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SA's guide to the latest in new home designs

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CLASSIC BEAUTY

AN ELEGANT VILLA THAT WILL LOOK RIGHT AT HOME IN THE ESTABLISHED INNER SUBURBS

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Pictures NICK CLAYTON

A classic character villa full of surprises

There's more than meets the eye in this beautiful character villa by Oakford Homes, so don't forget to open the cupboards

Visiting a new display home with my daughter is always fun as I find she is a good source for feedback and her reactions usually speak louder than words.

On this occasion my daughter wasn't in the mood for looking around as a sleepover at a friend's house the night before had left her tired and a little cranky. Never mind, I told her, you're coming anyway because the four-bedroom 2.5-bathroom character villa we are going to look at is near our home, just a suburb over.

It was a good call on my part because by the time we walked into the elegant entrance hall of Oakford Homes' new Meridian Hawthorn design, on display at leafy Hawthorn, she was in her usual investigative mood and zoomed off ahead of me as I lingered in the front wing of the home, nodding at the excellent amount of tall storage cupboards in the retreat.

This is an interesting room with high 3m ceilings but no actual windows to the outside as it is surrounded by three double-size bedrooms. However, a Velux skylight (as standard) adds a sculptural feel and illuminates the space remarkably well, almost in saintly fashion from above.

This part of the Meridian Hawthorn design is well and truly the kids' wing, which you can delightfully close off to the hallway (tick for mum and dad) and it's fairly self-contained with a spacious bathroom adjacent, which has a rather lovely choice of tiles (Kalkaria Beige porcelain rectified tiles - style no 1006858, from Beaumont Tiles).

The retreat itself is shown with a large corner lounge plus a study zone, so it's easy to see how the space will work practically for multiple children to hang out in.

Oakford Homes' housing consultant Eileen Williams says the Meridian Hawthorn design will suit a wide demographic range, but will most definitely suit families with either young or older children.

"This home can fit on a relatively compact block being only 14m wide. It offers flexibility of three living options," Eileen says. "Visitors say they love the family room overlooking the alfresco and outdoor living is ideal."

While I was still musing the main bathroom's lovely proportions and admiring the profile of the bedroom wardrobes (Shaker style is a favourite), my daughter by this stage had disappeared up the hallway and was discovering the main living areas that I was yet to get to.

By the time did get there, after checking out the detailing in the wide hallway: timber floorboards, high skirtings and 3.3m-high vaulted ceiling with 90mm Concerto cornices (an excellent choice for a replica villa), I had lost her.

This often happens, but after a quick check of the home theatre and the family lounge, I figured she must be in the laundry which extends on from the galley-style kitchen. She wasn't in there, but the laundry is a stunning feature of this home with an abundance of storage dressed in the same Shaker profile that flows from the beautifully appointed kitchen (that features Miele appliances and strip lighting).

An island bench sits at the heart of the kitchen, and at first I figured the laundry compensated for the fact this kitchen is a good size, but there isn't space for a walk-in pantry.

Just as that thought was going through my head, a single tall cupboard door opens, and there is my daughter, who has been hiding inside a 'secret' walk-in pantry waiting for me to find her.

Now usually I'm the first to open every cupboard door to find out what's behind them, but on this visit I hadn't, and I don't think I would have discovered it if it hadn't been for her.

I would have missed out on a hidden treat as this walk-in pantry is roomy with an L-shape bench, more cupboards and open shelving. The pantry makes the main kitchen make sense, even if it's one of the most discreet I've seen to date.

"You wouldn't have found it," my daughter laughed, to which I had to agree.

So my advice is this: open the cupboards and drawers and see the clever, thoughtful ideas that go into display homes because they are there to get you thinking. Like the pull-out rubbish bins in the island cupboard and the wider drawers to fit big platters.

> **"The quality of workmanship shown within this home**

It's not only the kitchen that will stop you in your tracks though, you'll want to wander out to the long alfresco which runs the length of the family lounge, then take a seat in the comfortable home theatre and listen to the soothing music.

