



Forget about restaurants – dining at home in style is far more preferable now



The views from the balcony are spectacular

## modern makeover



GOOD BONES WERE HIDDEN BEHIND DATED BLONDE BRICKS AND BROWN LAMINATE, BUT A CLEVER MAKEOVER HAS REVEALED THIS BEACH UNIT'S TRUE BEAUTY. BY **SHARON LUCK**

**HOLIDAYS BY** the beach will never be the same for Ipswich-based Bruce Sackson and Sue Stewart. Their holiday unit on Alexandra Parade was caught in a time warp, complete with blonde brick walls, brown laminate kitchen and daggy floorcoverings.

Purchased back in 1987, the unit might have been fashionable at some point, but by the time the noughties rolled around it was looking seriously dated. And it wasn't just Sue and Bruce who thought so. The other owners of the six-unit complex were in complete agreement and unanimously decided on an external facelift.

The outside façade was rendered in neutral cream tones and substantial verandahs were added to all three levels. The old and rarely used swimming pool out the back was removed to make way for additional garaging

for all the unit owners.

Inspired by the external transformation, the Sacksons decided to makeover the interior of their top floor beach-facing unit.

And the results are stunning – those blonde brick walls are now smooth plaster, the shuttered verandah now provides a huge expanse of very usable living space and the kitchen is spacious and modern.

"We want to spend more time here now," says Sue, who admits that walking in the front door instantly puts her into holiday mode.

The couple paid plenty of attention to the detail, with Sue choosing the finishes and colours, steering the overall look of the project. But she is quick to heap praise on the man she says is the real reason the renovation has been so effective.

"Ian Dimond is a great architect. He did a



The lounge room is now a practical, welcoming space that opens to the veranda

brilliant job of the kitchen, opening it up for me, and he made the view so much more accessible with lots of glass," she says.

"We had ideas and he encompassed them in the design, which was then beautifully built by our builder Gordon Winch, an old-style builder who appreciated the strong bones of our unit," Sue says. "It's built like a bunker."

Their combined efforts have brought about a tremendous transformation.

Grey is the dominant colour scheme, with dark tiles laid on the floor (except for carpet in the bedrooms) with white, silver and splashes of colour adding impact. In the kitchen and living areas, the accent colour is a rich tomato red.

For Sue, the kitchen is perhaps the greatest triumph – comprising soft-close drawers and extra wide caesarstone benchtops, it's so

much more than she had hoped for.

The angled benchtop creates the perfect place to prepare food or serve it up banquet style. Of course, most of the dining is done outdoors in the sheltered corners of the wrap-around verandah. A handy servery above the sink makes this possible, as well as making sure the host/hostess is part of the party even if they are hard at work in the kitchen.

"We spend so much more time here now that it's all done," Sue says of the project that took almost a year to complete.

And amazingly, it's hard to believe it's a unit – there is so much room. There are three bedrooms and all are big enough for king- and queen-sized beds. There's also plenty of storage in each room, including a walk-in-robe in the master bedroom and plenty of cupboards along the hallway.



Margot loves her new room

There are also two bathrooms – the main has a spa bath, separate shower and vanity.

The ensuite bathroom has been enlarged, crimping a bit of space from the laundry to allow room for a bigger shower (complete with monsoon shower head). Mirrors have also been well positioned, making this room appear even larger than it is.

"The beauty of working with a building of this age is that all the rooms were of good proportions," Sue says.

And it all suits their daughter, Margot, perfectly. She loves the beach across the road, and now that the unit is such an inviting place, it's not hard for her to convince her parents that it's time to pack the car and spend a weekend walking on the sand or checking out the tidal pools at Alex.



Tomato red makes a bold statement in the kitchen