$5,500!

Offer open to Australian residents. Details page 81



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Compostable coffee packs

Look out Melbourne, Adelaide might just have the goods when it comes to coffee now – especially sustainably packaged coffee. Most coffee bags can't be recycled due to the mixed materials used to make them, but Allways is filling the gap with its Zero Waste Coffee Subscription, delivering coffee from Adelaide's best coffee roasters straight to your home in truly compostable packaging. Even the coffee capsules, thankfully, are compostable. Nine Adelaide roasters participate in the program with different coffee sent each time and delivery Australia-wide. (Nothing beats sourcing your coffee close to home though, so do support your own local coffee roasters who use compostable or reusable packaging.) Allways subscriptions start at \$24 for 250g each fortnight, with beans, ground filter, capsules and decaf available.

www.allways.coffee

Recycled flatpack sofa

The outer fabric of the All Day Sofa from Eva is soft, durable and made from post-consumer plastic, saving around 300 plastic bottles from landfill per sofa. The back cushions are filled with a combination of recycled natural latex and recycled polyester, helping to minimise the use of new materials and plastic. Timber use on the sofa is a bit of a mixed bag, with the frame and legs made from sustainably managed forests (not necessarily FSC-certified, though) plus tough plywood for the backs and arms. The covers are machine washable, making the couch simple to look after. It's delivered as a flatpack for easy transport, and is simple to assemble without tools, using a system of hand-screws instead. The sofa comes in two- and three-seater options, as well as larger corner and L-shaped configurations. Prices range from \$1,350 for a two-seater to \$3,800 for a seven-seater.

www.eva.com.au



Keeping it cool in summer

Shifting hot air out of your roof space can make a difference to energy bills and the comfort of your home. Ridge vents provide passive ventilation and work by allowing hot air in the roof cavity to rise and escape through the highest part of the roof. Fortunately, these systems can be retrofitted; one option is the Exhale Ventrige from Stratco which suits metal-roofed homes. The vent's low profile is intended to blend into the ridgeline and make it less likely to be torn off during high winds. The design also protects against embers or vermin entering the roof, and it's low maintenance, with no moving parts to repair. Exhale is available in two lengths, either 1,220mm or 2,440mm, with one 1,220mm Exhale recommended for every 100 square metres of roofing. Prices start at \$533 for a 1,220mm length.

www.stratco.com.au

BOOKS



Come over to my house

Eliza Hull & Sally Rippin
 Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2022
 \$25

Many, especially the four million or so Australians living with a disability, would probably say that we have waited far too long for a story like *Come over to my house*: a tale that seizes the opportunity to celebrate and teach the diversity that comes with being human. Disability advocate Eliza Hull has teamed up with writer Sally Rippin to collaborate on this entertaining children's book, in which the reader weaves through the beautiful and unique lives, homes and relationships of children, parents and carers around Australia.

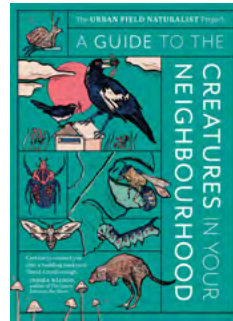
We meet Mei Li, who has cerebral palsy and can say the alphabet backwards; Archie, who uses sign language to communicate with his loving mum, and Max, whose Aunt Trudy supports his mum to look after him – just to name a few. Regardless of circumstance, there is no shortage of fun and games to be had and friendships to be made at each home, and it is all expertly and sensitively illustrated by Daniel Gray-Barnett.

The accessibility of each home for people with varying needs is a key theme, demonstrating the importance of universal design not only for residents, but for the broader community as well; you (and the kids in your life) may just learn something about how to make your home a more welcoming place.

Come over to my house provides a great opportunity to broach the topic of disability, diversity and inclusion with the young ones you hold dear. Not only that – it shows how much fun can be had. Eliza and Sally say it best:

*Come visit our houses, come over and play!
 If we're kind to each other we'll have a great day.
 We can do our best to include everyone,
 So games with our friends will always be fun.*

Review by James King



A guide to the creatures in your neighbourhood

The Urban Field Naturalist Project
 Murdoch Books, 2022
 \$33

As a pandemic lockdown loomed, two biologists, two designers and a philosopher took up the challenge of making productive use of the enforced downtime, and *A guide to the creatures in your neighbourhood* was born.

