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AUSTRALIAN

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# HOMES

THE STORIES, STYLE AND LOVE THAT MAKE A HOME BEAUTIFUL



PHOTOGRAPHY MARTINA GEMMOLA

JEWEL BOX *page 64*



# jewel BOX

A LONG-AWAITED MAKEOVER  
TRANSFORMS A DESIGNER'S  
MELBOURNE ABODE INTO  
HER DREAM HOME

Story JACKIE BRYGEL Styling RUTH WELSBY  
Photography MARTINA GEMMOLA

**SUNNY DISPOSITION** From the heritage rooms overlooking the street to this bright, beautiful rear living zone, every corner of the Melbourne home of interior designer Alice (pictured above, welcoming guests) has been taken into account. "As the house is quite dark at the front, I wanted this area to feature a lot of glass to bring the outside in," says Alice, who shares her home with husband Steve and daughters Kara, 14, and Frankie, 11. A bespoke leather banquette and Edelweis terrazzo table, both designed by AV-ID Interior Decoration & Design and manufactured by Scope Furniture, have been teamed with 'Avery Maja' armchairs from Globe West to create a chic dining nook (opposite) that wouldn't look out of place in a Melbourne bistro. A pair of &Tradition 'Formakami' paper-lantern-style pendant lights (try Cult) casts a delicate glow over the eating zone that is regularly used by the family. >





Melbourne interior designer Alice has always been in her element expressing her creative flair in other people's homes, but she had to don rose-coloured glasses to see the potential in her own home. In fact, more than a decade passed before the time was finally right for the talented mother of two to truly address her ageing 1920s abode in Melbourne's inner south-east. "I design these beautiful homes for people, and yet here I was, like the cobbler with the hole in his own shoe!" says a laughing Alice. "My house wasn't an expression of who I am as a designer and as a person. My family and I lived in what I call pseudo-student accommodation!"

With its rabbit warren of poky rooms, the heritage home that Alice and her husband Steve bought in 2008 also appeared to pay homage to one of the designer's least favourite hues. "Everything was beige when it came to the interiors – which is definitely not me," says Alice, director of AV-ID Interior Decoration & Design. The couple did a basic cosmetic refresh when they first moved in and put in heating. "This is a double-brick house, so structurally it was sound, but there were a lot of important things missing," she says. "The electrics hadn't been done in 40 years and there were layers of hideous carpets on top of the floorboards. But I knew we could bring the original house back to life while adding a modern renovation at the back."

Three years ago, Alice joined forces with Mary Koutrakys Jacobson, director of MJK, along with builders Conrad Howard and Warren Brown, to bring her vision to life. And what a vision it was! Over a 12-month period, with Alice, Steve and their two daughters, Kara, now 14, and Frankie, 11, living in a rental home nearby, the home was transformed into a captivating yet supremely comfortable sanctuary.

While the rear of the home has been rebuilt to create a light and alluring living zone that opens to the garden – lushly re-landscaped by Jane Mitchell of MINT Garden Design – there's plenty to please the eye at the front. It's here, in the more formal lounge and dining domains, that a palette of jewel tones imparts an intoxicating sense of warmth and luxury. And that's just as Alice intended. "I was very keen to embrace colour in the original part of the house, and play with the natural darkness of those rooms," she says. "A green dining room feels so inviting and cosy – like a beautiful pair of slippers."

As she sagely adds, there's no need to be afraid of colour. "Be bold and experiment," says Alice. "At the end of the day, it's only paint and you can always paint over it again if it's not for you."

Also important was that the renovation maintained the integrity of her home's unique past while looking forward. "The original style of the house is California bungalow, but with an unusual mix of Art Deco, Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts – a real fusion of styles that I love," she says. "To me, some renovations appear as boxes added at the end of a house. They don't seem to have been considered enough."

For Alice, the much-anticipated renewal of her home has been worth the wait. "When I walk in the door, I finally feel that the home reflects me and my family," she says with a smile. "Certainly, we see this as the house our children will grow up in."

FLOOR PLAN



**KITCHEN** There's no question that Alice and Steve's kitchen (this page & opposite) meets the brief for family functionality in luxe contemporary style. Heavily-veined Viscount White granite from CDK Stone is just one of its heroes. A sea of two-pac cabinetry in Dulux Black is a striking contrast to both the granite and timber dowel island front. On the shelf above the workbench props an original landscape by Mick Sudding. Textured terrazzo floor tiles by Disegno Casa and a ceiling in Glosswood teak boards adds another dimension to a space with a chic aesthetic.

