



cheat sheet

Who lives here: Make-up artist Kylie O'Toole, her husband Andrew, a photographer and creative director at Eleven Australia, and their daughters, Anais, 16; and Bonnie, 14.

Style of home: A renovated Victorian home in Melbourne, circa 1880.

🕒 The family undertook a 13-month renovation working with architect Damian Rogers and tasking interior designer Jessica Bettenay with the interiors over a further two years.

\$\$\$ The renovation cost around \$800,000.



LIVING AREA (opposite) The developing patina of the Corten steel panels is the star of this space. Cool concrete, punctuated by black lights from Lights & Tracks, contrasts with the rusted surface, while a colourful rug from Loom Rugs marks out a warm living zone. **EXTERIOR** The dramatic glass and steel structure opens up the rear of the home, flooding the living zone with sunlight. Doors by PW Glass fold away to the side.

STYLING ASSISTANCE: GEORGIE FITZGERALD & SARA HUCKETT.
ARTWORK: PRINT BY ALI MCNABNEY/STEVENS, ALI/MCNABNEY/STEVENS.COM

A NEW LEAF

This unique space, packed with natural materials and sustainable surprises, is a classic case of a slow and steady renovation

WORDS & STYLING JULIA GREEN PHOTOGRAPHY ARMELLE HABIB



bright idea

Hide storage and the hardworking elements of a kitchen, like the fridge, in dark colour. Timber cabinetry, stained in WOCA Carbon Black oil, disappears beside this crisp white kitchen.



The age-old saying, 'Rome wasn't built in a day' certainly rings true for interior designer Jessica Bettenay of Melbourne-based studio Resident Avenue. The adage speaks to both the time and the creative energy put into her latest interior project. Helping her long-time friends Andrew and Kylie fit out the home of their dreams was a lengthy but rewarding process for Jessica. With an ethos focused on individual design, she started with an understanding of the couple's deeply held values around sustainable living and love of natural materials. The design process was carefully thought-out and ultimately delivered a spectacular and uniquely curated result.

"Andrew and Kylie spent 10 years living in their space and raising their family prior to the renovations, so had a finely honed sense of what was important for their lifestyle," says Jessica. "It took time, patience and four rounds of architectural designs before we started the interior. All up, it took a total of just under six years to get it exactly right."

It might have been a long process but, according to the designer, not a second was wasted nor a stone unturned, such was the level of dedication employed in ensuring the right feel

was achieved for each space. The overhaul began in 2014, when much of the building was stripped back to its bare bones and the existing kitchen, bathrooms and living areas were demolished. In the true spirit of sustainability, all offcuts were upcycled – even the back gate was built out of salvaged timber.

An angled roof structure in glass and steel, installed at the rear of the building, set the tone for things to come. Its leaf shape became synonymous with the home and earned the abode its name, 'The Leaf House'. Wrapping the weathered steel Corten material from the exterior through to the interior wall of the living room was a genius move, seamlessly linking the spaces.

According to Jessica, it was Andrew and Kylie's love for and exploration of natural materials that guaranteed the successful result. Timeless and naturally aged substrates, including Carrara marble and concrete, were selected for the kitchen and bathroom materials palettes. Every detail was thoughtfully considered, from the aged-brass tapware to the custom drain tray carved into the marble kitchen benchtop.

To encapsulate the timeless style of the home, artwork and furniture reflecting the owners' affection for travel and unpretentious beauty were selected. Treasures collected on the couple's travels, including rugs, textiles and sculptures, were integrated into the design, while earthy base colours dictated



LIVING AREA (opposite) The expansive Jordan sofa matches the scale of the room, while the &Tradition 'Palette' coffee table by Jaime Hayon from Great Dane is a sculptural addition. **KITCHEN** Two versions of the kitchen were initially designed, one white and one black," says Jessica. "The family opted for the lighter, brighter version." American oak veneer joinery from George Fethers adds warmth, while grooves cut into the Carrara marble benchtop from Corsi & Nicolai replace a draining tray.



star performer

Vertical cladding in white and black provides a link to the original weatherboard exterior of the house, while also adding textural interest.

KITCHEN & DINING AREA Mismatched dining chairs from Hay and Cult are a nod to the family's love of the eclectic. The Tuckbox Design table is lit by a Normann Copenhagen pendant light. **PORTRAIT (right)** Interior designer Jessica stands in the doorway to the intimate sitting room, which can be separated from the main living area with a sliding door.