An offshoot of the Urban Field Naturalist Project website, this paperback urges readers to engage in a “passionate immersion in the lives and worlds of other creatures”. Inspired by the field naturalist tradition, the book critiques its colonialist underpinnings: recognising that its philosophies are at once sorely needed and in need of transformation.

The answer appears to lie in an impactful collection of guides, tools and techniques to help budding naturalists learn about the wildlife that we're most likely to encounter in urban environments. In the 'Guide' section, there's a lineup of some of the better-known wildlife 'local heroes' such as the Australian white ibis (or 'bin chicken') – a poster child for urban wildlife adaptation, for good or ill.

The fascinating guide to lesser-known pollinators recounts the heroic journey of the wasp species *Pleistodontes froggatti* to pollinate the Moreton Bay fig (*Ficus macrophylla*), a frighteningly intricate cycle that's crucial to the reproduction of both species.

Besides the guides, there are ideas for safe and minimally invasive exploration through hands-off experiments, journalling, nature art and storytelling, and the book is rounded out with engaging and beautifully written stories of encounters in the field.

While lighthearted in tone, *A guide to the creatures in your neighbourhood* is a timely reminder not to look away; like the fig wasp, we are often the tiniest slip away from a point of no return. It seems like a small but crucial step that we learn as much as we can about the creatures around us while we still can.

Review by Kellie Flanagan



At a glance

- Home designed for ageing in place, including possible future wheelchair use
- Double-storey for views and breezes, with ramp access and provision for a lift
- High-performing, energy-efficient hempcrete house

↑

Built largely with hempcrete, Trish and Rob's house places the living spaces on the upper level to capture breezes and make the most of views north to the port and west to the ocean. Greenery will climb the mesh trellis along the northern facade over time, creating a sense of enclosure on the ground level, while maintaining light and outlook upstairs. A covered ramp incorporating shallow steps provides easy access with a wheelchair or a shopping cart.

Easy and breezy

LOCATION Beaconsfield, WA

WORDS Rebecca Gross

PHOTOGRAPHY Robert Frith

A hempcrete house that's comfortable year-round, with careful thought given to accessibility: perfect for the long term for Perth retirees Rob and Trish.

When Trish and Rob moved from their family home of 33 years, they wanted to live in a small, warm, easy-to-maintain house where they could confidently enjoy the next stage of their lives. "Accessibility is about more than being able to move around. It's about size, maintenance, ease of cleaning, temperature control and comfort. To be able to live somewhere for longer, without moving or employing people to help, adds to accessibility," says Trish. They engaged Philip Stejskal Architecture to design their new Fremantle home with accessibility and sustainability at the forefront so they can comfortably age in place.

The house, located on the subdivided property behind Trish and Rob's former home, is a two-storey building with an external ramp linking the two levels. The couple live upstairs, where an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area occupies

the front of the house and a bedroom and bathroom sit at the back. The orientation and narrow plan maximise passive solar performance, with large windows along the north side for sunlight and high-level windows along the south for cross ventilation. The living area opens to a west-facing verandah that feels like an outdoor room: sliding glass screens provide protection from the prevailing wind, concealed roller blinds provide sun control, and louvres along the side open for the summer breeze. The verandah wraps around the corner to join the covered ramp, designed with a gradual incline to make pushing a shopping cart or a wheelchair easy and incorporating shallow steps in the middle. "We were interested in the idea of a traditional Australian homestead verandah as an architectural device that protects the building from sun, and we incorporated the ramp as part of that," says architect Philip Stejskal.

Downstairs is a second bedroom and bathroom/laundry plus a storage room and garage. A short flight of steps gives internal access from the garage, and provision has been made for a lift to be installed in the future if needed. A

Family favourite

LOCATION Witchcliffe, WA

WORDS Rachael Bernstone

PHOTOGRAPHY Frances Andrijich

Having experienced life in diverse places and climate zones, Aron and Jodie chose an ecovillage near Margaret River to put down roots and build their small, high-performing family home.

Jodie Passmore and Aron Dyer were born and raised in Perth, and moved around the country before building their home in the Witchcliffe Ecovillage, 10 kilometres south of Margaret River.

