

Two-year-old Evelyn walking down the front path. Home owner David Frazer says the timber for the gables was bought "as a mishmash of seconds" and the recycled bricks came from Dunolly Demolition and Salvage. **FACING PAGE** The dining room features a table by sculptor Jason Waterhouse, which was custom-made for David in exchange for a painting. Above it hangs a David Trubridge light from Tongue and Groove. For stockist details, see page 133.



HOME GALLERY

MORE THAN JUST A FAMILY HOME, ARTIST DAVID FRAZER'S HOUSE IS A SHOWCASE OF ART AND SCULPTURE.

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Some of David's art collection hangs in the living room, including a piece by his grandfather Eric Frazer above the fireplace, a painted woomera by Albert Namatjira, as well as paintings by Albert's grandson, Gabriel Namatjira, and Henoeh Raberaba. The large linocut is David's own, *Waiting for rain*. The 1950s Cintique armchair belonged to David's aunt and he restored it himself. **FACING PAGE, FROM TOP** David repurposed his great grandparents' wardrobe to make the cupboard in the kitchen. The cabinetry was done by by A.G. Kitchens in Chewton, using Tasmanian blackwood benchtops; Thomas and Sarah standing alongside David, Oskar, Evelyn and Lukas.



IT'S THE WIDE, open spaces of the country and a sense of isolation that often inspire David Frazer's art. These are common themes throughout the work of this award-winning artist and printmaker, known for his fine woodcuts, linocuts, etchings and lithographs, as well as his sculpture and paintings. It all harks back to his country childhood; his father was a school principal and his early years were spent in the little Wimmera town of Murtoa in north-west Victoria.

"I remember those very rural-based melancholic feelings that centre on my time in Murtoa as a kid, when I used to sit on the roof and look out over the plains and the wide expanses of landscape. I remember the town on a Saturday afternoon was completely devoid of people and that feeling of melancholy — and beauty — and that's what I capture in my work," says the 51-year-old.

Today it's the vibrant town of Castlemaine, 130 kilometres north-west of Melbourne, that is David's home and the centre of his creativity. He lives here with his wife Sarah, an art conservator specialising in paper, and their two-year-old twins, Thomas and Evelyn, in the home they finished building in early 2015. David's older boys from a previous marriage, Oskar, 13, and Lukas, 10, spend time here too. The block was once part of a bigger property with stables shaded by huge cedars. Down the back is David's "big tin shed" — his studio and bolthole, which he built well before the house.

As a boy David was always drawing. However, his path towards a career in art wasn't direct. He moved to Bendigo to study for a teaching diploma in 1991, and then decided to pursue ambitions in singing and acting, before finally >



David unrolls his biggest linocut print, *Slow Boat* (120cm x 180cm). It took him four months to complete.



CLOCKWISE A sketch David did of a sailor last time he was in Skopelos, Greece; some of his old wood engraving blocks; a work by John R. Walker is centred above a Danish-style bureau David bought on eBay. The other works are also by friends including Pro Hart, Rick Amor and Geoffrey Ricardo. David made the two bronze sculptures, while Sarah made the basket. The large sculptural piece is by Jameison Miller. **FACING PAGE** Behind the sofa hangs (from left) paintings by David's grandfather, Wayne Viney, Mark Dober and Rew Hanks. The rug is from a stall at the Wesley Hill Market, Castlemaine. For stockist details, see page 133.



discovering printmaking was what he wanted to do. "I had a flair for it and I like the narrative of it, so in 1996 I decided to do an Honours in printmaking at Monash in Melbourne. One of the lecturers there introduced me to wood engraving — the old fashioned way of illustrating newspapers — and it was love at first sight." It's an art form David has used to illustrate books. In 2014 he illustrated one of Paul Kelly's songs, *Little Aches & Pains*, making it into a small book, and in 2017 he collaborated with the songwriter Don Walker in an interpretation of his song *Pool*.

David moved to Castlemaine with his first wife in 2008, when he bought the old stables building next door to the house. A year later he was single again and rather than do up the stables, he subdivided the land to build a new house. "I sold the stables and kept two thirds of the property with the studio on it. And then I started to build the new house."

Then he met Sarah, 39, in Port Fairy on the west coast. "The house was meant to be modest but it ended up becoming quite grand. If I'd known I was going to double my family and have more kids I would have designed it differently as the bedrooms are pretty squishy, but downstairs the living area is very nice and open plan."

The gabled house reflects the form of the old stables next door and sits in a landscaped garden featuring drystone walls. Recycled timbers and bricks were more sustainable and affordable than new, and added to the home's rustic aesthetic. "I quite like how it's all different now," says David.

Inside, the light-filled home is split level, with the two bedrooms on a mezzanine under the steep pitched roof >



ABOUT THE HOUSE

- The front and back doors are painted in Firestone, the interior walls are Natural White and the glass splashback in the kitchen is Applegate, all by Dulux. 13 25 25; dulux.com.au
- Building work was by The Built Collective — specialists in sustainable design. thebuiltcollective.com.au
- Architect Katrina Logan, from Logan Studio in did the initial design and coordinated the project until the build commenced. (03) 5470 6287; loganstudio.com.au
- Timber cladding in the gables is a mixture of timbers that were bought as seconds from Woodform Architectural. 1800 008 828; woodformarch.com
- Flooring is recycled Tasmanian oak from The Salvage Yard, Castlemaine. 0435 500 112; thesalvageyard.com.au
- Stonework landscaping is by Castlemaine stonemason Kaya Storm from Arrowstone Masonry and Design. 0428 664 630; kayastorm.com
- Japanese windows in the mezzanine are by Mat Shears Woodworks. matshearswoodworks.com



CLOCKWISE Natural White paint from Dulux makes the perfect backdrop for the couple's collection of treasures; looking down the side of the house to the garden and studio. Stonemason Kaya Storm did the paving and stonework; fresh picked flowers in the kitchen. The black bowl is by David's friend, Jade Kellet. For stockist details, see page 133.



and two bedrooms downstairs. “We put Japanese windows up there to open it up and a louvre window in the gable as I wanted ventilation through the upstairs.”

The mellow timber flooring is also recycled, from an old school. In the kitchen Sarah chose the apple green splashback and an heirloom wardrobe from David's family has been converted to a dresser. “It was my great grandparents’,” he says. “It always looked like a bedroom piece in the kitchen in the old stables so I took the mirrors out, replaced them with clear glass, put some shelves in and it was transformed.”

David's art collection hangs on the walls in most rooms. “A lot of my collection is doing swaps with fellow artists, including John R Walker, David Moore and Geoffrey Ricardo, which is a good way to build a collection,” says David. “My grandfather was a very good watercolour artist and some of his paintings also hang on the walls. His distant cousins were the Lindsay family and I have four of Lionel Lindsay's wood engravings, plus a painted woomera by Albert Namatjira that I inherited from my other grandfather who was posted up at Hermannsburg during World War Two.”

Building invariably means making compromises that even an artist can't avoid. “I've found that with huge windows, there's not a lot of hanging space,” says David. Fortunately he always has the studio down in the garden — a place where his art is unhindered. “The studio is my sanctuary,” he says. *CS*
David Frazer is having a solo exhibition at Beaver Galleries in Canberra until March 4th, and will be running a printmaking course on the Greek Island of Skopelos in September. Visit dfrazer.com