**WE LOVE...**  
*shapely benches*

*With its tactile timber and stone finishes, a pill-shaped island designed by AV-ID and built by Lifestyle Designs International is truly ahead of the curve. "I don't like the sharp edges of a rectangular island," says Alice. "A curve feels more organic and softer, and is conducive to people gathering around it." >*



*"I LOVE THE movement IN THIS STONE, AS WELL AS ITS DURABILITY, AS I entertain A LOT AND CAN BE A PRETTY MESSY COOK" - ALICE*

"I WANTED THE colour  
TO TALK IN THE  
FRONT ROOMS OF  
THE HOUSE" ~ ALICE



**LOUNGE AREA** Alice turned to two of her favourite nature-inspired hues – deep blue and green – for a new lease of life. “I do like to bring the outside in by using these shades,” she says. Walls in Dulux Surf ‘n’ Dive set the scene and create a dramatic foil to ceiling and trims in Dulux Natural White. A Jordan ‘Andy’ sofa upholstered in ‘Elk’ velvet in Fern forms a sumptuous partnership with a pair of Woud ‘Nakki’ armchairs from FLOC Studio upholstered in Kvadrat ‘Harald’ navy velvet. **DINING AREA** A cherished collection of antique furnishings maintains this room’s heritage grandeur. The masterstroke is the vivid Dulux Highland Green paintwork. “I love the colours of nature,” says Alice. A custom rug from Domain Textiles adds extra warmth with an artwork called *Detour* by Joe De Chellis providing a sweet touch of colour. >

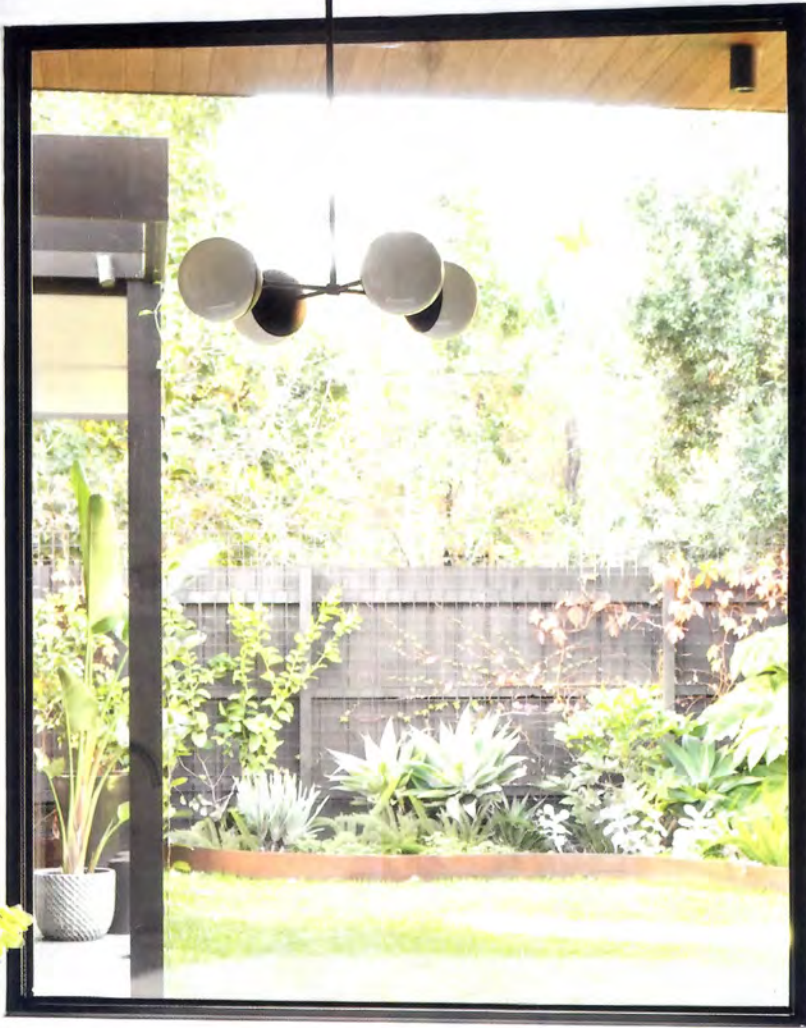






**MAIN BEDROOM** "I've always loved that feeling of a retreat when you step into a bedroom - that's what I wanted to create here," says Alice. Dulux Silkworth presents a misty face on the walls, with the stormy shade complemented by billowy curtains made by BQ Design in Verve Designer Collections 'Must'. The timber sideboard was a roadside find, and Ernest Buckmaster's original circa-1950s work *Goulburn River* claims rightful prominence above the bed. **BATHROOM** A huge picture window forms a backdrop unlike any other to the freestanding Justina stone bath (opposite, try Stonebaths). "I was having a moment of wanting to feel like I was in a beautiful boutique hotel in Bali when I designed this bathroom," says Alice. A bespoke vanity unit in Evenex 'Persian Walnut' veneer from Elton Group, with an Elba marble top (try CDK Stone), completes the picture of five-star style. >

'ALTO COMPASS' PENDANT AND WALL LIGHTS (OPPOSITE PAGE) CEDAR & MOSS  
'TRIUMF' STOOL MRD HOME ACTUAL PAINT COLOUR MAY VARY ON APPLICATION



"WE WANTED TO  
ENHANCE THE *feeling*  
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