“We worked in the film industry and Aron’s projects often had us following the work,” Jodie says. “Even once our son was born we kept moving, between the Gold Coast, Sydney and the Macedon Ranges in Victoria, so we’ve experienced a lot of different climates. That honed our thinking about what we wanted our house to do, and how we wanted to live.”

They gained useful insights living overseas, too. “From the experience of living and working out of a suitcase, we realised that our child was thriving on not having many possessions, and we embedded that knowledge in the design of this house,” Jodie explains.

Once their second child arrived – they are now aged four and eight – Jodie and Aron sought a place to put down roots, exploring ecovillages in several states before becoming just the third family to move into the relatively new Witchcliffe development.

“We knew we wanted enough space to grow some of our own food, but not so much land that we would feel overwhelmed by the management of it,” Jodie says. “And we knew we wanted the support and relationships with others living similarly nearby – growing, harvesting, working together – but we were still keen to have a clear boundary and strata title in place.” They also wanted to be self-sufficient for electricity and water.

Jodie and Aron sketched a rough plan for a small house and showed it to a family friend and architect, Adrian Welke of Troppo Architects. Much to their surprise and delight, he agreed to help them realise the project, and put forward suggestions about how they might adjust their aspirations.

With 40-plus years of experience delivering public and private housing around Australia, Adrian was happy to





↑
Aron and Jodie's house is part of the developing community at Witchcliffe Ecovillage near Margaret River in Western Australia. Although the house is compact at just 96 square metres, it's well-connected to the backyard and adjacent community garden. The roof form was designed to maximise both solar access to the interior and space for solar panels.

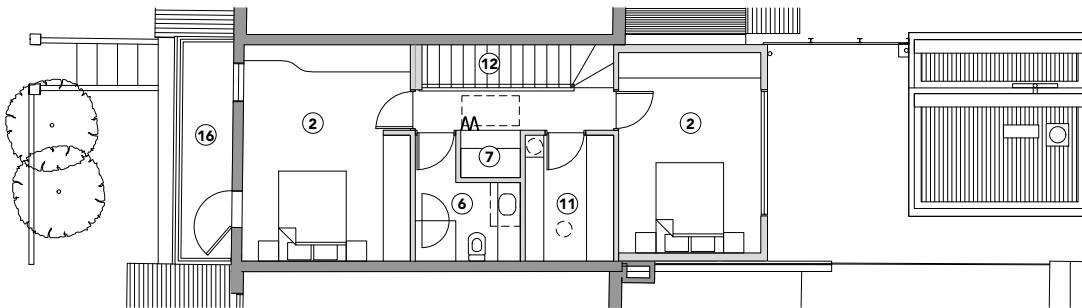
At a glance

- 8.1-Star all-electric family home of just 96m²
- Rammed earth spine wall and concrete slab for thermal mass
- Built to Livable Housing Australia Silver Level guidelines for accessibility



←
A guest pod was cleverly squeezed into the corner of the tiny inner-city block, providing a slightly separated space for visitors across a peaceful courtyard garden.

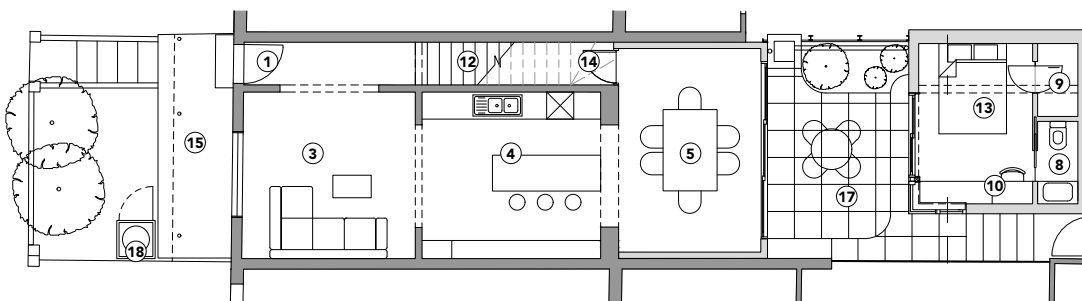
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Entry
- ② Bedroom
- ③ Living
- ④ Kitchen
- ⑤ Dining
- ⑥ Bathroom
- ⑦ Laundry
- ⑧ Toilet
- ⑨ Shower
- ⑩ Study nook
- ⑪ Walk-in robe
- ⑫ Stairs
- ⑬ Guest pod
- ⑭ Store under stairs
- ⑮ Porch
- ⑯ Balcony
- ⑰ Courtyard
- ⑱ Hot water heat pump

