



POINT OF

VIEW

**A MODERN BARN HOUSE WITH SPECTACULAR VIEWS IN RURAL VICTORIA GIVES ONE COUPLE THE CHANCE TO NURTURE AN ENRICHED LIFESTYLE CONNECTED TO THE LAND**

Story JESSICA BELLEF Styling BELLE HEMMING Photography MARNIE HAWSON

**REFINED RURAL** Cutting a shed-like silhouette, Kristy and Neil's new-build home, is an ode to farm life and the stunning West Gippsland outlook. A bespoke barn door painted in Dulux Red Back forms the front entry (opposite), with reclaimed brick paving leading into the home. "When you pull back the red barn door and step in, the amazing view of the hills envelops you," says Kristy, pictured. >



The simple beauty of a weather-beaten farm shed set in rolling swathes of pasture land dotted with gum thickets and rocky outcrops captured Kristy and Neil's hearts and minds in 2015. Energised by time spent at cattle stations while travelling the dusty road from Darwin to Broome, the Melbourne city-dwellers began to think about what life would look like once their son and daughter, now 16 and 19, flew the coop.

Kristy was working in marketing and PR, and her husband Neil in corporate strategy, but their vision for the future involved building an eco-friendly agri-business and a new home in the country. "We had zero farming background, and we didn't know anyone in

the industry," Kristy laughs. "Our friends thought we were mad when we bought the land, especially because it was 150 acres [60 hectares] and not just a four-acre hobby farm."

Their property, Green Hills Farm, is located in West Gippsland, a 90-minute drive from Melbourne. "It was the first property we really looked at, and we instantly fell in love. We got an immediate feeling of home and place," Kristy shares. The small, asbestos-ridden farmhouse was still standing, but the couple were awestruck by the western views of the Strzelecki Ranges gained from a tumbledown shed. "Walking around the old stables, the view of the hills came into life. We immediately knew this is where the house needed to go," says Kristy. "We wanted to create a new version of it, a modern barn, not just something off the plan." The resulting home is >

**LIVING AREA** To give a cosy feel to the living space, a Cheminees Philippe 'Radiante' wood heater was at the top of Kristy's wish list, while the sofas from King, sitting on a rug from Armadillo, were an inspired choice. "The house is very angular, so the circular couch really softens the space and creates a sense of gathering," says Kristy. A framed photo print of the Australian bush by Marnie Hawson echoes the raw beauty of the surroundings.



a comfortable, contemporary farmhouse designed by Angus McKay and Len Chapman of Slap Architects and built by JW & WM Woodbridge. Celebrating the organic textures, simple forms and hardworking spirit of Australian rural outbuildings, the iron-roofed, timber-clad abode is in harmony with the pastoral landscape. The merging of the natural and built environment continues inside, where daylight and tactile finishes flow. “We worked extensively with Kristy to develop the interiors based on the inspiration of the existing dairy farm materials, such as the weathered timber used in the interior wall linings and the brick flooring,” says Angus.

The low-maintenance retreat is minimally decorated with functionality at the fore. “There is a sense of simplicity when living in the country; it’s not about going out and buying lots of little things to fill up a room,” says Kristy. “We are living on a working farm. Surfaces and flooring need to handle things like muddy boots, hence the concrete floors and the recycled brick paving in the

entrance and mudroom.” Glazing features heavily on the western facade, capturing every inch of outlook and the spectacular sunsets. “It’s endless hours of golden glow here,” Kristy smiles.

The house at Green Hills Farm is thoughtfully designed for years of happiness and restorative gazing out to the far reaches of the surrounds. And how has the couple fared as farmers? With the help of a handful of dedicated people, they now raise grass-fed cattle and produce organic garlic, and their kitchen garden and orchards supply local restaurants. They run boutique accommodation on the lot next door and host events to celebrate local producers.

Kristy estimates she and Neil are about two years away from making Green Hills Farm their full-time residence and occupation, and they couldn’t be more excited. “Every time we walk in, we think how lucky we are to have found this place and built this home,” she shares. “It’s so calming and joyous and allows space for creativity with gardening and cooking. My cup is really filled by being here. >

“WE WANTED OUR HOUSE TO *reflect* THE OLD RUSTIC SHEDS AND BARNES YOU SEE WHEN YOU TRAVEL THROUGH *these beautiful rolling hills*” KRISTY

**FRONT ENTRY** The approach to the farmhouse hints at the incredible views of the Strzelecki Ranges to the west. Landscape designer Prue Metcalfe framed the entry with a young snow gum and a mix of hardy native grasses interspersed with large local rocks from Mt Speed Quarry.