“It’s the extra little details that help to shape the home’s individuality and personality”

JESSICA BETTENAY, INTERIOR DESIGNER



the home’s understated palette. Colourful, textured accessories were then layered for dimension and impact.

Another factor underpinning many of the interior design decisions was the amount of light. As a photographer, homeowner Andrew was particular that the home should be bathed in natural sunlight, and that the family should be able to control the ambience. Jessica embraced the challenge and, together with her clients, produced a lighting plan that ticked the boxes both practically and aesthetically. Diffused lighting in the hallway, for example, offers a soft evening glow, while track lighting illuminates busy work zones.

But it wasn’t just indoors that enjoyed the makeover. A rooftop vegetable garden was added to the build, which saw the family oasis become a local talking point. “Kylie and Andrew rarely need to set foot inside a grocery store, instead feeding themselves and their extended family from the abundant fresh produce of their labour,” says Jessica. “The end of each day sees them catching up while tending to their veggie patch.”

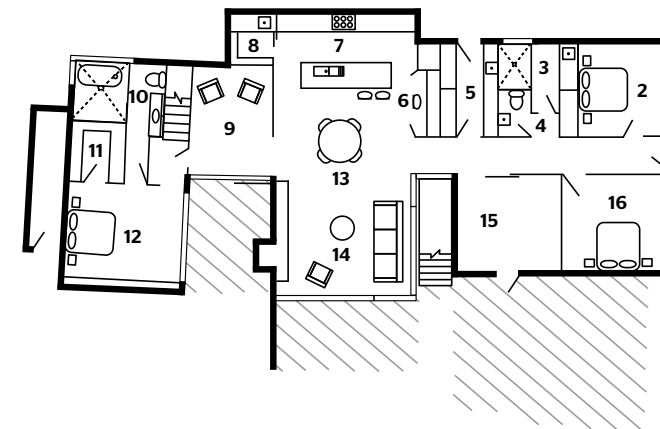
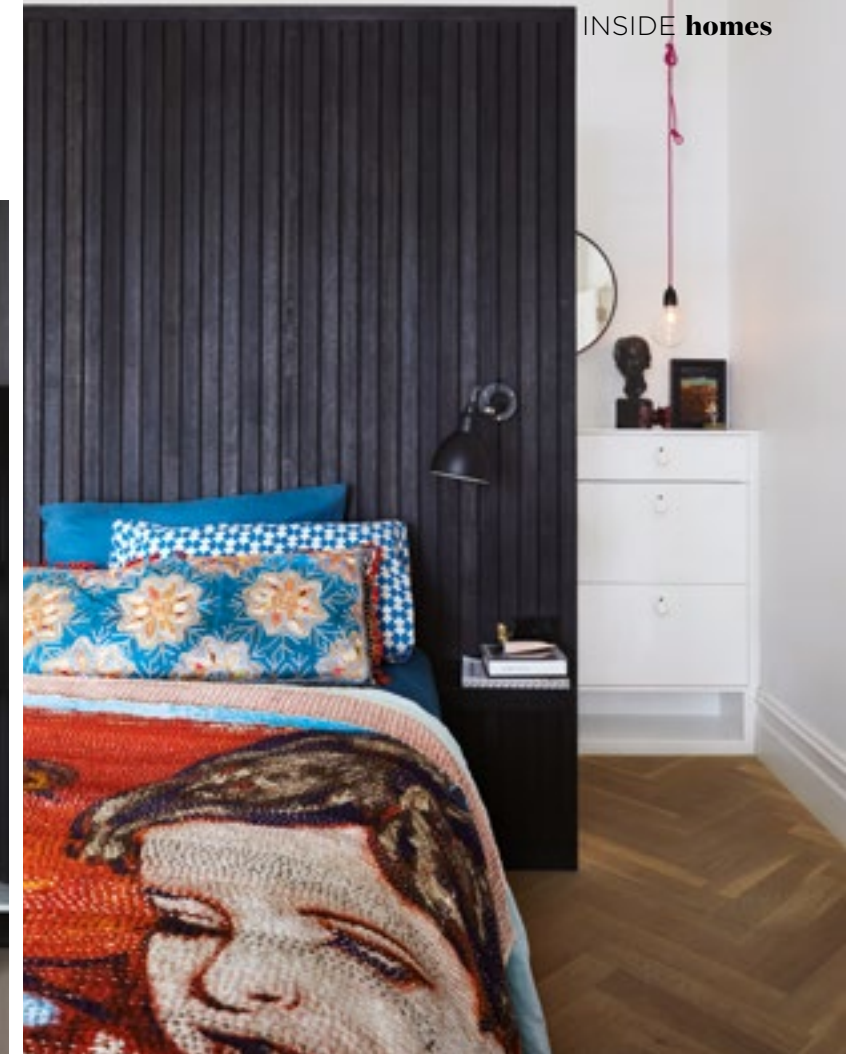
The overall tapestry of the home has a considered, welcoming feeling with an emphasis on the organic. According to Jessica, the design journey was as important as the end result. It was a collaboration of creative minds, culminating in brave design and decisions made with a lifetime in mind. “The devil is in the detail,” she says. “It’s the emotional response to every single facet of this home that makes it feel special. This house is an honest and authentic reflection of the beautiful souls that occupy it.” **10**