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



HOUSE SPECIFICATIONS

HOT WATER

- Stiebel Eltron heat pump

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- 4.2kW solar PV system (12 x 350W LG Neon2 panels with Enphase IQ7 microinverters) from LG systems, grid connected with provision for future battery connection

WATER SAVING

- Courtyard raingarden

PASSIVE DESIGN, HEATING & COOLING

- House: enlarged front windows and extensive glazing of rear facade to enhance light and sun, with shading to suit both summer and winter; new studio pod: north-west facing clerestory windows for solar access
- New and extended areas have insulated concrete slabs for thermal mass
- The new roof allows optimal north-facing solar harvesting while maintaining solar access to front and rear rooms
- Natural cross ventilation paths are designed for effective night purging of heat in summer

ACTIVE HEATING & COOLING

- Daikin Nexura floor-standing reverse-cycle air conditioners with radiant heat panels

BUILDING MATERIALS

- Existing walls: double brick
- New walls: timber frame with James Hardie cement sheet cladding, including HardieSmart boundary wall system
- Flooring: recycled Tasmanian oak
- Roofing: Lysaght Spandek
- Insulation: Bradford Gold Batts to ceiling (R5), Bradford Anticon blanket to roof (R1.3), Bradford Gold batts to new walls (R2.5), Kingspan Kooltherm K3 (R2.5) under slabs

WINDOWS & GLAZING

- Aluminium-framed double-glazed windows and doors with FSC-certified hardwood reveals, from Baseline Windows and Doors

LIGHTING

- LED lights from Mondoluce Melbourne

PAINTS, FINISHES & FLOOR COVERINGS

- Dulux low-VOC interior paints
- Loba zero-VOC internal timber finishes
- Porters Paints low-VOC external masonry paint

OTHER ESD FEATURES

- All-electric house with induction cooking
- Vintage and antique furniture pieces including Danish dining suite
- Owners use their bicycles as their primary mode of transport to get around Melbourne

DESIGNER

Fred Architecture

BUILDER

Lonsdale Building Group

PROJECT TYPE

Renovation and addition

LOCATION

West Melbourne, VIC
(Wurundjeri Country)

COST

\$740,000

SIZE

House 134m²
Land 118m²

ENERGY RATING

7.9 Stars

ENERGY ASSESSOR

Energy Smart Housing

→
Happily, there is now room in the small house for the couple's beloved dining table. The graceful curve of the existing balcony metalwork is echoed in the new stairwell balustrade inside.



A PLUS FOR EVERYONE:

Universal design and why it should be in your brief

WORDS Jane Bringolf PHOTOGRAPHY Taylor'd Distinction



↑

Step-free, flush transitions between inside and out are a basic requirement for accessibility, and are easy to achieve with some attention to door frame design.

Often thought of simply as accessibility for wheelchair users, universal design is in fact much broader than that. Its focus on the adaptability of spaces to cater for everyone, regardless of disability, life stage and household makeup, makes it an important part of sustainable design. Universal design expert Jane Bringolf explains what it's all about, and how easy it is to incorporate in your build.

To state the obvious, none of us are getting any younger. In fact, we all aspire to living a long and healthy life. So why are we still building homes as if we are never going to grow old, get sick or break a leg? Bringing a universal design perspective to our homes means many of life's expected and unexpected events can be accommodated. It's a design concept that considers the life course from cradle to grave. That means everyone benefits, both occupants and visitors.

Universal design does not refer to a particular style or kind of design; rather, is a design-thinking process and is best applied at the beginning of the project. It means thinking

UPGRADE YOUR COOKING:

Making the move to induction

WORDS Rebecca Gross



↑ Induction cooking for a crowd at Bronwyn and Brad's gas-free Golden Valley home, Tasmania. See *Sanctuary 55* for more on this house, designed by Designful. Image: Natalie Mendham

Induction cooking is on the rise as more and more people turn off the gas and go all-electric. Yet, there is still some reluctance based on lingering misconceptions. So here's why we at *Sanctuary* think induction cooking is a no-brainer – plus ideas for how to make the move in an existing kitchen.

