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This Sustainable Apartment Is A Little Slice Of LA, In Melbourne

SUSTAINABLE HOMES

When designed well, there's a lot to be said for apartment living. For one thing, Melbourne's population growth simply can't sustain that outdated Australian dream of the quarter acre suburban block, but beyond that, thoughtful medium-density development offers affordability and sustainability that can be otherwise difficult to achieve, especially for first home buyers in and around our capital cities.

One of Melbourne's most successful recent multi-residential projects is this uniquely 'breathable' apartment building in North Fitzroy, designed by Fieldwork architects for Milieu.

Illustrator Samantha Curcio and primary school teacher David Waddell are among this building's proud apartment owners, and they invited us in for a tour!

1st September, 2020



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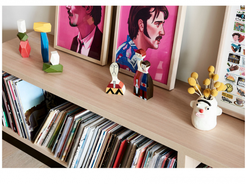




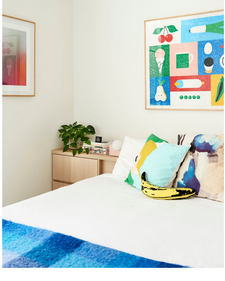


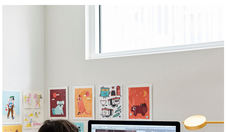


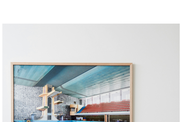


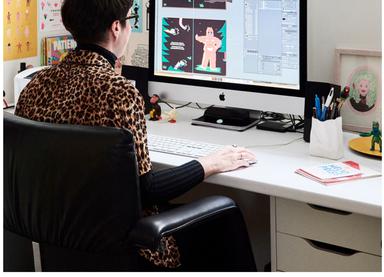


























Amelia Barnes

Tuesday 1st September 2020

‘We really love that our place isn’t one of your typical apartment styles.’ – Samantha Curcio

When looking to buy their first home, illustrator Samantha Curcio and primary school teacher David Waddell went seeking a property with sustainable design credentials and some inherent character. ‘We were looking for apartments for a while, but didn’t want to move into a ‘mega block’ which seemed to be popping up everywhere,’ says Samantha.

The couple were living in Carlton North at the time, so when they discovered a new 26-apartment project being designed by Fieldwork architects nearby, they were immediately interested. Renders of the proposed ‘Nth Fitzroy’ building displayed a lush central atrium, alongside an eye-catching façade cloaked in a veil of expanded metal mesh, allowing the building to ‘breathe’ with the rhythms of the day. The building also included a suite of sustainable features, including rainwater harvesting, solar electricity in common areas, and thermal design principles that resulted in a 7-star NatHERS rating. ‘I think in this day and age it’s important to buy responsibly, and we felt being sustainable is a big factor in that,’ says Samantha.

It was these sustainable credentials, paired with the location and appealing aesthetic, that sealed the deal for the couple, and they purchased one of the last properties available off the plan. Samantha says, ‘This place had everything we liked about the neighbourhood, plus all the added design features that made it a more unique buy.’

The development was completed in late 2018, and the finished result proved just attractive as those initial renders. ‘When we first moved in, everyone kept telling us it reminded them of LA, which definitely gives off that vibe,’ says Samantha. ‘We really love that our place isn’t one of your typical apartment styles.’

Inside Samantha and David’s apartment, the distinctive mesh facade means plenty of natural light and cross ventilation. ‘We love the dappled light we get through our shutters, and it’s a bonus that it’s an environmental feature of this place!’ Samantha says.

The pair have personalised their space with a combination of both contemporary and vintage furniture, and an array of fun, quirky styling details. Sentimental knick-knacks and art by local artists is displayed throughout, including Samantha’s own cheerful, graphic artwork. Check out her brilliant portfolio and online store here, for an instant mood-boost!

Instead of rushing to fill the home with furniture, the couple have taken the time to find pieces they will truly cherish, including their long awaited sofa. ‘Probably the biggest challenge was trying to teach Dave how to sit in a bean bag for six months until our couch arrived from overseas!’ Samantha says.

The absolute cherry on top of this apartment building for Samantha and David is the ground floor restaurant, Lagotto, which happens to be one of the best all-day Italian restaurants in town!

Samantha and David have been living in this building for almost two years now, and have happily settled in to their cheerful little slice of Fitzroy North. The couple love their building’s leafy central atrium, and note their apartment’s temperature-controlled interiors, which are especially important in summer. ‘We rarely put the air con on, so that’s been a blessing and for sure has saved us some cash!,’ says Samantha. ‘More gelati money!’

This story is part of our series on Sustainable Homes, brought to you in partnership with Bank Australia. You can revisit the earlier stories in this series here and here.

Bank Australia’s Clean Energy Home Loan offers a discounted home loan rate if you buy or build a home that exceeds a 7-star NatHERS rating, or have made ambitious green upgrades in the last 12 months. Find out more here!

THIS WEEK



GARDENS

A Sensitive Update For This Grand, 100-Year-Old Garden in Sydney

Numerous landscape designers have tended to this Mosman property over the past century, resulting in a layered, grandiose space.

Amelia Barnes



HOMES

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