

# VID PLAY

Confidence with colour and a love for simple, natural materials have transformed this **urban new-build** into a character-filled home

**Colour me happy**  
Multicoloured MDF storage cupboards divide homeowner Pieter's workspace and the living area. The paint colours, mostly leftovers and samples, act as an anchor for other items in the home. →



**Quick way down**

The white-metal staircase is not only ultra-modern but sturdy, too – Pieter likes to take the shortcut. Concrete ceilings and white flooring help to reflect natural light throughout.

WHEN GRAPHIC DESIGNER Pieter Gaerdelen and his partner Lot Claes found somewhere to build a house in their home city it was a dream come true. After signing up for a development program offering affordable building ground for young families in 2008, the couple were offered the chance to buy a piece of land a year later.

Remarkably, it was situated among historical city-centre buildings – a rare occurrence. One of the reasons for their good fortune is that others were put off by the small and rather unusual dimensions of the site, but this was a challenge Pieter and Lot were ready to take on. “I guess other people couldn’t see the potential,” Pieter says. “Needless to say, we were over the moon and signed up straightaway.”

Next, they enlisted the help of CH-Architects because of their experience with compact, low-budget houses. “We had a pretty big list of criteria for such a small piece of building space, and they managed to fill it in just perfectly,” Pieter says. Building commenced in November 2010 and the family moved into the home in ->

text victoria kingsbury | photography luc roymans/chilli media



**who lives here?**

Pieter Gaerdelen with his partner Lot Claes and their children Mona, 6, Eppo, 3, and baby Polly, 3 weeks. Plus, two pet rabbits Snoezy and Sneeuwkllokje

**City slickers** Pieter and Lot were both students in the city and they loved the vivid, cultural and creative atmosphere so much they decided to stick around with their growing family.

**Design advantage** As Pieter is a 3D graphic designer, he was able to make up 3D renderings for most rooms in the house, particularly the kitchen and all the storage cupboards, to give exact dimensions of the space first. This really helped the couple so they could see if the plans they had would work.

**Looking up**

Light pours through the huge window and folding door in the open living area. Pieter’s office space is directly above, so he can see all the action below.



**First impressions (above)**

Pieter and Lot searched high and low to find a brick they really liked. They visited brick suppliers and factories for the darkest hue they could find, and it paid off – combined with the wood, they're almost a perfect match for the black walls inside.



**Simplicity is key (left)**

A shelf made out of leftover multiplex panels that support the kitchen table is another of Pieter's DIY touches.

**Below** Mona enjoys playing at the dining table while mum cooks in the kitchen directly opposite.



December 2011 – a quick turnaround considering the couple did the plumbing, electrical wiring, ventilation system installment, underfloor heating, and most of the custom-made cupboards and storage units themselves.

The house needed to perform as a functional family home without sacrificing on the couple's vision for a clean, modern design. They achieved this with a clever floorplan split over three levels, allowing for lots of natural light and maximisation of space. The ground floor is used for storage, and it's where the family's bikes are housed, but it's the spectacular kitchen that takes centre stage here – it overlooks the garden, thanks to the huge window and folding glass door, making it a perfect spot for the family to spend their day.

Pieter gave the kitchen a custom-made feel by painting it in two different colours and giving it an unusual layout. He also created extra storage by adding some self-made MDF cabinets and open shelving. The shelves were painted with the same black paint as the kitchen walls and cabinets, and the rest of the house, too. "We chose black in the kitchen because it makes the space feel intimate and cosy," Pieter says.

Pieter's workspace and living area make up the second level and the three bedrooms and family bathroom the top floor. "The house was originally laid out for a family of four, so now we're rearranging some areas of →



**Great heights**

The floor in the work area of the kitchen is lowered so that the benchtop and kitchen table could remain as one piece. "It's the centre of our house," Pieter says. Flowerpot pendant light from Verner Pantton.

**Hang ten**

Pieter's desk simply hooks over the wall, so he can move it wherever he likes! It's a single sheet of metal with invisible reinforcements underneath. It's also no accident that the colour matches the metal stairs.

△ clever "hanging" desk

**Storage & style (right)**

In the living area, the TV sits on a Muuto stacked shelving system. "We're hoping to keep adding to them, to fill up the whole wall," Pieter says. →

**Functional flooring (above)**

The choice of white polyurethane flooring is perfect for a young family. "It's extremely flexible and pleasant to walk on with bare feet," Pieter says.

"Our son can spend hours on it playing with his Matchbox cars."

the house," he says. "The kids' bedroom is still one open room, but the windows, electrics and doors are already in place so we can separate the room in two when they require more personal space."

Connecting each level are the white metal staircases. "Concrete stairs would have been the more budget-friendly option, but they could never offer what we've accomplished with the metal stairs." The open, perforated steps allow as much sunlight through as possible – all the way from the light openings in the roof, down to the ground floor. "The shadow and light play on a sunny day is just stunning," enthuses Pieter. "It's the kind of stuff a graphic designer gets really excited about!"