See more of interior designer Jessica’s work at residentavenue.com.au. Get in touch with architect Damian Rogers at rogersarchitecture.com and the builder at duobuilt.com.

HALLWAY Custom American oak chevron flooring echoes the history of the home, while the Proplamp 'Cloud-Nuage' pendant light from Nedgis in the UK offers a textural element above. **STUDY NOOK (opposite left)** Dark wall panels are a dramatic touch in this hideaway study area, located just off the kitchen. **ANAIS'S BEDROOM (opposite top right)** A hand-painted throw by David Bromley makes a bold statement on the bed. **MEZZANINE (opposite below right)** This study zone serves as a private retreat above Kylie and Andrew's bedroom.

“It took time, patience and four rounds of architectural designs before we started the interior”

JESSICA BETTENAY, INTERIOR DESIGNER



- 1. Entry
- 2. Bonnie's bedroom
- 3. Bathroom
- 4. Powder room
- 5. Laundry
- 6. Study nook
- 7. Kitchen
- 8. Pantry
- 9. Sitting room
- 10. Ensuite
- 11. Walk-in robe
- 12. Master bedroom
- 13. Dining area
- 14. Living area
- 15. Media/living room
- 16. Anais's bedroom

WALL LIGHT (ABOVE BED), AMBIENTEDIRECT, AMBIENTEDIRECTCOMVEN





SITTING ROOM (opposite left) A pair of Camerich 'Leman' leather armchairs from Meizai give this room a sophisticated touch.

ENSUITE (opposite right) Surrounded by large-format tiles from Urban Edge, the freestanding tub from Natural Stone Bath Factory is a focal point. Graphic custom tiles from The City Tiler are a bold addition behind the vanity.

MASTER BEDROOM Old meets new in this peaceful zone, where timber flooring surrounds recessed Cavalier Bremworth carpet from Williamstown Carpets. The vaulted ceiling and timber lining reflect the home's original structure.

lessons learnt

"ALL THINGS INDIVIDUAL TAKE TIME – STYLE CANNOT BE BOUGHT OR RUSHED"

JESSICA BETTENAY, INTERIOR DESIGNER

"We were determined to build a unique home that embraced individuality and sustainability. With a strong focus on recycled materials, homeowner Andrew sourced beautiful Bert & May reclaimed tiles, which came from sites in Spain, Portugal and Italy. When they arrived, of course, they were all different depths. Each tile had to be ground back individually by our Tiler, which certainly blew the tile budget."

5 GREAT FINDS

CLEAN LINES Slimline designs meet bold colour and sculptural shapes in this contemporary home. Complement natural materials with tactile choices for a relaxed look



1

&Tradition 'Palette' table, \$3250, Great Dane, greatdane.furniture.com.



2

Normann Copenhagen 'Bell' pendant light, \$795, BYMR, bymr.com.au.

3

'Kundan' silk rug, \$16,800/264cm x 362cm, Loom Rugs, loomrugs.com.



5

Camerich 'Leman' leather armchair, from \$2288, Meizai, meizai.com.au.



4

'Nook' 3.5 seater sofa, \$7094, Jardan, jardan.com.au.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON, BEDLINEN, BEDOUIN SOCIETE, BEDOUIXSOCIETE.COM, AND SOCIETY OF WANDERERS, SOCIETYOFWANDERS.COM