**KITCHEN & DINING** The raw, industrial scheme is practical and striking. The kitchen cabinetry is from George Fethers & Co, with the dark matt 'Nero' finish providing a contrast to the Victorian ash veneer. The benchtop is Caesarstone 'Raw Concrete', and custom-made steel plating forms the splashback. An 'AIM' pendant light from Euro luce dances over the dining chairs from Design By Them and a table crafted by the builders, JW & WM Woodbridge. "The builders provided the attention to detail that the project demanded for a successful outcome," says Angus from Slap Architects.



**WE LOVE...**  
*custom storage*

Kristy gains extra storage space with the open shelves from Nicholls Design. "It's not just a shelf filled with pretty things that don't get used - I use those things every day," says the foodie who loves to cook. The unit was custom-designed to suit the kitchen's streamlined palette. Visit [nichollsdesign.com.au](http://nichollsdesign.com.au) >

**FLOOR PLAN**

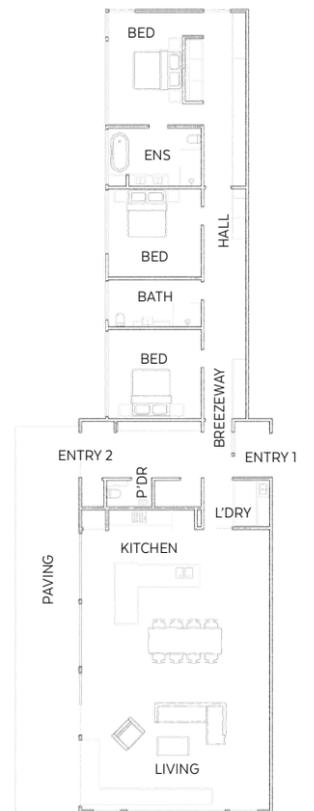


ILLUSTRATION KENZIEDSIGN.COM

“WE ARE CONSTANTLY DRAWN TO *look at nature* THROUGH THE USE OF *natural wood* IN THE INTERIORS AND OUR VIEWS” KRISTY



**MAIN BEDROOM** “It’s the ultimate bedroom retreat when you can snuggle down for a good night’s sleep or afternoon nap. Like the living area, it’s all about the views,” says Kristy of the luxe cabin-style main bedroom. Yellow stringybark timber from Montana Timber continues through this space, with a feature wall made from textured, rough-sawn panelling and a polished version of the natural material laid as flooring and the floating wall behind the bed. A bed from King, wall lights from Marz Designs, a standing mirror (find similar at Freedom), and wall-mounted bedside from Danish Red complete the sleep zone. **MAIN ENSUITE** (opposite) Calm, modern and organic, the ensuite features Uniquestone ‘Nite’ tiles across the floor and wall, cabinetry in George Fethers & Co ‘Nero’ retoned timber veneer, and a ‘Raw Concrete’ benchtop from Caesarstone. The Laufen counter basins, tapware and the towel rail are from Reece, with mirrors by Zuster, a ‘Terra’ pendant from Marz Designs and a Globe West stool. “Our bed, bath and shower all face those magnificent views of green rolling hills, creating a seamless feel from one end of the house to the other,” says Kristy. >





**Source book**

**Architect:** Slap Architects, slaparchitects.com.au.

**Builder:** JW & WM Woodbridge Builders, woodybuild.com.au.

**Landscape design:** Prue Metcalfe Gardens & Design, pruemetcalfegardens.com.au.

**Landscapers:** Tim Cannon Landscapes, timcannon.com.au and Local Boys, localboys.net.au.

**Green Hills Farm:** To find out more and shop the Green Hills Farm products range, visit greenhillsfarm.com.au.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** Kristy picks beans in the kitchen garden that provides masses of organic produce for the family and local chefs. Farming novices Kristy and Neil have established a working farm and a supportive community around them. “We’ve had a lot of help from people smarter than us to bring our vision to life,” Kristy shares.



**BARN BEAUTY**



**INSIDE STORY**  
*Kristy & Neil's home*

**Who lives here?**  
Kristy and Neil, who are aiming to make Green Hills Farm their full-time residence and occupation in about two years.

**Country living is...?**  
Kristy: “The community. It’s all about sharing food, knowledge and time with people.”

**Your ethos?**  
Kristy: “We are very committed to land regeneration and ensuring it is better than we found it for future generations.”

**Decorating approach?**  
Kristy: “I am still finding pieces for the house. I am comfortable with the fact that I know what I am looking for, and it’s going to take time.”



1. Purple salvia hugs the farmhouse that overlooks the Strzelecki Ranges.
2. Trit House side table and wall painted in Dulux Whisper White.
3. The entryway features reclaimed brick floors and a wall clad in rough-sawn yellow stringybark from Montana Timber.
4. The master ensuite features a tub from Reece, Globe West timber stool and mountain views.
5. The project’s builders, JW & WM Woodbridge, constructed the dining table using yellow stringybark timber.
6. The builders also crafted the Victorian ash bunks. Beanbags from Target.
7. A pre-fab greenhouse by Sproutwell Greenhouses protects young seedlings.

