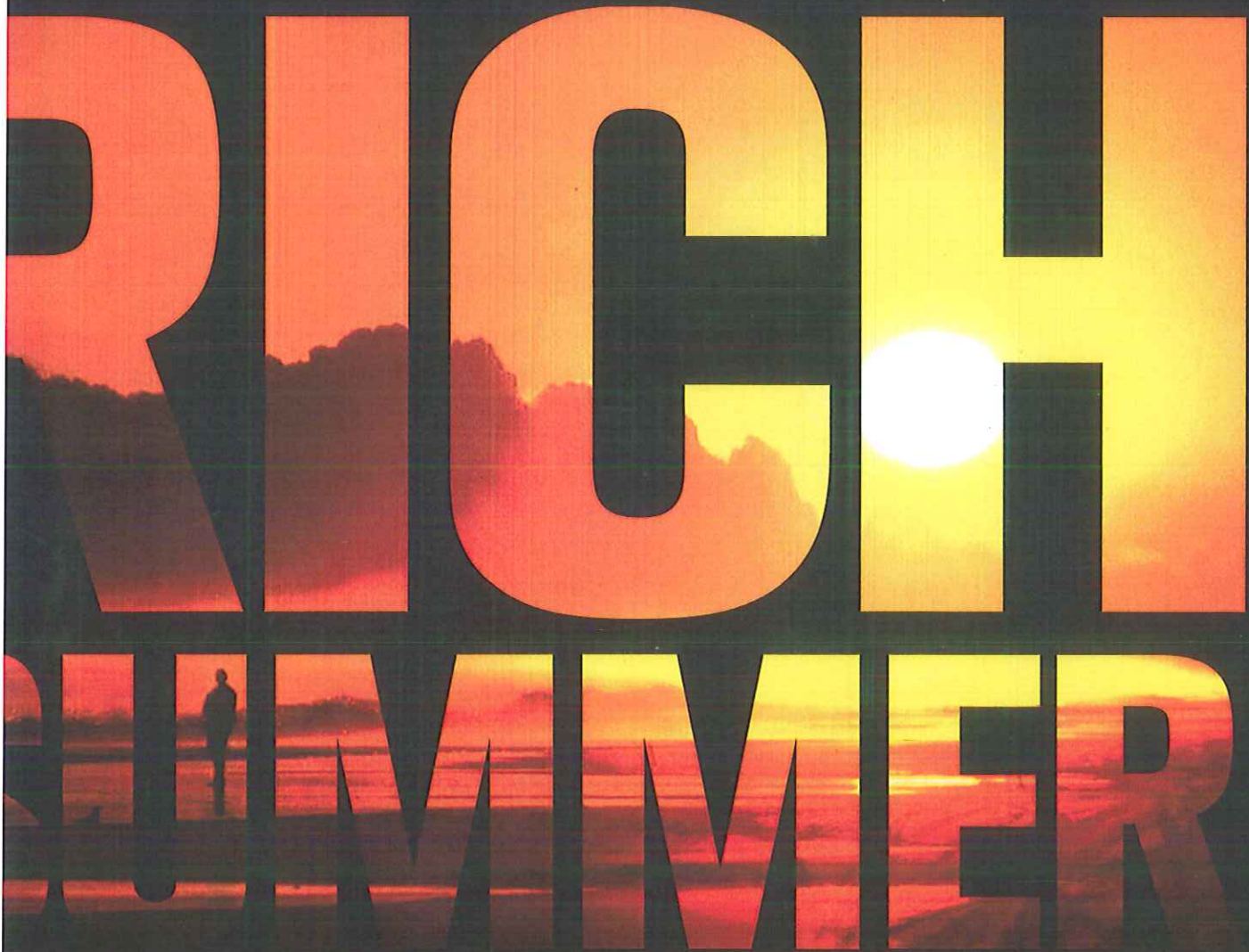


TOP 50 SPORTS EARNERS 30 | TEAM RICH: HIRED HELP FOR THE AFFLUENT
CLASSROOMS FOR ENTREPRENEURS 48 | THE WEALTHY AND THEIR ART MUSEUMS

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works by Sidney Nolan, John Perceval, Arthur Boyd and Joy Hester, was displayed in their lifetime in an acclaimed 1960s modernist building, designed by architects McGlashan Everist, with typical architectural bombast as a "museum for living in".

A house for an architect is always something of a laboratory, a way of testing the way space, light and design can change the way one lives (and who one is and even the wider society).

