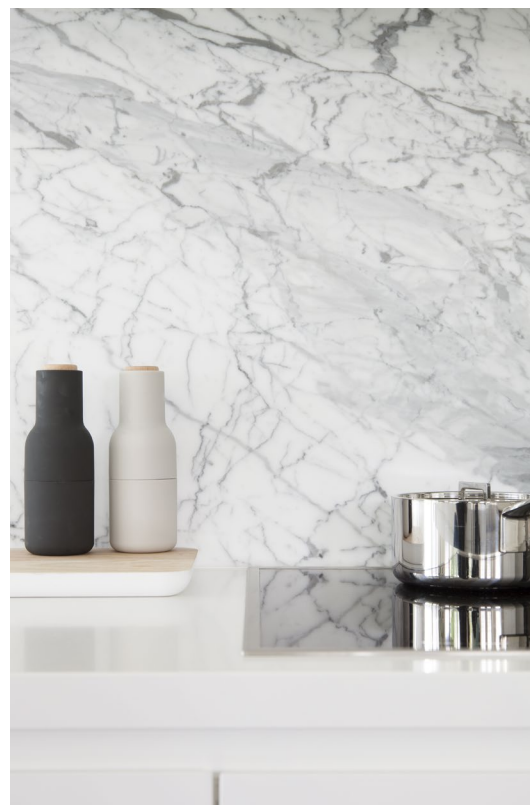


A photograph of a dining room interior. In the foreground, a dark wood dining table is set with a vase of white tulips, several glasses, and a stack of plates. Light-colored wooden chairs with woven seats are arranged around the table. To the right, a large green plant sits in a tall, two-toned woven basket. A large, dried branch hangs from the top left corner. The background is a plain white wall, and a window is visible on the right side.

FAMILY focus

A MELBOURNE COUPLE WITH FOUR CHILDREN AND BUSY
CAREERS PULLED OFF A STUNNING RENOVATION BY
WORKING WITH A DEDICATED TEAM OF LOCAL SPECIALISTS
WORDS ANNA McCOOE STYLING WENDY BANNISTER PHOTOGRAPHY SHANIA SHEGEDYN



RESTORED TREASURE Cool, calm and collected are the bywords for the Melbourne home of Claire, Andrew and their four children, Lucy, eight, Sophie, one, Ben, six, and Josh, three (enjoying afternoon tea on a setting from House of Orange, with mum, on the new deck, top left). While the heritage rooms at the front of the Victorian-style home – including the nursery (top right) – remain much the same, a light-filled extension at the rear incorporates the spacious timber deck, as well as the kitchen (bottom right), living room (above left) and dining room (opposite). In the latter, a 15-year-old table is given an update with elegant ‘Wishbone’ chairs from Cult, while greenery comes courtesy of a faux fiddle-leaf fig from Home By Tribal. Throughout the home, walls in Dulux Natural White provide a clean backdrop for art to shine – in the living room, a Kirsty Dunn artwork adorns the wall above the Jetmaster fireplace, while a Rachel Castle coloured spot painting hangs above an original fireplace in Sophie’s room. >

LIVING ROOM A muted colour palette inspires tranquillity in the living room, where a large Jordan couch provides enough room for the whole family. Rustic touches come in the form of a pair of coffee tables from Hermon & Hermon and a neutral-hued La Grolla rug. Dusty blue cushions and a throw, all from Bed Bath N' Table, and the Rosetta Santucci artwork bring just the right amount of colour to the serene space. A spectacular 'A Ghost Story' pendant by Mance over the dining table gives definition to the dual zones, and adds a nuance of raw charm.

PAINT
Wash & Wear 101
Technology in Natural
White, \$71.90/4L,
Dulux.



Three-year-old Josh – a would-be builder – stands at the front door of a pretty Victorian house in Melbourne’s inner east. His head is held high under the tip of his hard hat, as he reveals his favourite thing about his family’s recent renovation: “Working together and getting the job done.” Josh’s parents, Claire and Andrew, feel much the same way. They bought the house – complete with an outdoor toilet and outdoor laundry – on a 536-square-metre block eight years ago. The process of transforming it from a rundown building into a pitch-perfect, six-bedroom home was almost effortless, thanks to the trust they had in their team. “It was all down to the people we worked with,” says Claire, who began meeting designers six weeks after having her third child, Josh – brother to Lucy, now eight, six-year-old Ben and the newest child on the block, baby Sophie.

