

TIMBER: What's old is new again

ONLY the yellow wall wash and a few essential fittings are new in the house Jim and Leigh Ruig built at Red Hill.

The couple specialise in recycling old building materials.

"I go searching for old buildings," said Jim, "and people ring me up when they see an old building or an old bridge coming down."

And the older the better, preferably at least 50 years old. That's when timbers were abundant, he said, and builders had the time to dovetail and do things properly.

"The old timbers came from big-

ger trees — better quality," he said. "You can't replace the depth of colour and the warmth of old timber. It's a better product."

"Fifty years ago, time was not an issue. There was a lot of labour and they selected timber for its grade."

"We're second-hand dealers, like the antique dealers. That's the way we treat old timbers, like antiques."

Their career started 15 years ago, said Jim, when they bought an old corner shop, then an old house, and started renovating. Before that, he'd been a fireman, car salesman and hairdresser with Leigh, "and played rugby".

"At Red Hill, we bought next door and this was an old burnt-out fish and chips shop," he said.

They cleared and set about building a single level villa "with as much recycled material as possible".

Car cover is detached, by the footpath. Entry from the front veranda is to central yellow-washed passage that continues through the house to arrive at full-width open living area and deck under shelter.

Overhead are great trusses from an old railway workshop in Toowoomba. Together with the bricks from the Cannon Hill saleyards, this was the starting point for the villa design.

Wide recycled floorboards were re-built out of massive old beams. Kitchen bench tops were made out of floor joists from the old Treasury building.

GRACE GARLICK



Living room uses second-hand bricks and overhead trusses from an old railway workshop



Bathroom cabinet is recycled pine

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