So it is for Corbett Lyon, the architectural principal of Lyons Architects, who is working on the new \$1 billion Children's Hospital in Brisbane as well as an equally ambitious, if more modestly priced "housemuseum" for his family and their 200-piece collection of contemporary Australian art at Kew in Melbourne's east.

It is not a museum for living in like Heide, Lyon says, and nor is it just a house with pictures on the wall. About 1350 square metres, with a budget he will only describe as "lean and mean", the building is half-complete and the family hopes to move in by mid-2008. "It's a juxtaposition of big museum spaces and living spaces and we'll kind of live around and through the art, and people will be invited in to experience that," he says.

Corbett and Yueji Lyon have built their collection together over 12 years, and their two daughters, now 10 and 12, have grown up with the artworks. The Lyon collection includes Howard Arkley's hazy, blissful multipanel mural of a suburban interior, *Fabricated Rooms*, alongside the sizeable architectural installations of Callum Morton and Patricia Piccinini's *Truck Babies* – shiny, duco-finished infant road trains.

Unlike most other collections, the Lyons' is in constant flux. By buying the work of artists early in their careers – but from the top galleries, Jan Minchin's Tolarno Galleries and

the Anna Schwartz Gallery in Melbourne – the Lyons have seen the value of many works in their collection skyrocket and, by judicious selling, can realise some of the gains and invest in a new generation of emerging artists.

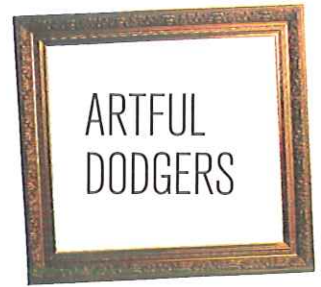
Lyon says he has no idea what the collection is worth. "Georges Mora [ex-husband of artist Mirka Mora and founder of Tolarno] told me when I first started collecting, if you buy what's really good then the monetary value kind of works itself out. It's true. And the value is meaningless if the plan is to keep them, either for the family or in a public custodial role."

Lyon says the idea to build his own private museum came from his travels. "Everyone who goes to the Peggy Guggenheim museum in Venice and the Sir John Soane's Museum in London comes back loving it because it's an intimate experience and, importantly, you see the connection between the work and the collector."

Travel has also given him the sense that theirs is an international shift away from the monumentalism of Bilbao, and back towards the more personal – both in terms of the idiosyncrasies of a collection and the intimacy of a smaller space.

The plan is to open the housemuseum to groups of school or university students, or artists and architects from Australia and overseas, rather than by general admission. "Being a private family housemuseum, we're unfettered by collection policies – we can do whatever we like," Lyons says.

"We're planning to run music concerts in there, and have people over for extended afternoon teas. There'll be artists' talks – it'll be a really interesting place for people to come to ... Our aim is to make it not like other art museums around the world, but to make it very special as an experience." **BRW**



Two new private museums is a coincidence, three is a trend but five in the space of 18 months? That's a boom. Why now? As one expert in philanthropy puts it: "Australia is creating millionaires at one of the fastest rates in the world, and there are only so many yachts you can buy."

Changes to the tax laws in 2001 also made it simpler and less expensive to set up philanthropic foundations, the deputy director of Swinburne University's Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment, Dennis Tracey, says. "As a rough rule of thumb, you needed \$1 million to be worth setting up a foundation [before], and now it's only a couple of hundred thousand."

"These things always have a lead time – it takes a while for people to hear about them, it takes a while for lawyers and accountants and advisers to know enough about them to confidently advise their clients."

There's more to it than tax changes. Tracey believes there is a new mood for philanthropy worldwide. "A growing interest in notions like civil society and the responsibilities of the individual – I would say recent events like the huge donations by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett in the United States are a symptom of this."

Jane Haley, chief executive of the Australia Business Arts Foundation,

which promote sector arts sup agrees that tax may have enab of the museum

"There's been modifications to tax rules, including people can claim deductions over – so if a person a work of art or it to a public co a private musei foundation, the a tax deductio value of that wo to five years."

Whether the have driven the unclear. "Often of thing is quite anyway, not the thing people ta about," Haley s

Architect Cc Lyon is building "housemuseum Melbourne to h his family and v contemporary / luminaries – pa in after-tax doll deductibility.

Lyon did inve obtaining tax a for his venture, the local coun permission for : museum on the abandoned the decided to pres anyway. Now h he did as the fa make every dex themselves. "O it's a very silly ir Lyon says. "Our says: "Why arer setting up a ph foundation and what Steve Viz: So, in a sense, ' it hard."



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Corbett Lyon

Constant flux: Corbett Lyon and his wife Yueji at the site of their 'housemuseum'