I may have left the best part until last, especially if you are a parent who needs your own space to have time out. The master bedroom is a delightful room with a fabulous walk-through wardrobe (wait until you see the storage) and a lavish, long ensuite that has double vanities, a stone benchtop and a wide shower.

It also has tall double french doors that open to a private courtyard and you can just imagine opening them up to let the breeze in or walking out there into the sunshine on a late spring morning. It's a lovely detail of this master suite.

However, if there's one thing you'll remember the most, I'm sure it will be the high standard of finish in this character villa.

"The classic character villa (old world), was to enable the facade to blend with established homes, in areas where heritage guidelines need to be taken into consideration," Oakford Homes' draftsperson and designer Gloria Schwarz says.

"We wanted to work with the traditional Hawthorn theme externally but showcase a more modern classic feel internally," adds Oakford's selections coordinator Casey Wood.

"With the use of soft taupes, Shaker style joinery and walnut coloured timber floors, it has a lived in, 'homely' feel while still using quite a few contemporary products and finishes."

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Get the look

Traditional villa style

We love how this home replicates the older villas so well. The facade has a 30-degree roof pitch, rendered boxed quoins (in Solver colour Alabaster), surrounds and the base course with chipped edge sandstone infill and gable with timber slats and finial to front. Littlehampton Bricks in colour Coachhouse were chosen for the rest of this home, and the front facade's stone is Sandstone 'Dove grey' textured face veneer in an Ashlar pattern. The fine line pointing was done by All Stone.

Kitchen details

The kitchen has Shaker profile cabinetry in 2Pak Snowdrift Satin with a square pocket pencil edge to the rear wall and 2Pak ½ strength Asphalt Satin to island cupboards. The benchtop is 20mm Essastone Calcatta gloss with a pencil edge to rear bench and 40m Essastone Calcatta gloss to the island. All were supplied by Alden Cabinetmakers.

Nice boards

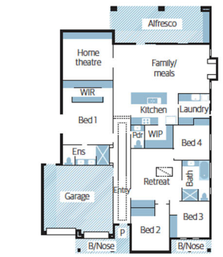
You'll notice the impressive, wide timber floating floorboards as soon as you walk in the door. These are Longridge floating floors in the colour Oatmeal, supplied by McLeays.

Lantern effect

The ensuite's vanity looks sharp and has a fabulous wall created with lantern shape tiles, which makes the space look luxurious. This is Mos Hex Smoke Bevel tiles (style 1000075), supplied by Beaumont Tiles.

Let the light in

Skylights are our new favourite feature, and this Velux FS2004-M08 (780x1400) fixed roof skylight in white, shows just how it can transform an internal room. It was supplied by Solatube.



Homeview

Off the plan

Builder Oakford Homes
Design Meridian Hawthorn
Price From $423,675 as displayed
Location On display at 77 Cross Rd, Hawthorn,
Open Sat | Sun | Tues | Wed | Thurs, 1pm–4pm
Contact Eileen Williams 0414 835 429 or Kimberly Potter 0410 341 694
Details
272 sqm total size | 198.55 sqm living areas | 14.05m width 22.31m depth | 4 bedrooms | 2 bathrooms | 3 living rooms 2 garage | 3m ceilings (3.3m vaulted to the hallway)

Features you'll love

Shoe heaven: Walk behind the bedhead and if the amount of drawer storage doesn't make you smile, the shelves for shoes will. For those who like to have their best pumps on display, this is for you.
Noise cancelling doors: Glass double doors to the home theatre (adjacent the main living zone) block out the sound coming from within, which will be what you want if some family members are watching an action blockbuster but you want to sit back and catch up on *The Bachelorette* in the next room.
Ceiling details: We love 3m-high ceilings as they make homes look so graceful, airy and grand. The wide cornice detailing and vaulted 3.3m ceiling in the entrance hall is luxurious and looks impressive.