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**A WEEKEND WITH ...**

**SHAREEN JOEL**

*On Friday evenings, this design all-rounder breaks free of the city and heads south with the family to their stylish weekender*

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“The best part about being here is that it’s all natural activities, not electronic: water, walks, community”



**Shareen Joel has an eye** for perfectly imperfect detail. Every particular of her Sorrento weekender on Victoria’s Mornington Peninsula reiterates the laidback mood. Understated materials ground the impressive proportions, the easy layout is steeped in sunlight and the furniture is covetable without being precious. Perfection at Casa Joel isn’t pristine; it’s an assured state only struck after a few spills and scratches. The designer planned the holiday house to share with her husband, Dean, children Sasha, 12, and Nicholas, 10, their dog, Daisy, and friends and family. “It’s about entertaining, having lots of kids over and not worrying that the two-pack might chip,” Shareen says.

It’s fitting that the place is effortlessly cohesive; the designer has forged her reputation on her holistic approach to macro and minor details. Shareen began her career as an industrial designer working in the automotive industry for Ford and Aston Martin. She later studied interior design and gained a building practitioner licence. As principal of the multidisciplinary firm Shareen Joel Design and co-founder of the online Share Design, Shareen takes her easy elegance across all platforms of creative direction for clients such as Witchery, Country Road, Lockwood and Sheridan. The in-demand designer also devises residential interiors for devotees of her classically clean aesthetic. →

Neutral surfaces visually stretch the interior proportions and camouflage built-ins. A partition wall **(opposite page)** houses the fireplace on one side and storage on the other. Cabinetry in the kitchen **(above)** recedes, so that the marble benchtops and the grey mosaic splashback play hero roles. The living room’s long run of shelving **(left)** provides a pedestal for art.



Shareen is nothing if not consistent: “Every part of design in my life goes hand in hand,” she says. “When designing a car, every component is resolved. With houses, you’re not just worrying about the overall look but also what the door handles look like and the weight and feel of every detail.”

During the week, Shareen invests precious spare time in her side project, Sharedesign.com, an online treasure-trove of design resources. On Friday evenings, however, when she clocks off, the family packs the car and then drives 90 blissful minutes south of Melbourne to Sorrento. “That’s when the kids spill everything they have done and everything they’re feeling,” she says.

The Joels always gravitated towards the Mornington Peninsula. Dean is a keen sailor and loves sharing the passion with his kids. When son Nicholas became serious about the sport, the family decided to make a commitment. They bought a vacant block at auction the day they spotted it in May 2010. By May 2011, the building was underway, and the house was completed on December 22nd, just in time for a Christmas party for 40.

The weekender may be new but it’s already worn in. Shareen explains: “It had to feel casual from day one. We had to be able to relax in it and feel like we were on holidays.” Shareen struck this immediate homeliness by taking full advantage of the site. →

Paintings tie the whole scheme together. “If you can’t afford large works, buy lots of little ones,” says Shareen, who knew she had to have the Colin Pennock impasto oil painting (above) the minute she saw it. Similarly, she fell for two Nicholas Harding paintings, now in the living room (above right) and dining area (right). The sitting-room ledge (opposite page) is like a miniature gallery.

