



Style sequel

After creating her ultimate family home in Melbourne, this serial renovator is finally ready to down tools

STORY KERRY RAMSEY STYLING WENDY BANNISTER
PHOTOGRAPHY GORTA YUUKI



FRONT EXTERIOR Jo loves the grand golden ash tree that welcomes visitors almost as much as the home she shares with her husband, Steve, and their three children. Although the couple replaced the original roof and weatherboards, ornate details ensure the Edwardian facade retains its period charm. >

SIGNS OF A SERIAL RENOVATOR include a passion for floor plans, a nose for scoping out ‘for sale’ signs and an insatiable appetite for transformation. By the time she’d renovated her fifth home, design director Jo suspected she was hooked. Her flair and enthusiasm grew as she reached double figures, with her 11th renovation appearing in *Home Beautiful* in June 2008.

With no desire to hang up the hammer, Jo recently spotted her next challenge – a large Edwardian property in Melbourne’s east. Her husband Steve and their children, Annabelle, 14, Sophie, 12, and Henry, nine, had no qualms about moving house yet again. Jo’s project-managing skills guaranteed a stress-free revamp, but it was her innovative floor plan that won everyone over – positioning the children’s bedrooms and rumpus room on the first floor. “Now the girls are older, they really like their own space,” says Jo.

Just a month after settling the property, Jo had already drawn up the plans, had the building permit approved, and commenced building. “The house was built in the 1900s and had great bones, but it looked like Laura Ashley on speed,” recalls Jo with a laugh. “There were wallpaper borders everywhere – even on the ceiling. I’d never seen that done before!” Its 1980s sensibility continued throughout, with walls painted in different shades of pink and peach.

But paring back the garish colour palette was a cinch compared to the structural work required. “It wasn’t the type of renovation we could have lived through because the house was taken back to a frame on the inside,” explains Jo, who, with her family, lived in a nearby rental home while the house was gutted. An old extension was demolished, walls were replastered and insulated, and plumbing and electricals were replaced. Even the grand exterior needed extensive work, including replacing the roof and rotted weatherboards. When all this was completed, a rear extension and second-storey were added, tripling the size of the house. The inclusion of a pool and relandscaping of the garden provided the finishing touches.

After taking a hands-on approach during the 12-month build, Jo found the final stage – decorating – a real breeze. “My style really hasn’t changed over the years,” she admits. Her latest home displays a mix-and-match aesthetic, adorned with antique and modern furniture and pops of scarlet. “I’ve always loved linen and other textures, and I like to use timeless neutral sofas as a base.”

More than just a family home, the dwelling doubles as a showroom for Jo’s design firm, Beautiful Home. Her unexpected flourishes, such as the wallpaper laundry splashback, a mini-computer enclave in the pantry and the state-of-the-art wine cellar (all page 83) – add real impact. Well-travelled treasures are juxtaposed against the home’s period features for a surprising, but pleasing, effect. “I’ve finally created my family’s dream home – we’ve all fallen in love with it,” says Jo.

LIVING ROOM Worn timbers and splashes of red create a warm and welcoming feel in the living area, against a crisp backdrop of walls in Antique White USA by Dulux. The armchairs in vibrant tulip fabric have been a long-lasting favourite. “I’ve had them for 12 years and I still love them as much as I did when I first bought them,” says Jo. The home is filled with carefully displayed ornaments, which add a personal touch. Country Road votives, vases from Say It With Flowers and a wooden rice tray by Cumquat Interiors take pride of place on the antique coffee table.



Inside story

Who lives here?

Jo, director of design firm Beautiful Home; her husband Steve, an executive; and their children, Annabelle, 14, Sophie, 12, and Henry, nine.

What’s your best trick when designing interiors?

Jo: “The key pieces, in neutral tones, should last forever. Simply update with soft furnishings, lamps and other inexpensive items.”

Favourite Melbourne homewares shop?

“I always enjoy popping in to Hermon & Hermon in Richmond. Owner Barbara Hermon mixes textures and colours beautifully. Her store has just celebrated 21 years and I’ve been shopping there for the past 16.”

