



## FACT FILE

## THE BRIEF

To knockdown the majority of a Californian bungalow on a sloping block and replace with a modern, family-friendly tri-storey home

## THE FAMILY

Elvis and Tina Mardini and their children Mia, 8, and George, 3

## THE OWNER/BUILDER

Mardini Contructions



# True labour of love

A builder with a grand imagination created his dream home, writes Catherine Nikas-Boulos

The little store front stocked with sweets and other convenience buys is long gone. Now a different kind of delight can be found on this sloping former shop site in Earlwood.

Award-winning builder Elvis Mardini of Mardini Contructions has worked on a host of lavish multi-million dollar properties, but this personal labour of love stands out for him.

Together with wife Tina, they have created a house that incorporates all their design objectives while providing ample

entertainment room and growing space for their children Mia, 8, and George, 3.

"We designed and built this home from the ground up and we were very specific about what we wanted," Elvis says.

"I wanted to find a house I could renovate and rebuild on a sloping block, so I could extend and add high ceilings down the back. I was driving past when I saw it and called out to the agent who was there, 'I'll take it'."

The Mardini's home replaces a run-down bungalow that used to house an old-style shopfront. In a grand transformation that would astonish former customers, where they once stepped into the shop is now the Mardini's entrance area.

"When I was a kid, I used to go to that shop with my schoolmates to buy ice creams, so I have very fond memories of this place," Elvis says.

## Expanding space

Elvis explains his original vision and concept for the house was based on creating a feeling of rolling down the hill.

"Then to build on that concept, with a feeling of expanding space, that opens up as you progress from the modest front to the large open rear of the house and garden," he says.

The layout centres around a wide corridor leading out to open-plan living spaces, with impressive 5m ceilings in the living, family and dining room areas.

A pool attached to the rear patio, which in turns leads down to a cabana in the

backyard, completes this impressive build. Lush landscaping and plantation in a natural surround also makes for a magical escape in this private backyard.

The Mardini's house sits on a substantial 580sq m block, but as it backs on to an easement, the feeling is that of being on a much larger site.

To complement the natural beauty on their inner-west doorstep, they have used natural materials throughout the house.

"We like to use beautiful, natural materials as much as possible, and we selected some of our favourites for this home," Elvis says.

"We used old reclaimed sandstone externally, recycled jarrah timber for the internal doors, beams and rafters, cedar timber for the external windows and doors, limestone floors, and marble benchtops in the kitchen and bathrooms."

"With these materials, the aim was to give a warm feeling of an older lived-in look, even though the design is very modern in form, by including sharp, crisp shadowlines around the floors, walls and ceilings."

This was then contrasted with some traditional features, such as the chandeliers and wall scones. Classical antique furniture was then added, for further contrast and to highlight the colours.

## Lengthy construction

The tri-level five-bedroom double brick and concrete home was truly a labour of love, with the Mardini family living in the front portion of the house while the back

A The facade of the Mardini home B Owner Tina Mardini in the dining room C Plenty of light flows into the living areas from the large glass windows D The living room opens to the outdoors





**E** The kitchen **F** Marble benchtops are a feature  
**G** The dining area  
**H** The outdoor areas are beautifully landscaped