

“WE LOVE LIVING HERE”

Building a dream family home proved a breeze for this family, writes

LIZ McLACHLAN

When McKinnon couple Karin and David Kuehn saw custom home builder Carter Grange’s first advertisement in 2011, its message of architectural design, luxury finishes and affordability made them pick up the phone.

“We were the 11th callers to Carter Grange after they first started. We rang straight away, went to see their display and loved it,” says Karin Kuehn.

“What impressed us immediately was the space, and that their finishes were of a higher quality. Their philosophy is to appeal to people like us – second or third home buyers looking for better quality, more architectural flair and excellent detailing.”

In the midst of starting and raising a four-child family, the Kuehns knew they wanted a large family home where family members could have their own space but be together, and where extended family could celebrate occasions. They already lived on the block where they wanted to rebuild and loved the location and the neighbourhood.

“Carter Grange was advertising a five-bedroom house and we wanted the equivalent of six bedrooms. We spoke to them and realised we could have what we wanted,” she says.

“We started with a Metropolis design, then changed everything. You can never have enough storage and with four children we need it. We got our 49-square house with all the spaces and finishes we wanted within our budget.”

Kuehn, a practising accountant and academic, says she visited a couple of Carter Grange building sites and spoke to tradespeople before signing a contract.

“All the tradies I met take great pride in their work and it says a lot about the way Carter Grange runs its business. I asked them what they liked about working for Carter Grange and if they were paid on time. They were all very happy. The big difference between Carter Grange and other builders is that they understand they are building your baby, your dream, and how important it is to you.”

Kuehn says the process from start to finish with Carter Grange was a dream process disturbed only by circumstances outside its control – an 18-month negotiation with the council and energy supplier to replace a power pole.

Carter Grange began building in February last year and finished in early August with a build time of five months, one week.

“We moved out on December 14, 2012, so the house could be demolished and the site prepared for building, and we moved into our new house on August 28. We love living here; it’s such an easy house to live in. The biggest surprise was how much we love our open-plan family living area. It’s light, airy, fresh and welcoming.”



A fully fitted study opposite the kitchen is perfect for Elizabeth, 10, Alexandra, 8, and Stephanie, 6, to work on projects and stay in touch with their parents and younger brother, Michael, 2, in the family zone.

The Kuehns’ new house includes a ground-level, open-plan family living, dining and kitchen zone designed around an outdoor living area, study, butler’s pantry, laundry, man cave with walk-in storage, powder room with shower, and double garage with storage and internal entry. The Kuehns chose to take out an internal wall dividing a formal living area to make it part of the family living space, and enclosed the under-stair space for storage.

Upstairs are the main bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and en suite, four children’s bedrooms, a play space, a family bathroom, a powder room and walk-in storeroom. The Kuehns extended the upper level over the outdoor living area to create a children’s living area, used stair landing space for a store room, and a hall wall void for an additional linen press.

Kuehn says Carter Grange’s communication throughout planning and building built up a high level of trust.

“They always told us exactly what was happening and when. Nothing was a hassle for Carter Grange. There were modest charges for some of the changes, but nothing exorbitant or unexpected.

“When I first saw the timber flooring going in I was worried it wasn’t spotted gum and they checked it straight away and came back and reassured me. When I saw the vanity units were installed too low, our site supervisor immediately checked and arranged a fix.”

She says nearly all their finishes and specifications were from Carter Grange’s standard range. Their upgrades included spotted gum timber flooring, carpet and the replacement of many of the awning windows with a double-glazed sash system to optimise ventilation.

“We also put in additional internal soundproof insulation to cut noise and further increase our energy efficiency. Thanks to the way Carter Grange builds, our gas bills are down to about 30 per cent of what they used to be.”

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No place like home:

Karin Kuehn and her children Stephanie, Michael, Alexandra and Elizabeth in their new house.

(SUPPLIED \ DARREN JAMES)