How did you choose the right white interior wall paint?

“In the past, I’ve used different whites depending on the light in each room, but in this house, I’ve used the same in all rooms – Dulux’s Antique White USA. If this house had more light, I would have used something creamier.” >

DINING AREA A visually arresting pendant (try Hermon & Hermon) works as a centrepiece, while sultry red tones pop up in artworks by Anita Dammersmith, whose work features throughout the home. Replica 'Wishbone' chairs from Matt Blatt surround a sturdy dining table from Thailand, where the family lived for three years. Jo chose smooth Victorian ash floorboards, stained in dark brown, to complete the rich scheme.



“My *style* hasn’t really changed over the years”



KITCHEN (top) Plenty of space, a clean white palette and a Calacatta marble splashback from Created In Stone (createdinstone.com.au) lend a contemporary feel. The wooden bar stools are available from Beautiful Home; beautifulhome.net.au. **LIVING ROOM (bottom)** Graphic red-and-white cushions tie in with four photo frames displaying the same Designers Guild fabric, positioned above an Indonesian dowry trunk. A Jetmaster fireplace provides warmth in winter, while baskets bought in America a decade ago serve as a stylish storage solution. >

ARTWORK (TOP RIGHT) ANITA DAMMERSMITH

we love

The expansive double doors

To combat a dim interior – a common problem in Edwardian homes – Jo transformed single doorways into expansive double doors in the master bedroom as well as in the home office and formal living room.

The larger doors invite streams of natural light and open up the space.

ARTWORK: ANITA DAMMERSMITH

“Curtains are a *soft addition* to our bedroom”