Building designer Jo McIntyre of Beautiful Home was the first person she called. “I really liked that she was a mum with three kids running a business,” says fellow practised juggler Claire, a physiotherapist who owns a healthcare consultancy. “Jo understands family and she understands what works in the home.” Next in the line-up was builder Rod Devlin of Devlin Mees – “a true professional” – and local landscape architect Mary-Claire Dalling. “We had a trail of one person referring the next,” explains Claire. “It was important to us to support small, local companies.”

After spending a year working on plans and permits, the family moved out for the 11-month renovation, which delivered a spacious extension at the rear. The heritage part of the home remained almost unchanged, except for a small nursery which was transformed into a walk-in robe and ensuite for the main bedroom. The clan moved home again just six weeks before Sophie was born.

Colourful paintings by Australian artists now dress the walls and Melbourne-made furniture holds the floor. The vision is all about family – and a large family at that. The new extension steps down to an open-plan living, dining and kitchen space with a pantry and laundry tucked into the north side. The kids rule the upstairs level, which features a playroom, three delightful bedrooms and a family bathroom. “It had to be a functional home,” explains Claire. “With a busy family, it was all about how we would make it work.”

Light and space bring a gentle grandness to this lovely home, which feels impressive without seeking approval. This is perhaps driven by Claire’s penchant for simple, functional spaces, evidenced as she breezes past beautiful furniture and big-ticket appliances to get to the pigeonhole storage in the laundry. “It’s the little things,” she says, while Sophie gurgles and Josh gets busy with pencil and paper, drawing up blueprints for the next house. He’s obviously keen to do it again, but would Claire? “If we could assemble the same team, definitely!”

“WE WANTED THE HOUSE TO BE
timeless. WHEN WE HAD TO MAKE
DECISIONS, WE WOULD *try to*
be led BY THAT” ~ CLAIRE

KITCHEN “We’re passionate about cooking and entertaining at home,” says Claire of the spacious, elegant kitchen (right & above right). Crisp benchtops in Quantum Quartz Alpine White and Polytec vinyl wrap joinery in Ultra White Matt allow the Calacatta marble to stand-out. “It’s almost like a piece of art,” Claire says. The mum-of-four wanted the look to be as streamlined as possible, so chose not to have cupboard handles. “I like to keep things simple and handles are a feature that can date a kitchen.” Tucked behind the kitchen is a stocked pantry with low shelves so the kids can help with breakfast as they become more independent. >





“WE’D SEEN OUR DESIGNER’S WORK BEFORE AND *loved her use of* LIGHT” ~ CLAIRE

STUDY

A pair of stunning Mario Gerth paintings from Home By Tribal bring vibrancy and interest to the otherwise subtle palette of the study (above). A table from Globe West is paired with Coco Republic chairs to create a stylish work area, while a Perfect Pieces armchair – that the couple had reupholstered – and a Robert Kitto ‘Bevington’ lantern add more charm to the inspired workspace.

ENSUITE

Timelessness was an essential cornerstone of the ensuite’s decor (right & above right). The floor is swathed in gorgeous Carrara marble tiles from CDK Stone and the Polytec vinyl wrap joinery in Ultra White Matt is topped with a Caesarstone benchtop in Pure White. The round basins are from Elite Appliances, and the timber ‘Peg’ stool from House Of Orange is a warm and functional addition.



MAIN BEDROOM Claire and Andrew's bedroom is a place of understated style and is filled with light, thanks to the beautiful bay window. The Rosetta Santucci artwork, above the Jordan bed, brings the room in line with the couple's penchant for a contemporary aesthetic. Isabella Patterson from Home By Tribal helped Claire pull together a lot of the finishes and artwork in the home and even had the armchair (opposite, top right) reupholstered in a bold print. >



CARPET
'Savoir Faire' in Char
Grey, \$75/sqm,
Tuffmaster.



