

## CUSTOM BUILT



Marc Drexel with Rochelle Donovan. Pictures: Gerald Moscarda

# A shared passion

■ Len Findlay

**M**arc Drexel has passion — and he will happily tell you about his passion at length. Rochelle Donovan and Anthony Pillinger share that passion. It is for sustainable living, innovative and planet-friendly designs and cost-effectiveness. And it has all come together in Mr Drexel's home at Wembley.

From the recycled rail sleepers in the front fence, to the 3500L rainwater tank, to the design, which uses most

unusual materials, to the airflow, the home is a modern statement about what can be done. Even during construction, waste was minimal, with recycling a major demand.

A feature of the home is the lack of hallways and passageways — “Waste of space,” said Mr Drexel. He also does not like big open-plan areas which are expensive to heat and cool, so every part of this home can be sectioned separately.

The result is a three-bedroom, two-bathroom home, with two living areas, which has been given a nine-star thermal performance rating.

According to the Nationwide House Energy Ratings Scheme, a Federal Government measure, Australian homes built in 1990 averaged one star on this measure and, from 2012, new homes must achieve six stars.

A perfect 10 would mean that the home had no running costs.

To achieve his dream, Mr Drexel, who is managing director of ARCshelter — a company which advises builders, designers, buyers and real estate agents on sustainable



The dark and handsome kitchen benches are made of paper.

# for innovation

buildings — turned to old friend Rochelle Donovan, of Lucky Stripe Interiors, to design the home. He then had Anthony Pillinger, of Swell Homes (another passionate eco-builder) to construct it.

Everything in the garden is local native “or edible”, says Mr Drexel, and even the construction of a small pond at the side incorporates his philosophy. It sits outside a small window and, according to Mr Drexel, “will work exactly as the old Coolgardie safes did and the breeze across the water will add to the cooling”.

Ms Donovan in the past has concentrated on interior design work but expanded here and is happy with the results. She emphasises the design ensures that temperature is maintained at 22-24C.

The walls are not double brick, but single brick and concrete, with an insulated cavity — and even that is filled with recycled plastic bottles.

The floor is polished concrete, with little aggregate. Dark in colour, it absorbs the sun and gives out heat at night.

The open brick wall above the kitchen will soon have a planter

box and will support plants.

The pergola has no cover, instead it will be covered by grape vines.

There is an upstairs room which can be anything — lounge, retreat or kids' room. And there are huge storage areas built in under the roof.

The lower level has a living area, with skillion ceiling, a study, a main suite with full ensuite, two more bedrooms, a laundry and guest bathroom.

The kitchen benches are dark and handsome — and made of paper. Manufactured in Byron Bay, it is called Paper Rock and

looks and feels like granite.

The home is the future according to owner, designer and builder. Mr Drexel has little time for “McMansions” housing two people at enormous costs and says the world is waking up to the ideas of sustainability.

Now his home is showing how the design features are working and Mr Drexel plans to open it to groups as he continues to spread his message.

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