

**There are no fancy street-front facades** or grand formal entrances at the home of designers Sam Rickard and Fernando Frisoni. Instead, the unconventional entrance to their charming cottage, elevated among trees and breezes, is via a narrow lane, up an external staircase onto a deck and through bi-fold doors into a living room.

"I saw its potential, it faced north and it was in a quiet spot, even though it needed a lot of work," says Rickard, 45, who adds that the building – tucked away in Darlinghurst near St Vincent's Hospital – was originally built in the 1920s as nurses' accommodation and takes out the second floor of a two-level building. (Another residence is on the bottom level.)

When Rickard, a production/interior designer currently working on Channel Seven's family drama *Packed To The Rafters*, bought it 18 years ago against the advice of his architect father, it was in a dilapidated state. He widened doorways and windows to promote cross-ventilation, pulled out walls, installed Japanese sliding panels to create a flexible floorplan and converted the attic to a bedroom. A new kitchen was given a central spot, while the lounge room was positioned facing the laneway, eventually to be screened by the native gum and white cedar trees that he planted.

The house has "a tree-house feel", says Frisoni, a 31-year-old Brazilian-born fashion designer who came to Australia for a holiday a decade ago and never left. He has brought his own touches with him since moving in 10 years ago. "His tastes are more flamboyant," says Rickard. "He's made me less rigid."

Frisoni's bright workroom has his stamp all over it: pieces from his current collection and new patterns hang on racks, while scattered treasures include piles of books, Hermès packaging, scented candles and even a statuette of St Anthony, patron saint of lost and stolen things. "It's a Brazilian thing," says Frisoni, who has also claimed the pitched-roof attic bedroom as a dressing room to house his impressive wardrobe.

Still, Rickard's preference for modernist pieces is evident. His collection includes tan leather Cassina chairs, Thonet/Le Corbusier bentwood armchairs, an Arne Jacobsen red swan chair and a pair of black leather Charles and Ray Eames lounges from his family home that he recalls swinging on as a boy. "I guess a lot of people grew up hating their parents' furniture but I always appreciated it."

But with his strong use of colour, he has departed from the influence of his father, respected architect Bruce Rickard. "Dad used natural palettes, very earthy tones. He wonders how I've become so brave with colour given it certainly doesn't come from him." Rickard cites the influence of 20th-century Mexican architect Luis Barragán to explain his use of colour, such as the orange-tiled bathroom and his striking art. A painting in the lounge and a sculpture in the second living area are by Sydney artist Richard Goodwin, while a painting in the bedroom is by Rickard's mother, artist Robin Young.

The pair love the recent addition of a deck that allows entertaining to spill outdoors and say their home is a refuge from the hustle and bustle of the city just a stone's throw away.



**Above**  
Sam Rickard (left) and Fernando Frisoni.

**Below left**  
Frisoni's workroom features treasures including books and packaging.

**Below**  
A sculpture by Richard Goodwin is part of the art collection.

**Opposite**  
The leafy entrance is through bi-fold doors into the living room.

## openh**ouse**

Vibrant colours and modernist furniture come together in a home nestled among the gum trees.

Words and styling  
**Andrea Millar**  
Photography  
**Chris Chen and Matt Read**





**where  
they  
shop**

**Aero Designs**

479 Bourke Street,  
Surry Hills.  
Phone: 9380 8856

"Great for storage solutions.  
We've bought some  
extra bookshelves from  
this shop," says Rickard.

**Dinosaur Designs**

339 Oxford Street,  
Paddington.  
Phone: 9361 3776.

"I love the shapes and  
textures of these  
accessories and they have  
lots of red pieces."

**Space Furniture**

84 O'Riordan Street,  
Alexandria.  
Phone: 8339 7588.

"All the Cassina pieces are  
from here. They represent  
a lot of the top-end  
manufacturers from  
around the world."

**Ken Neale Twentieth  
Century Modern**

Shop 3, 138 Darlinghurst  
Road, Darlinghurst.  
Phone: 0410 463 121.

"I've bought a pair of bright  
yellow butterfly chairs  
from this shop."

**Anibou**

726 Bourke Street,  
Redfern.  
Phone: 9319 0655

"The Artek stools used  
as side-tables are from  
this store."