WE LOVE...

outdoor chalkboards

Painted in chalkboard paint and framed in plywood, the writing board – the idea of landscape architect Mary-Claire Dalling, a mum at the kids' primary school – makes a creative addition to the boundary wall.

The chalkboard makes the backyard a dream play area for the older children. Find White Knight Chalkboard paint in Black, \$14.90/205ml, at Bunnings; bunnings.com.au.



“THE KIDS *love to sit* IN THEIR BEANBAGS AND *read* THEIR BOOKS” ~ CLAIRE

BEN'S ROOM

Each of the upstairs kids' rooms has its own personality – and colour scheme. In Ben's room (above), yellow and orange rule thanks to the Rachel Castle bedlinen. The throw is from Bed Bath N' Table, and local artist Kirsty Dunn created the artwork. The House Of Orange bed features a nifty storage drawer, too.

LUCY'S ROOM

A Rosetta Santucci artwork is a colourful addition to Lucy's pretty-in-pink room (top left). The spotted quilt is by Luna

Ninos of Luna Gallery, and the vibrant Juju wall hanging was found at Table Tonic.

JOSH'S ROOM

“We try to read to our kids as a family every night,” says Claire, who displays books in Josh's room in a Ubabub ‘Booksee’ shelf at a child-friendly height (above left). Animal heads from Bonjour teamed with a Morgan & Finch ‘Serengeti Rhinoceros’ cushion from Bed Bath N' Table and the Tigeroy bean bag keep the spirit fun and cheeky in this room. >

DECK Previously uneven, the indoor-outdoor connection is now flush, thanks to a dip in the inside level following the renovation. It's a decision that came into its own when Sophie started crawling. "All flat is wonderful for a baby," explains Claire. "Sophie can crawl straight out without the risk of falling down any stairs. She's able to explore the garden and keep up with her siblings." The family dog, Jack, watches over the older kids playing on the in-ground trampoline (opposite) - "we've had all ages jumping on the trampoline, from babies to grandparents," laughs Claire - and Lucy and Josh survey the area from the front of the family's lovingly restored home.



RUG
Outdoor rug in
Chevron Grey,
\$130/180cm x 270cm,
Fenton & Fenton.

SOURCE BOOK

INSIDE STORY CLAIRE & ANDREW'S HOME

Who lives here?

Claire, a physiotherapist who owns a healthcare consultancy; her husband Andrew, an AFL player development manager; their children Lucy, eight, Ben, six, Josh, three, and Sophie, one; and Jack the golden retriever.

Why this property?

Claire: "We were looking in the area for a while and then this house came up as a private sale. It was fairly basic, but we saw that it had potential for a big renovation."

Best renovation advice?

"Work with good, local people and keep referring to the experts. Having so many professionals around, with great ideas, made our renovation possible."

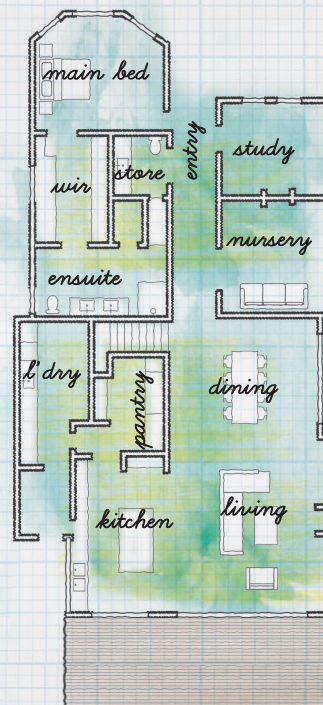
Saving grace?

"We were so busy with work and the kids, that when we had to make decisions we had to make them fast and I think that worked for us."

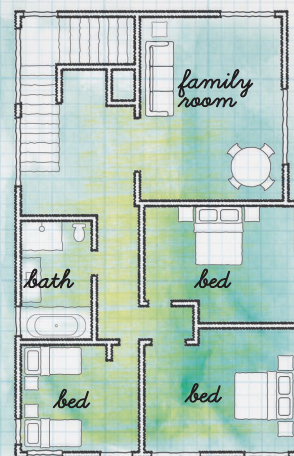


PLANS

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



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Landscape architect

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