ALL ABOUT INDUCTION

Choosing to go all-electric at home has traditionally meant using a conventional resistive electric cooktop, and due to their downsides people will often prefer to cook with gas. But induction technology has changed the game, outperforming both gas and old-school electric cooktops on numerous metrics.

Induction cooktops produce an oscillating magnetic field that induces an electric current in a pot, thereby heating it up. By heating the base of the pot directly, induction technology uses energy more efficiently than resistive electric elements or gas burners, and there's no energy lost from the element to the air. In addition, unlike gas cooktops, induction cooktops can be run on renewable energy such as solar generation or GreenPower, reducing greenhouse gas emissions even further.

In stark contrast to conventional electric cooktops, induction allows almost instant changes in temperature: the heat control is more precise and just as responsive as with gas cooking. Induction also allows speedier cooking, and because the heat is generated directly in the pot, the cooktop surface remains relatively cool – great for kitchen safety.

In the interests of safety and energy efficiency, most models have smart features that will shut off the power when the pan is removed or boils over, and apply only the required power for the size of the pan in contact with the cooking zone. When you're finished cooking, the flat glass surface is easy to wipe clean with a wet cloth, and spills don't tend to burn or bake on because the glass surface doesn't get that hot.



OUTDOORS

Plants that keep on giving

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY Mara Ripani

Avid gardener and permaculturalist Mara Ripani shares her knowledge of herbaceous perennials: what they are, how to care for them and their role in organic gardens.

One day you may find yourself falling in love with plants and gardens, and in the process discovering an entirely new language. Many plant nurseries have a category called perennials, dedicated to plants that live for more than two years. What you might not realise is that this category rarely includes trees and shrubs (even though these also live for more than two years) and is in fact usually dedicated to herbaceous perennials.

JUST WHAT ARE HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS?

When I first began creating a garden, I had no idea how important horticultural language could be, and terms such as 'herbaceous perennial' meant nothing to me. Over time I came to learn that even one word could reveal a great deal about a plant's life cycle and care needs.

The word 'perennial' tells you the plant will live for many years. Contrast this with 'annuals' and 'biennials'. An annual will live for one year then die and hence will need to be planted again, unless it self-seeds. And a biennial will live for a maximum of two years, then die and need to be planted again, unless it suckers (e.g. raspberries) or self-seeds (e.g. parsley).

The word 'herbaceous' tells us something important too. It lets us know that the plant is low-growing (with the exception of banana plants, the tallest 'herb'), retains soft green stems (unlike the woody trunks of trees and shrubs) and has an ephemeral nature – it dies back in winter, while underground the roots are very much alive, just dormant until spring's return.

This sort of information directly informs where we place herbaceous perennials and other plants in our garden, how we care for them and what to expect from them.



↖↑ There are many lovely perennial grasses to choose from, including exotics like Chinese silver grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*, facing page) and natives such as kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*, above).



↑ Colourful herbaceous perennials beardtongue (*Penstemon*) and *Agastache* with common tussock grass (*Poa labillardierei*) in the background.

WHY PLANT THEM?

Herbaceous perennials are distinctly different from trees and shrubs, although they are all perennials. Herbaceous perennials are mostly low-growing plants such as grasses, flowers and herbs and hence offer an entirely different garden experience. Depending on the plant – and there is a huge variety to choose from – they also produce stunning flower shows, seed heads, or fragrant medicinal leaves. They can provide nectar and pollen for bees, cut flowers for your home, and strong architectural forms in the garden. Some herbaceous perennials are also culinary herbs and provide food, for example artichokes, potatoes, mint, asparagus, fennel and rhubarb.

As perennials remain in the ground year after year, they provide habitat for insects of all kinds. They also provide a safe haven for soil builders: worms, spiders, bacteria, algae and fungi. Their long-lived roots stabilise the soil, while their dormant phase in winter means pruned dead stems add organic matter to soil.

