



New colourful decorative cushions updated the Spencers' cream fabric lounge.

# A DAY ON THE GREEN

Tom and Lynne Spencer have scored a hole-in-one with their revamped golfer's paradise.

STORY CARLA CARUSO PHOTOGRAPHY TONY POTTER STYLING KATHRYN BORGLUND



LEFT: ITF Cabinet Making and Joinery was behind the sleek kitchen cabinetry.

TOP LEFT: Floor-to-ceiling windows provide a stunning outlook when cooking.

ABOVE: Looking onto lush golfing fairways isn't a bad way to spend an evening.



**F**or golf lovers, inhabiting a home overlooking lush green fairways is the ultimate dream. For Tom and Lynne Spencer and their 25-year-old daughter Leanne, it's a day-to-day reality. The trio reside in a two-storey home on an estate within Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club in Sydney's northern suburbs – just 25 minutes' drive from the CBD.

"We were one of the first groups of people in the estate and moved here in 1997," Tom says. "Hence, we were able to get a north-facing block that looks across a lake with the golf course beyond; it really has got a lovely aspect."

The family has lived here since – except for two years when Tom's job as a corporate lawyer gave the family the chance to live in Singapore and Shanghai. When Tom and

Lynne returned in 2009, they decided it was time to revamp their former digs. "As time went past, the house had got a little tired," Lynne says. "We started off wanting just to extend the back verandah, but ended up doing the whole house." The Spencers employed the services of interior designer Noela Coffey, and about eight months later – with the family moving out for half the time – the makeover was complete in 2010.



Features such as a mirrored splashback, induction cooktop and glossy cabinetry modernised the kitchen.





## LIGHT AND BRIGHT

"The initial design brief was to open up the home so the garden became more a part of the house," Tom enthuses. "We already had plenty of windows facing north, but they've since been made floor-to-ceiling, with bi-fold doors at the rear. It's a great result."



The colour palette was also tweaked. "The whole place has been lightened up," Lynne says. "We had beige everywhere. The walls are now all in Dulux Whisper White. We initially thought the white would make the house look quite sterile, but it's actually made it look really nice and modern. It has particularly lightened up a couple of darkish rooms."

The whole ground floor of the home was also retiled in a white limestone hue with a grey fleck, while off-white carpets were laid elsewhere. The downstairs windows facing north got a burst of colour with soft green curtains, while grey curtains with black motifs adorn the windows upstairs.

Throughout the home there's also a distinct Oriental flavour with many Asian artefacts and ornaments dotted about thanks to the family's travels abroad.

## TOTAL REVAMP

In the kitchen, a dated laminate and timber look made way for sleek polyurethane cabinetry and Caesarstone benches in urban

## BEHIND THE SCENES

**Luckiest find:** Interior designer Noela Coffey was quite the find it seems. "Working closely with Noela was great," Tom says. "She was very creative and had a lot of ideas. She would often say 'Just trust me', and we did."

**Favourite room or feature:** "Our spacious open-plan kitchen and family room area is a favourite. When the door is open on a sunny day and you get the breeze coming through, it's just brilliant," Tom says.

**Favourite things:** "Increasing the size of the windows to floor-to-ceiling has had a real impact," Lynne says. "The large glass plate windows in both the kitchen area and the main bedroom just seem to have doubled what was already a great view. Plus, there's just a general increase in the home's lightness, brightness and modernity."

**Biggest challenge:** Designing the kitchen to include a working pantry area caused a few headaches. "We ended up with a lovely kitchen, but we had structural issues with our original design," Lynne says. "We wanted a walk-in pantry, but there were a lot of challenges in making room for things like the fridge and having the pantry big enough to still be useful, but with a bit of tweaking, we got there."

**Top tip:** "We had a lot of ideas ourselves, but I think just listening to an experienced interior designer was a plus," Tom says. "Noela Coffey was great to work with. She always had ideas and always made us think about new and different approaches. We had an architect for the dimensions, but when it came to actually filling the available space Noela took over."

ABOVE: The new floor-to-ceiling windows mean the indoor area now spills outdoors.

LEFT: The Spencers' old whitewashed dining set was updated with black lacquer and reupholstered too.



The spacious dining area is both elegant and stylish.



– a warm brown/grey shade – crafted by ITF Cabinet Making and Joinery. Benchtops were lowered and new De Dietrich appliances also helped modernise the space, including a steamer, microwave, oven, warming drawer and coffee maker. A gas stove was also replaced by an induction cooktop.

“Having no hob on the kitchen benchtops makes the room look much more

modern,” Lynne enthuses. “I also like that we get a reflection of the golf course and the pool in the mirrored, mesh splashback. The whole kitchen not only looks nicer, it’s also more functional.”

The dining setting is part of the family’s original furniture, but was refreshed and made to look new again with whitewashed chairs lacquered in black. “The new colour goes well with the new silver light fittings, and repainting the chairs and sideboard also saved us some money,” Tom says. An outdated entertainment unit in the family room was also replaced with a sleek, low-sitting one and old, clunky TVs were swapped for sleek, wall-mounted flat screens. Similarly, glass balustrades replaced



ABOVE: A grey and white colour palette and floor-to-ceiling windows keep the master bedroom light and bright.

RIGHT: A neutral colour palette helps make this bathroom feel roomy.

## COLOUR CODE

Dulux Whisper White was used throughout the home and helped to lighten some dark rooms and create a cohesive, modern look.



Dulux Whisper White





A punch of colour and nautical stripes make this a cheery bedroom for overseas guests or visiting family members.



old handrails on the staircase and modern light fittings added a streamlined look throughout.

Four bathrooms became five, with a new ensuite added to Leanne's bedroom. "The emphasis throughout the bathrooms was on white glossy tiles, glass shower screens and new stainless-steel fittings," Tom says. The bedrooms also had built-ins added.

### OUT BACK

The back verandah was revamped to flow into the indoor area. The previously tiled area of about 10m by 2.5m was extended to span 20m by 4m – all now undercover, with galvanised iron roofing. The same limestone flooring from indoors now spills outside too. "We also put in a couple of skylights to let the sun through. And we just love relaxing out on the verandah now," Tom says.

"They've got the best spot on the golf course," interior designer Noela Coffey chimes in, "and to have the bi-folds that open up and out onto the verandah has really added to the space. Renovating all

the bathrooms and the kitchen has added value to the home as well."

"It ended up being a pretty big job," Tom says, "but we're so happy with the results – it feels like a new house."

ABOVE: A mirror, extending to the ceiling, adds to the sense of space in this bathroom.

BELOW: The bathrooms have a plush, hotel-like feel.





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