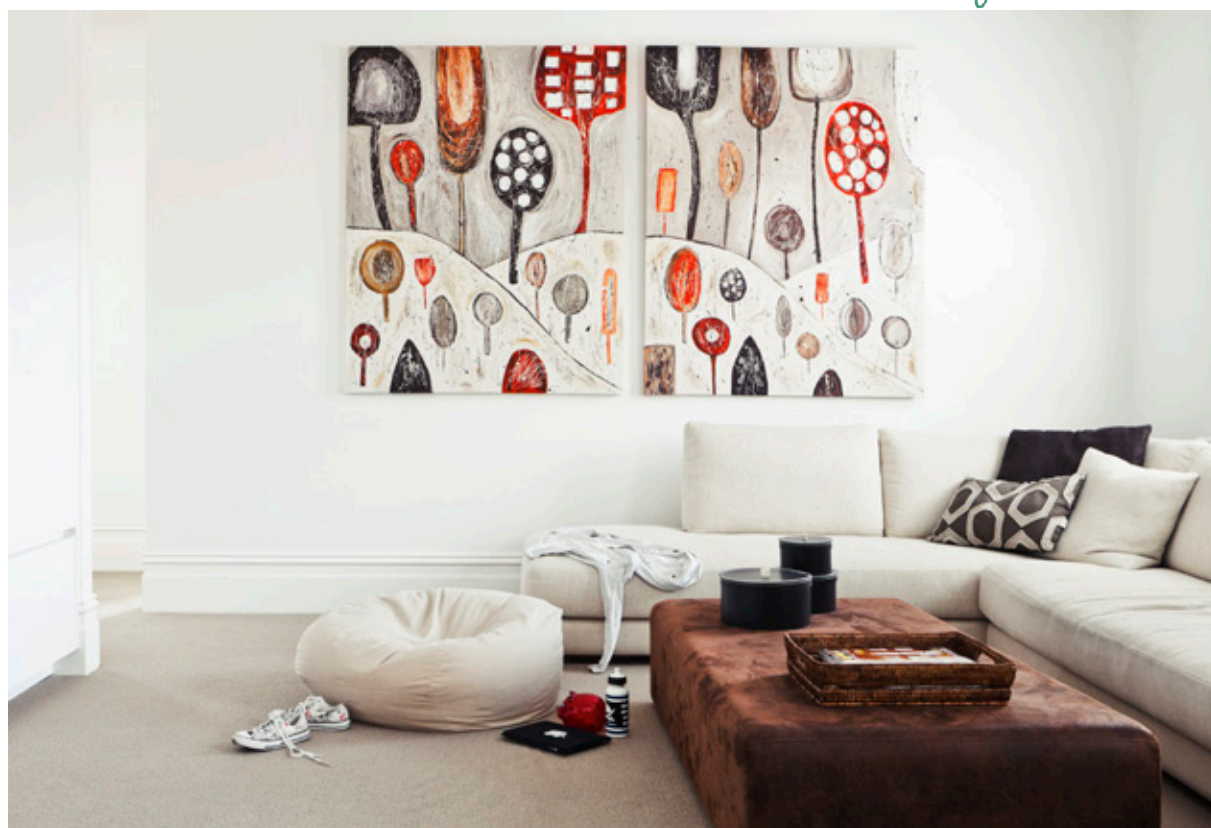


MASTER BEDROOM (this page & opposite)

Originally a formal dining room, the new master bedroom now leads into a spacious ensuite. Jo chose eclectic pieces, including an antique Chinese medicine cupboard and small hessian mannequin from Cumquat Interiors, that blend well with period features such as an original fireplace. To enhance the space, she added linen curtains on bronze rods. “This is the first time I’ve ever done curtains in a house of mine,” Jo says. “I usually do shutters or Roman blinds, but curtains are a soft addition to our bedroom.” The Jordan ‘Leila’ bed is topped with luxurious, creamy linen and plush cushions (try Abode, abodeliving.com). >



“Key pieces, in neutral tones, should *last forever*”



GUEST BATHROOM (top left) Practical but chic, the bathroom is fitted with a rectangular Rogerseller basin and shiny tapware from Elite Appliances. **LIVING ROOM** (top right) Assorted accessories from Hermon & Hermon add exotic appeal. **RUMPUS ROOM** (above) Positioning the kids' retreat on the first floor has been a real winner for the whole family. “Steve and I have really got back some sort of a life,” explains Jo, who spends more time in the main living room, while the kids play Wii or watch a DVD upstairs on their Jordan ‘Empire’ sofa and beanbag from Target.

ARTWORK: ANITA DAMMERSMITH



ANNABELLE'S BEDROOM

When 14-year-old Annabelle was asked how she would like to decorate her room, the fanatical Collingwood (AFL) supporter said black and white. “So I gave her black and white – my way!” says Jo. The room is decorated with ‘Midnight’ linen from Provincial Home Living, a bookcase and chair from Ikea and a desk from Petite Living. For similar zinc letters, try Ici Et Là. >



BACKYARD Sliding glass doors open up the living area to the backyard, encouraging the children to play outside. "My kids always give me a wish list when we move into a new property, and this time, they really wanted a swimming pool," recalls Jo. After the pool was installed, she surrounded it with Classicstone pavers in Portland from Stone Outdoors (stoneoutdoors.com.au). Sunlounges from Domo Collections (domo.com.au) are for parents only, to enjoy while the kids splash about.

style notes

1

2

3

the details

1 Living room walls Wash & Wear 101 Barrier Technology in Antique White USA, \$74.95/4L, Dulux.

2 Floorboard stain Try Proofint in Walnut and Black, \$50/L, Feast Watson.

3 Kitchen splashback Calacatta marble, from \$500/sqm, Created in Stone.

CONTACT Designer Jo McIntyre, Beautiful Home, 0417 341 853, beautifulhome.net.au.

Stockists, page 212

COMPUTER NOOK A functional space for "Mum's stuff", the enclave leads through to the laundry.

HOME OFFICE Design inspiration flows naturally here, thanks to artwork by Anita Dammersmith and a collection of global treasures. Magazine holders from Kikki.K create a sense of order.

"I've finally created my family's *dream home* - we've all fallen in love with it"



WINE CELLAR The cellar, a wine buff's dream, was a luxury addition for Jo's husband.