Once the bones of the building were in place it was time for the fun stuff. This couple are clearly not afraid of colour and they've used it to maximum effect. The colourful and quirky light fixtures break up the exposed concrete and cut through the home's black and white colour scheme, as works of art in themselves. And every piece of furniture, from the teal sofa in the kitchen area to the colourful beds in the children's room, is all part of the same colour scheme, weaving its way through every level. ●

**A** STORAGE DOOR

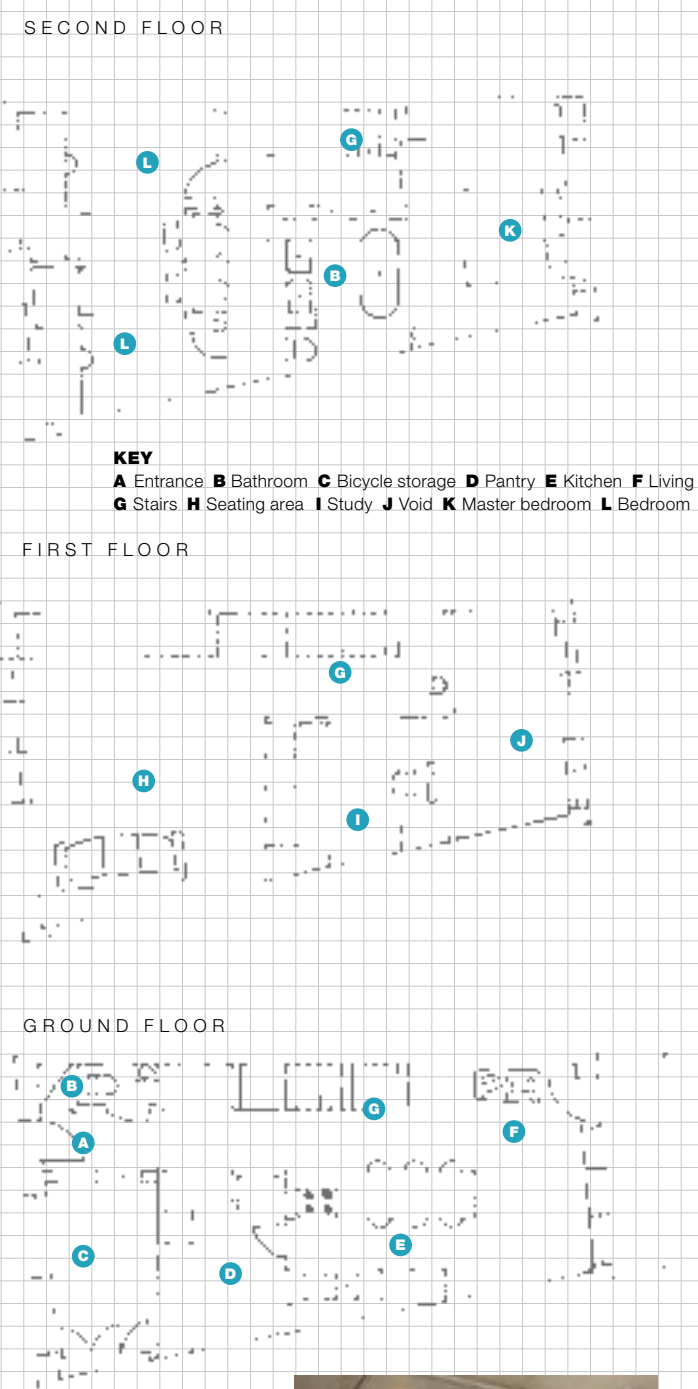
**B** STORAGE DOOR

**C** STORAGE DOOR

**D** STORAGE DOOR

**E** INTERIOR PAINT - BEDROOM

**F** INTERIOR PAINT - BATHROOM



**Cohesive look**  
 The bathroom follows the same scheme as the kitchen: white, black and pops of vivid colour.



floorplan & still-life styling christina banos | photography luc roymans/chilli media (lifestyle shots)

**FINISHES**  
**DOOR PANELS** Colour Palette in **Raspberry (A)**, **Olympia Blue (B)**, **Peacock (C)**, and **Clamshell (D)**, from \$80.30 a sq m (excluding installation and fabrication), Laminex. **INTERIOR PAINT** Dulux Wash & Wear in **Dandelion Yellow (E)**, \$89.95 for 4L. Murobond Pure in **Night Owl (F)**, \$98 for 4L. For stockists, see page 231.



**Jump for joy**  
 Warm yellow walls means that the sun never stops shining in the kids' bedroom. - Eppo and Mona love it!



**Bright spark**  
 Nud Collection **cord & socket** with Plumen bulb, \$114, Surrounding.

**Flower power**  
 Verner Panton "Flowerpot - VP1" **pendant**, \$475, Great Dane Furniture. 23cm diameter.

**Red alert**  
 Plumen "Drop Cap" **pendant** in Red, \$106, Surrounding.

PIETER & LOT'S MOODBOARD  
*A monochrome backdrop layered with bold colour pops in finishes and furnishings = a fun family home*

**Fun & functional**  
 Diego single-tier **storage unit**, \$399, OZ Design Furniture. 1.8m x 80cm x 30cm.



**Cool terrarium**  
 Artificial **succulent garden**, \$64.95, Rogue. 18cm high.



**Indoor outdoor**  
 Socker **plant pots**, \$3.49 each, Ikea. 14cm diameter.



**Stacked up**  
 Frosta birch plywood **stools**, \$14.99 each, Ikea.



**Retro statement**  
 Sixty 3-seat **sofa** in Blue, \$1669, Jumbled. 1.86m x 82cm x 80cm.



**Reversible rug**  
 Stockholm **rug** in Black/Off-White, \$299, Ikea. 2.4m x 1.7m.

♥ great buy