



# out of AFRICA

An impressive African landscape  
digitally printed on glass takes  
centre stage in the revival of a 1920s  
bayside bungalow



The artwork continues from the outdoor area into the kitchen and a window for the splashback echoes the greenery



The connection with outdoors is continued via louvre windows

WORDS Danielle Townsend

PHOTOGRAPHY Dianna Snape Photography

Now considered a tranquil suburban oasis hidden in bayside Melbourne, it's difficult to believe that this home was once a badly renovated 1920s bungalow with an ugly red face-brick extension to the rear. The first-floor addition with a poorly configured layout was a notable addition to the most recent renovation completed in the late 1980s. The backyard also had a generous-sized gazebo, which included a spa and a large storeroom that took up most of the prime open space opportunity to the north, turning its back on the lovely northern aspect.

"The client was primarily concerned with creating a functioning family home that had generous entertaining areas and a better connection to the northern rear yard," says architect Adam Grundmann from bg architecture when explaining the client's brief.

The project involved a complete overhaul of the property — the rear extension was demolished to make way for a new kitchen dining and family room with an adjoining pantry,

laundry and sauna to one side. The new living zone is offset from the existing double-storey home to create a landscaped light well and level transition to the northern aspect.

However, the work didn't stop there. "Apart from the obvious programmatic requirements, the clients also wanted a creative point of difference and not merely a fashionable facelift," says Adam.

This "creative point of difference" came in the form of an expansive digitally imaged glass wall, a "wonder wall", which transports those who live or visit here thousands of kilometres away to Africa. And it's possible thanks to the wonders of digital technology.

"Digital photography has radically altered the landscape for architects and our clients," says Adam. "In the process it has opened up whole other possibilities for glass."

The client's father is a very accomplished photographer and had a series of magnificent wildlife and landscape shots from a recent trip to Africa. The original photography artwork was supplied as a high-resolution image. "We chose



The clean lines of the home are a far cry from the existing residence

a section of an image depicting a lion in long grass,” continues Adam. “We cropped a section of the grasses from this shot and were able to enhance the green colours and focus depth in Photoshop to ensure the image was not too pixellated when realised in actual scale.”

The grasses create an extension to the landscape in the relatively small courtyard to the rear, with the portrayal of true-to-life landscape hues accentuating the natural scenery to the external pool area with limited landscape possibilities.

“Glass was chosen to provide a dramatic canvas for the home,” says Adam. “The effect of bordering lush grasslands isn’t an attempt to create the grand 3D illusion so much as reinforce a sense of a tranquil suburban oasis. The digitally imaged glass wall accentuates the depth of the property with a seamless transition inside to out.”

The entire glazed feature stretches an incredible uninterrupted 15 metres and stands more than three metres high. Viridian and DigiGlass combined to provide the glazing technology necessary to allow the architect and client’s remarkable vision.

The external system saw the image printed onto a 0.76mm film (DigiGlass) and laminated with a layer of 0.76mm white film between the two sheets of 5mm clear toughened glass onto a fibre cement substrate. Interior glazed elements are screen-printed digital imagery on the back of 6mm Starfire clear glass on a black melamine substrate.

“The major challenge to assemble such a detailed imaged over such a large area required careful calibration and set-out of each panel,” says Adam. “Rigorous co-ordination was required between builder, cabinetmaker, glazier and the digital printing company to ensure the facilitation of these panels.”

Test prints were created and challenged on the particular glass as well as spacing to allow for fixed, moveable and lockable panels. The set-out was critical to ensure that any penetrations through the glass for access to hardware installation was accurate and any moveable panels could move freely without conflict with adjacent panels. Each glazed panel was individually sized to suit the function of the particular panel, whether laundry access door or a joinery element.





Organic white fixtures are in direct contrast with the solid dark stone finishes

Resistance to image fading was a critical consideration and the decision to proceed with the project came with a 20-year colour-fidelity guarantee.

When it comes to energy-efficiency, this home, now dubbed the “Savannah House” ticks many of the necessary boxes. Viridian Low-E double glazing was utilised in the large expanses

front lawn and provides water for the gardens.

The main living area and kitchen now benefit from cross-ventilation and solar gain with views to the lap pool and entertainment zone. “The connection from the new family/kitchen/meals zone to the northern courtyard and pool area is a seamless transition further enhanced by the feature glass wall that spans the two spaces,” says

“The clients also wanted a creative point of difference and not merely a fashionable facelift.”

of glass to the northern addition, while highlight louvres have been designed to expel heat during summer months. Internal courtyards and opening windows create cross-ventilation opportunities and take advantage of cooling sea breezes.

Also, hydronic floor heating and a polished concrete slab take advantage of the northern sun, providing a heat sink for winter months. A series of 20 solar electrical panels were installed on the new northern addition and provide electricity that is fed back into the grid. A 10,000-litre water tank was installed under the

Adam of his favourite part of the renovated space.

Although a big splurge financially, implementing this dramatic glass feature wall has paid off not only for the owners, who now enjoy the fruits of their father’s photography daily, but it was also shortlisted in the Viridian Glass Awards.

“The feature glass wall is the obvious jewel of this renovation; however, the relationship between the client, architect and builder was the key ingredient to the overall success of this project,” says Adam. “It was a complete collaboration.” **R**



## project particulars

### This project was designed by

BG ARCHITECTURE  
13 Martin Street, St Kilda Vic 3182  
03 9525 3390  
adam@bgarch.com.au

### This project was built by

ADCON CONSTRUCTIONS  
0415 377 796

**Budget:** \$3500/m<sup>2</sup>

### FLOORING

**Kitchen/dining/living:** Polished concrete  
**Bedroom/stair:** 100 per cent wool carpet  
**Outdoor:** Anston paving various sizes in White Cathedral  
**Other:** Spotted gum flooring at entry and main corridor

### WALLS

**Kitchen:** Screen-printed toughened glass with photographic image by Future Glass  
**Dining:** Floor-to-ceiling anodised aluminium glazing  
**Living:** Feature Emperite joinery; Dulux quarter-strength Sago  
**Bedroom/stair:** Plasterboard Dulux quarter-strength Sago  
**Outdoor:** DigiGlass clear toughened glass laminated with photographic interlayer  
**Other:** Western red cedar cladding

### KITCHEN

**Benchmark:** CaesarStone Snow  
**Splashback:** Toughened glass anodised aluminium window  
**Cabinetry:** Wenge veneer and Future Glass screen-printed glass face to black melamine substrate  
**Appliances:** Liebherr integrated fridge, Qasair rangehood, Miele oven and dishwasher, AEG cooktop

### BATHROOM FITTINGS

**Cabinetry:** Wenge veneer doors, Pietra Grigio honed marble top  
**Basin:** Apaaiser Orbit  
**Shower/bath:** Apaaiser Haven

### LIGHTING

LPA and Masson

### WINDOWS + EXTERNAL DOORS

Viridian Low E and double-glazed Low E windows and doors with anodised aluminium Capral 400-series frames

### OUTDOOR

**Paving:** Anston paving various sizes in White Cathedral  
**Drain:** Feature pool with concealed spill-edge drain  
**Landscape architect:** Sam Barber 0417 358 357  
**Glass:** Viridian  
www.viridianglass.com