In most cases, in winter, the entire herbaceous perennial plant will die – only the roots will live – and it is common practice to cut the plant back to the ground. However, it is often wise to leave the dead skeletal structure of the plant until new lush green shoots begin to form, partly because in some gardens you can lose track of where the plants are, and also because every plant,

**EMMA HEALY**

Architect
Landings Studio
www.landings-studio.com
Works in Queensland

What kind of house did you grow up in?

A 1950s fibro shack – and I live in one now too! Although the two houses are from the same era, they have very different layouts. My childhood home had an introverted plan with a ‘landlocked’ kitchen and a series of rooms you walked through to get to other rooms. My parents did a really good job using sliding walls, skylights and openings cut from one room to the next to allow for natural light and connectivity. My current home has a central corridor and all rooms have beautiful casement corner windows.

What was the first design project you were really proud of?

When I worked with m3architecture as a student I was lucky enough to work on the Tree of Knowledge memorial in Barcardine, outback Queensland. It was a really rewarding project to be part of because of its cultural significance.

What is your favourite sustainable building, and why?

The Port Philip Ecocentre in Melbourne, by Phooey Architects. It was ahead of its time and holistic in its approach to sustainability – including social sustainability via the stakeholder engagement and procurement process. I also like Phooey’s people-centred philosophy as a practice.

What’s on your drawing board right now?

I’m working with architect Emma Scragg for the Food Connect Shed – we are both long-term supporters of their philosophy of localising food systems. We are turning a small depot building on the outskirts of Brisbane into a nursery and events space. I’ve also been helping out my friends at Loop Growers farm with the reconstruction of their seed houses, processing and community buildings after the recent floods.

If you weren’t an architect, what would you be?

I would be a florist and my husband and business partner Dave would be a flower farmer. Working in a florist shop was my first job, and in 2014 we had a go at making flower farming and floral work our full-time business. We set up a social enterprise that connected local flower growers, community and backyard gardeners with sustainably-minded florists. We loved that chapter of our lives, but it wasn’t conducive to raising a young family and we missed the design industry too. It was this experiment that led to Dave studying horticulture. Now we combine all our skills and it feels like we get the best of both worlds.

**MICHAEL LURIE**

Building designer
Lurie Concepts
www.lurieconcepts.com.au
Works in South West and Great
Southern regions of WA

What kind of house did you grow up in?

I grew up in a coastal hamlet of Cape Town, South Africa, called Camps Bay, in a modest brick and tile house built on the side of Table Mountain. Overlooking the ocean, it had a pool that was an artful composition of granite boulders and concrete. It was such an epic landscape; you could never separate the home from its place.

What was the first design project you were really proud of?

I continue to be proud of my current home (see *Sanctuary58*). It well represents my ethos. It is relatively small, flexible and affordable, it generates income and energy, nurtures our health and most importantly is a vessel for making memories with my family.

What is your favourite sustainable building, and why?

I would love to visit Daylesford Longhouse in Victoria, by Partners Hill. It is a self-sufficient rural home and workplace shrouded by a 110-metre-long greenhouse. It extends the shed vernacular and layers multiple functions in a really adventurous (and beautiful) way. In an increasingly unpredictable climate this kind of utopic concept is one we would love to explore in our future work.

What’s on your drawing board right now?

We are fortunate to be designing our signature barn-style home on a number of spectacular rural properties. We are constantly experimenting with new ways to express the typology and to engage our homes with the natural environment. The recent supply chain issues have challenged us to review our palette of materials with a renewed focus on using locally available products.

What do we need to be considering to design our homes for resilience in a changing climate?

Optimising our homes’ thermal performance is a no-brainer both for reducing energy consumption during the life of the building and keeping the occupants comfortable during extreme weather events. Smart siting is also becoming more relevant than ever before as the risk of flooding, bushfire, erosion and rising sea levels increases.

What’s your best advice for someone designing their dream home?

Affordability is one of the biggest issues our clients face, so we always try to work closely with local builders and trades to find cost-effective solutions. Be open-minded to new ideas during the design process, and don’t be afraid to problem-solve or even compromise. Sometimes, the best outcome is a marriage of aesthetics, restraints and function.

WIN

a Benzina Zero City
Electric Scooter,
valued at \$5,500



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BENZINA ZERO

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Sanctuary MODERN GREEN HOMES