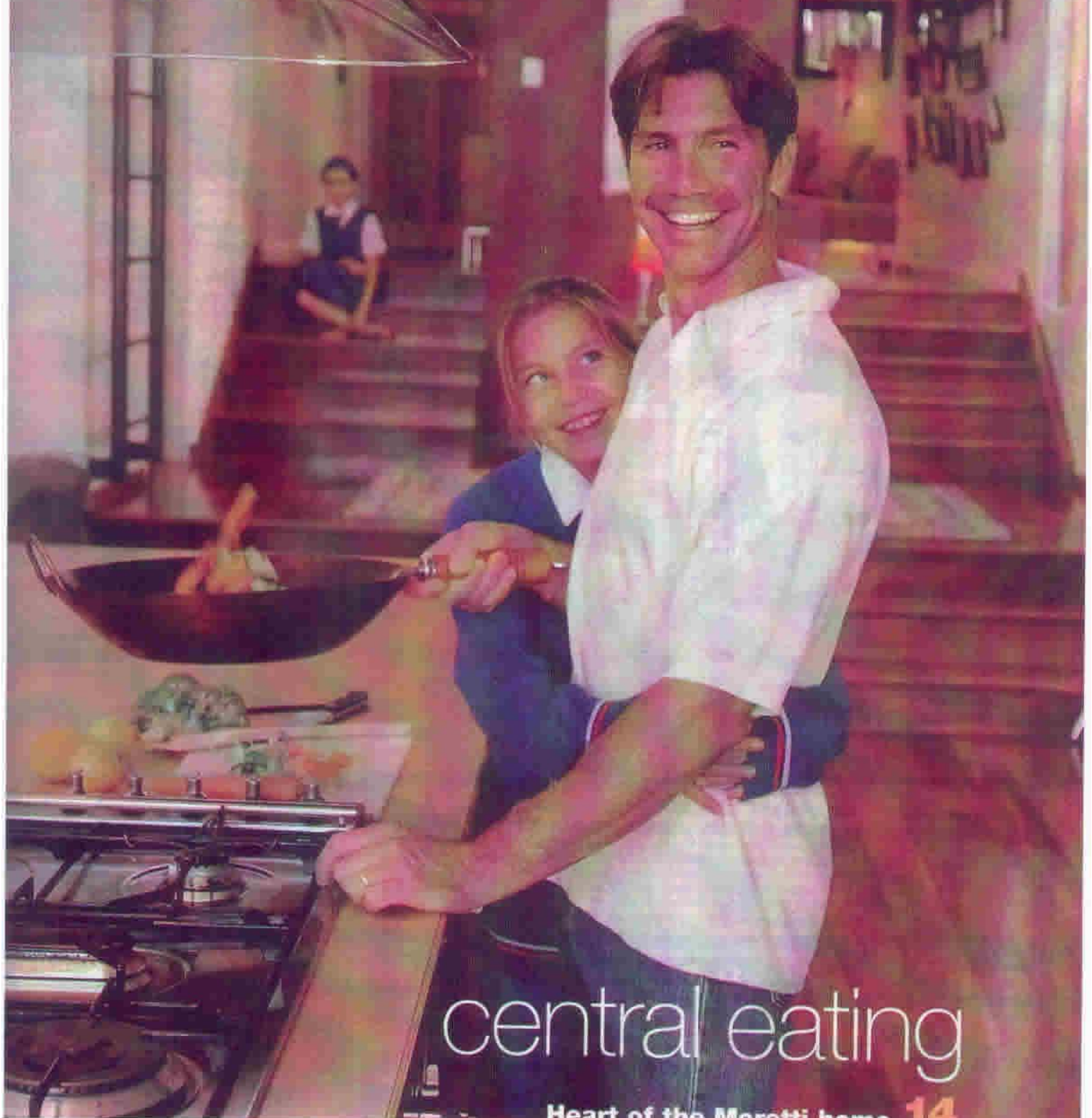


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home



central eating

Heart of the Moretti home 14

at home



The outdoor area, above and below, is Asian-inspired, while Nico Moretti says the living area, right, is all about food and entertaining.



Central eating a must

A STAGE for everyday living is how Nico Moretti describes the TV-style kitchen that plays a starring role in his zippy at-home cooking classes.

By night, the gourmet kitchen is host to 10 budding dinner-party chefs discovering Nico's Cooking Passions classes, but by day the open-plan room is the centre of family life for the self-taught chef, wife Belinda, and daughters Demi and Mikaela.

"We wanted a huge open-plan living area and one

kitchen was built three years ago – two years before retrenchment gave the chemical engineer an opportunity to follow his dream and start his cooking-class business, Urban Provider.

"My father, Vito Moretti, opened Vito's Cave, the first Italian restaurant in London, Canada, in the 1950s," he said.

"I grew up in a restaurant. I love food, any food, and I love cooking. We're always entertaining."

Nico and Belinda moved into their 1920s Leederville home in 1991, embarking on

"Even when the kids are outside, they are part of what's happening inside," Nico said.

"The deck is so deep and so protected from the weather by the extended roof that the furniture stays outdoors for most of the winter."

The back garden – just a single step down from the deck – takes its inspiration from Asia.

Black pebbles, square stepping stones, a water feature and hammock are the key elements.

At the top of the garden, an outdoor table setting is placed to make the most of the winter sun. It

I grew up in a restaurant. I love food, any food, and I love cooking

centred around the kitchen – hence the central island kitchen area," Nico said.

"It's a great family area. The kids can hang out and do their homework at the bench and eat meals from breakfast through to dinner. It's the perfect thing."

Charcoal-coloured lacquered cupboard doors and drawer fronts combine with stainless-steel appliances, glass blocks and a no-frills beech laminate workbench for a fresh, contemporary look.

"We wanted clean, simple lines that would not detract from the angles and shapes of the space," said Canadian-born Nico.

Very much the heart of the Moretti home, the

comprehensive extension work in 2000 after stints in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

The kitchen is part of a cleverly designed addition that highlights the couple's love of Asia and the Australian far north's tropical lifestyle.

"As well as a central living area, we wanted easy access to a big covered deck," Nico said.

With the help of Finn Pedersen of Iredale Pedersen Hook Architects, the Morettis created a splendid pavilion-style living area, two sides of which open up almost entirely to the outside. Here the deep deck and the extended corrugated-iron roof provide a true outdoor living area, complete with coffee table and inviting upholstered couches.

stands behind a rendered wall that has a cut-out offering a view back to the house.

The house, built on a sloping block, lent itself easily to a tiered extension.

Twin staircases either side of the old fireplace now lead down from a gallery-style lounge – featuring the family's treasured photo wall – to the new open-plan kitchen, family room and dining area.

An extra bathroom at the bottom of the stairs doubles as a laundry and provides for a loft study, reached via an industrial-style ladder.

"We needed to put a ceiling on the new bathroom so decided to utilise the space above it," Nico said.

The roof line of the original house was continued



The original lounge room opens either side of the fireplace, below, to the new living area.



Pictures: Richard Matherly

so that the new open-plan living space has an added sense of spaciousness as a result of the extra-high ceiling.

The insulated roof is made of an outer and inner shell of corrugated iron. High louvre windows and ceiling fans encourage cooling cross breezes.

The former kitchen was remodelled to become the master bedroom, to which an ensuite bathroom and walk-in wardrobe were added. Two bedrooms lead off the original hallway.

"We've always felt this was a great house, a great-feeling home and one that felt like a great entertaining home," Nico said.

PAULA AUBIN