

# perspective

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INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE &amp; DESIGN

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## AUSSIE RULES

In its first leap across the ocean, Australian brand Little Creatures has come to Hong Kong, with a perfect home away from home created by local interior design firm Charlie & Rose

### + WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL TAIPEI 2016

Themed 'Adaptive City — Design in Motion', events and exhibitions show how design can be integrated into society to help it function optimally

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by ARK**  
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**A fresh look for  
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**Ichijoji House, Kyoto**  
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HK\$48  
US\$18  
€15



An unconventional combination of traditional techniques and materials has enabled the retention and enhancement of much of the home's traditional character

## Fusing the modern and traditional

*An Australian architectural approach to traditional Japanese artisanship creates a unique and textured retreat in the suburbs of Kyoto*

TEXT:

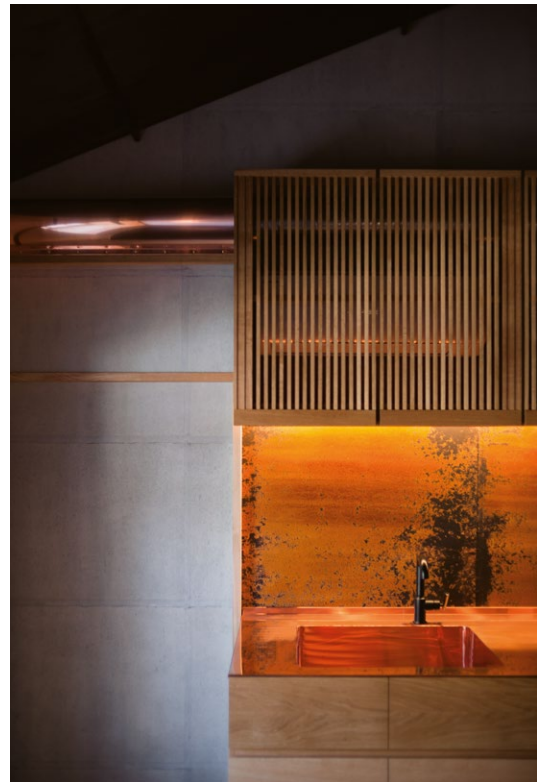
Suzanne Miao

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Originally constructed in 1961 as one in a block of four homes, this typical exemplar of the post-war Japanese row house typology had been left largely unaltered and allowed to dilapidate for over half a century. This is where the client, a Danish-Australian furniture maker, entered the picture.

With property prices escalating at home, he looked to his favourite travel destination, where the low cost of real estate, combined with a wealth of culture and a welcoming society, provided the perfect destination to create a desirable and attainable second home. Turning to young Australian architect Luke Hayward and his Japan-based firm atelier Luke, the client issued a project brief which called for extensive renovation of the existing home and a small extension at the rear to accommodate new indoor plumbing and increased flexibility of use.



*Clockwise from top*

A sensitively flexible and multilevelled living, dining and kitchen space transforms the spatial and experiential qualities of the interior, where a timber ladder provides access to a small loft • A new prospect to the outdoors and an increased sense of spaciousness are provided by a screened courtyard, which flows from the living space through sliding timber doors



**Project team:**

Junko Nakatsuka, Luke Hayward

**Construction:**

Miura Construction

**Finishes:**

Kiso Artech

**Cabinetmaker:**

Jurinsha

Unlike many similar renovations in Japan, which erase historical building stock through the unremarkable application of low durability prefabricated systems, Hayward decided upon an unconventional combination of traditional techniques and materials which would allow for the retention and enhancement of much of the home's traditional character.

From the stained wallpaper to the lacquered floorboards and the timber joinery, every element was hand-finished using traditional techniques. "Existing structural timber elements have also been alternately concealed and revealed to experiment with and occasionally subvert traditional Japanese approaches to building character," adds Hayward.

"In some cases, such as with the large cambered roof beams, previously hidden elements are celebrated as striking sculptural forms within the home."

Programatically, the house has been inverted from its original design, with living spaces placed



A new bathroom and toilet on the ground floor replace outbuildings that were demolished to allow for extension of the house; here, lacquered wallpapers bring a vibrancy of colour in contrast with the warm neutrality of the living areas

on the upper floor and private areas on the ground. A sensitively flexible and multilevelled living, dining and kitchen space transforms the spatial and experiential qualities of the interior. A new prospect to the outdoors and an increased sense of spaciousness are provided by a screened courtyard, which flows from the living space through sliding timber doors.

The old kitchen has been converted into a traditional Japanese bedroom with *tatami* mats, *shoji* screens and handmade wallpaper. A new bathroom and toilet on the ground floor replace outbuildings that were demolished to allow for extension of the house. In these private and contained spaces, lacquered wallpapers bring a vibrancy of colour in contrast with the warm neutrality of the living areas.

A series of bespoke furniture pieces have also been created. Japanese oak kitchen cabinetry is combined with a unique copper worktop and services ducting, resulting in a sensitively utilitarian aesthetic that complements the raw materiality of

the home. A fixed oak dining table is supported from the building structure, allowing it to almost float in space. Finally, a timber ladder provides both access to a small loft as well as an invitation to touch and grasp these specially crafted elements.

Externally, the front façade of the home has been treated largely as a restoration in order to retain a traditional aesthetic within the streetscape. Where possible, existing joinery elements have been retained and in some cases rebuilt to match the originals.

Traditional plasterwork, typically only seen in the restoration of temples and shrines, has been applied to bring extensive improvements to the existing render finish. At the rear, a new façade subtly pokes through the context of unsympathetically renovated neighbours, with a fine timber screen concealing a deep overhang and a layering of timber windows, sliding doors and paper screens.

Working in close collaboration with craftspeople in Kyoto, Osaka and Nagano, atelier Luke brought an outsider's design approach to the renovation of this densely layered and tactile residence. This transformation has allowed the client to modernise their home without abandoning the traditional design aspects that make Japanese houses unique.

"For the client, this new home has created not only a satisfying pride of ownership, but through the process of its making has unlocked new cultural experiences, forged new friendships and enabled a whole new life in Japan," Hayward says. ●