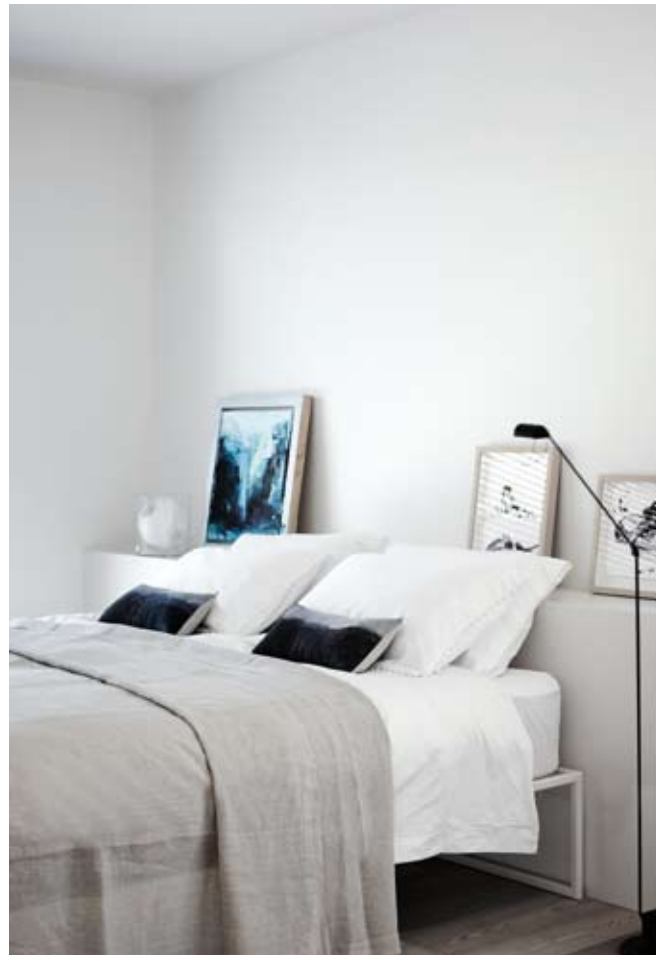


“A house should reflect the surrounding landscape as well as the personality of the people who live in it”

(THIS PAGE) 'AIRPORT' SOFA BY PAOLA NAVONE FOR POLIFORM, WWW.POLIFORM.COM.AU. FOR DETAILS OF ARTWORKS, CONTACT SHAREEN AT WWW.SHAREENJOEL.COM



Shareen enclosed an Electrolux barbecue by Jeppe Utzon in a slab of grey volcanic stone. 'BKF' butterfly chairs by Jorge Ferrari Hardoy, from Angelucci, are low-key and stylish. →



The L-shaped floorplan and full-height windows invite natural light and cross ventilation into the house, and the single-level construction melds with the landscape. Joinery for the fireplace partitions the kitchen and dining from the intimate living space. Still, when lots of people are over and the doors are all open, the outdoor deck, dining room and living area all become one.

With the ocean on one side and Port Phillip Bay on the other, the coastal context is infused into the new home without being overly 'beachy'. The colour of the exterior cedar is already softening with exposure to the elements, while inside, white-painted plywood panelling references the seaside vernacular. The white soap-finished pine floors are particularly in tune with the carefree beach vibe; the finish doesn't look polished but it still withstands stains. "Everyone asks me when we're finishing the floor," says Shareen. "Houses are so much easier to enjoy when surfaces don't have to be perfect all the time."

Shareen admits she is obsessed with collecting. The house is filled with some fairly serious mid-century design but it's also brimming with eBay ephemera. "I get fixated on pieces that are hard to find," she says. "I search on line and I wait and wait and wait, but it's worth it." While design may be her day job, it's also clearly still a favourite pastime – in the city or by the beach.

Rest and recreation, Mornington style: Nicholas sets sail on Port Phillip Bay (above). Salt air is showered off outside (right) after a day in the sun and before retiring to the serene master bedroom (above right), where crisp cottons and natural linens work elegantly together. (Opposite page) Shareen, Sasha and Nicholas on the Sorrento Pier, just minutes from their doorstep.



What are you ...

**Drawn to ...** Strong, graphic artworks, drawings and impasto paintings. **Doing next ...** Adding to the front garden. I would like to see a tree that falls over the fence to soften the frontage. We're also planning to add lots of indigenous foliage and just let it grow wild. **Loving ...** Breaking free of the city with the family. **Inspired by ...** The old masters of architecture and design: Mario Bellini, Achille Castiglioni and Le Corbusier, who spring from a time when there wasn't a strong differentiation between interiors, architecture, design and automotive. I love that. **Cooking ...** Lots of salads; pomegranate, grains, grilled haloumi and asparagus. **Following ...** The runway shows – I love the impact that fashion has on all forms of design. **Getting lost in ...** The internet; I'm always going from one site to another. **Passionate about ...** First, my family and gorgeous kids. Then, I am absolutely passionate about design in all forms – and sharing ideas. Good design should be for everyone. It has been a closed circle for a long time now, but it's time to start sharing and see where it all ends up. For more information about Shareen Joel Design, call (03) 9510 0433 or visit [www.shareenjoel.com](http://www.shareenjoel.com) and Share Design at [sharedesign.com](http://sharedesign.com). ❖

BEDROOM ARTWORKS BY TODD HUNTER & NICHOLAS HARDING