

# Dogged pursuit of a garden

AT HOME

Two little pooches motivated this couple to prioritise outdoor space

SUE WALLACE

Garden envy has prompted Victorian IT specialists Michael Ng and Greg Ong to again purchase an off-the-plan apartment with two garden areas and room for a dog.

It's the second time they have bought a property off the plan and are looking forward to their next move to Melbourne's Monument, a seven-level building with 24 luxe apartments in Orrong Road, Armadale, which will be ready in two years.

The couple say they have also been influenced by their friends' dogs — two inquisitive chihuahuas, Kiki and Biki, that visit regularly and are considered family.

"This is part of the reason we wanted a ground floor apartment with a large garden, so the dogs can run around, and we are planning to get a dog as well," Ng says.

Ng and Ong moved to Melbourne three years ago after "surviving" a challenging renovation of their three-level Paddington terrace house.

"The renovations didn't go to plan and it took close to a year to complete and it was a nerve-racking time," Ng says.

After much research, they purchased the two-bedroom apartment in the Springfield development in Toorak.

"Friends thought we were crazy to take the risk of buying something virtually unseen, but we were keen for a move after the renovations and we were tired of split levels," says Ong.

"We were confident we were making the right decision and when we moved in, we knew we had."

Ong moved from Singapore in 1997 and Ng arrived in 1998 and although they loved Sydney, they were ready for a change.

"I lived in Melbourne at South

Greg is a football fan and loves going to the MCG for matches," Ng says.

Moving from an old terrace with small rooms and stairs to the brand spanking new, open plan apartment took some adjusting.

"But overall, it was such a good experience. We entered into a bespoke contract, where we could specify furnishings and changed carpet to timber floor-boards in the bedrooms working with Chapter Group and interior design by K2LD," Ong says.

Their new 438sqm three-bedroom home is by the same architects and developers.

Ng says there were advantages buying off the plan including giving them time to sell their terrace.

"We also had the bonus of stamp duty concession as an incentive for buying off the floor plan. "We had a good feeling through the entire process, and this was confirmed when we moved in."

"Our home is fantastic and the next one should be even better."

Their present home is a 170sqm, first floor apartment which features a sleek lobby, study, streamlined kitchen, cosy dining and living area, slick marble bathroom and ensuite and a balcony with views of Japanese maples and

and there's plenty of space, but we definitely want a garden," Ong says.

Three striking paintings by Sydney artist Clare Brodie feature in the apartment.



A favourite possession is a quirky antique Chinese silk thread embroidered objet d'art that when flipped shows a cat on one side and a dog on the other.

Cooking is a passion and there's plenty of room in the kitchen when they get out the pots and pans.

Ong is a whiz at cakes while Ng's specialties are Asian dishes including Chinese popiah, a fresh spring roll with varied fillings.

"We made the best decision

Michael Ng, left, and Greg Ong with their friends' chihuahuas, Kiki and Biki; inset, Chinese objet d'art; right, Clare Brodie artwork

PICTURES: AARON FRANCIS

