



Where the living
IS EASY

Once a tired Edwardian cottage, this Melbourne abode is now a fabulous family home – and the focal point for festivities of a decidedly relaxed nature.

STORY DONNA COUTTS / STYLING HEATHER NETTE KING / PHOTOGRAPHY LAUREN BAMFORD

Stylist's assistant Kim de Winter.



LIVING / When it's time to party, the McIntyre family opens up the glass sliding doors to extend the circulation space to the covered deck. Christmas tree decorations, all Vixen & Velvet.
Designer buy: For similar armchair, try PB Comfort slip-covered armchair, from \$1474, Pottery Barn.
FRONT DOOR / A wreath from Vixen & Velvet makes for a cheery welcome. **FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 229.**

Share the magic

"We dedicate a whole day – the Saturday closest to the first of December – to decorating the house for Christmas," says Jo. "We always have a huge tree and everyone tries to hang their own ornaments, the ones they made in kindergarten or primary school, in the most prominent position. I like to play Christmas carols while we do it, which drives everyone insane! Once the tree is done, we get to work on the rest of the house."



Thousands of decisions great and small: that's what's involved in building or renovating. With 11 personal renovations under her belt and countless others completed for the clients of her home-design firm, Beautiful Home, Jo McIntyre had experience on her side when she embarked on a plan to sell the family home in Melbourne's east and renovate a tired weatherboard cottage down the street.

Not one to waste a moment, Jo had drawn up new floor plans, sorted quotes and permits, and had builders on site a mere two weeks after settlement. Ten months later, Jo, her husband Steve, and their children Annabelle, 18, Sophie, 16, and Henry, 13, moved in.

The beautiful Edwardian stucco and weatherboard facade was restored, but beyond that the home was stripped back to its frame. The plan was then to extend upwards and to the rear.

On the ground floor, the six original rooms were repurposed as the main bedroom suite, formal living and dining rooms, a bathroom and study. The rear extension accommodates a new open-plan kitchen/dining/living room, laundry, mud room and wine cellar, while on the first floor are the three children's bedrooms, a bathroom and a family room.

"Henry was only seven when we began this renovation so I had to design a layout that would still work for us when the children were in their teens and 20s," says Jo, who considers this her "almost forever" home.

The revised layout certainly works for this family. The open-plan kitchen/dining/living room is the centre of many of the McIntyres' daily activities. "The space is big enough that we can all be together in the one room but not so big that it feels like a warehouse," says Jo. There is a covered barbecue area on the deck adjacent to the dining zone, which makes entertaining a breeze. "We love barbecuing and having that area under cover means we can do so year round," says Jo. ▶

LIVING / Sophie trims the tree while Henry gets wrapping. The plinth in front of the windows is a great spot for display, and contains drawers for storage too. Artwork by Kirsty Davidson. Coffee table, Asian Tide.

Designer buy: Retro Chic Patchwork rug, from \$1600, Halcyon Lake Rugs and Carpets. **FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 229.**



◀ Other layout-efficient touches are the co-location of kitchen, laundry and study nook, plus a mud room next to the garage for storage of school bags and sports gear. “The mud room is great,” says Jo. “The children’s laptops and mobiles get charged there as well, so in the morning, everything they need is there ready to go again.”

One of the things Jo is most proud of achieving is good flow between indoors and out on a block of land that falls away steeply to the west. “Previously, there were about 10 steps down to the backyard so you would be out to the back fence before you reached ground level,” she says. They installed a pool too, which is elevated to further reduce the impact of the slope.

Christmas Day at the McIntyres’ is usually spent outdoors, says Jo, and to make it as relaxing as possible, she buys as much food pre-prepared as she can, including the turkey, trimmings and Steve’s favourite plum pudding.

“People should go easy on themselves at Christmas,” she says. “Everyone works so hard all year that I think you should do whatever it takes to be able to have the time to just enjoy being with your loved ones.” ▶

Beautiful Home, Surrey Hills, Victoria; 0417 341 853 or www.beautifulhome.net.au.



This is the life

Rebuilding the home practically from scratch meant Jo could tailor the design to her family’s lifestyle. “We all have our favourite rooms,” she says. “Everyone likes hanging out by the pool and watching movies in the family room. Sophie recently learned to cook and she really enjoys spending time in the kitchen. Steve loves having a wine cellar but my favourite has to be the formal living room. It’s my chill-out space.”



DINING / this page and opposite bottom Jo chills the Champagne before guests arrive. Artwork by Anita Dammersmith. Candelabrum, House of Orange. Tablecloth, Hale Mercantile Co. The stools and pendant light are from stores that are now closed.

Designer buy: Hay About A Chair dining chairs, \$570/each, Aptos Cruz Galleries.

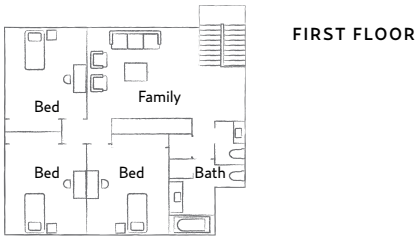
LIVING / “A big kitchen/dining/living room was essential for our family,” says Jo. Sofas, Jordan. The artworks at right are framed Designers Guild cushion covers. Artwork at left by Anita Dammersmith. **FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 229.**



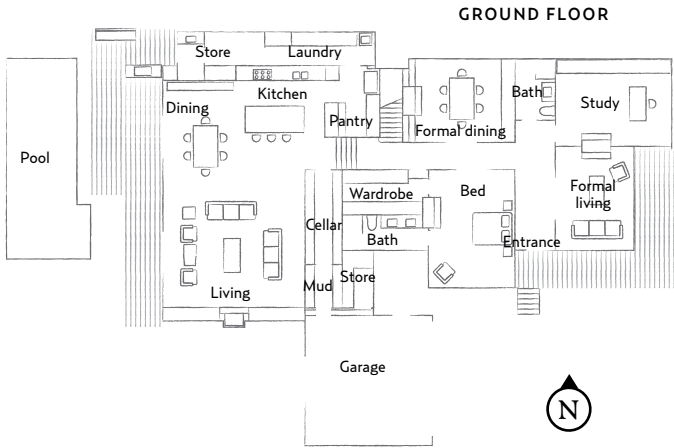
MAIN BEDROOM / A mix of textures adds interest to the tranquil neutral palette. Bed, Jordan. Bedlinen, Bemboka. **Designer buy:** Glass cloche lamp, \$590, Coastal Living. **BATHROOM** / The spacious upstairs bathroom features a laundry chute that links to the downstairs mud room, so there is no excuse for the children to leave dirty clothes on the floor. Shutters, Shades in Hawthorn. For similar wall and floor tiles, try Perini Tiles. Towels, Knotty. Stool, House of Orange. **DECK** / Bunting from Lark and brightly coloured table linen from Bonnie and Neil set the scene for a day of family fun. Table and sunloungers, Globe West. Chairs, Beautiful Home. Water jug, Coastal Living. Mince tarts, Zimt. **FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 229.**

H&G

THE LAYOUT



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

THE PALETTE

Dulux Black
front door

Add a dash of

Taubmans
Persia

Haymes Paint
Plum Pie

