

AUSTRALIAN COMING UP ROSES THE BRINDABELLA IS A WINNER

HOUSE & GARDEN

This is *living*
108 PAGES OF INSPIRATIONAL HOMES



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DREAM BEDROOM

Gardens great and small
Gorgeous grounds in the city and country

Welcome return

Works were well underway when Melbourne's lockdown turned one couple's interstate sojourn into an extended stay. But the renovation team rallied – and the homecoming was all the sweeter.

STORY Jackie Bryggel | STYLING Belle Hemming | PHOTOGRAPHY Marnie Hawson

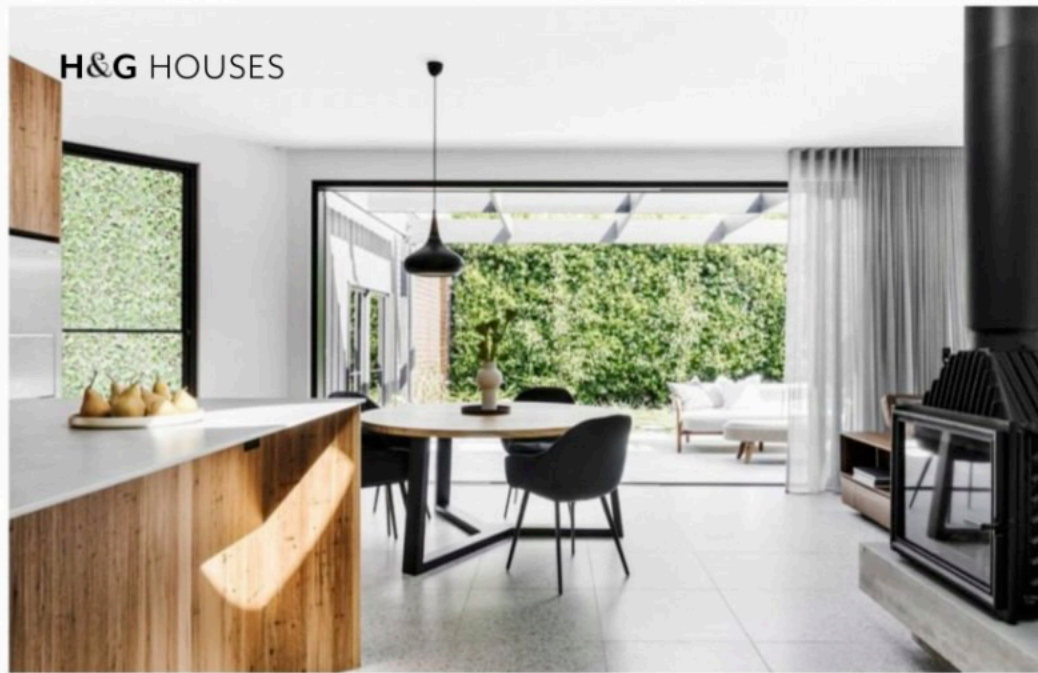


STREET FRONTAGE The hedge, an existing feature, provides privacy from the street while adding to the character of the cottage. Path made with bluestone pavers. **REAR GARDEN** *Opposite* Homeowners Nirangjan and Tracy with their baby son Ashton and Khan the Rhodesian ridgeback. Lux outdoor sofa and Tresse ottoman, both Osier Belle. Mystic outdoor tiles, CDK Stone. Landscaping by Inge Jabara Landscapes.

THIS IS THE LIFE

The success of this renovation lies in the fact that the century-old cottage now celebrates light, space and liveability – thanks to a more sustainable redesign. “The home has introduced environmental upgrades, with new underfloor insulation, larger windows and skylights to increase both ventilation and natural light,” says architect Kurt Crisp. “It’s now zoned for heating and cooling, with a set of internal doors that can be closed to separate the communal and private areas of the home.”





KITCHEN/DINING/LIVING Custom dining table, BA Furniture. Elford dining chairs, Temple & Webster. Orient P2 pendant light, Danish Red. Paul Agnew Designs 'Siena Seven Fifty' freestanding wood heater, Living Fire. Custom concrete plinth, Kyash Cubes. Velux skylight. The kitchen joinery, by Phelan Interiors, is feature-grade blackbutt. The benchtops are Neolith Beton from CDK Stone. Sling barstools, Obodo. Kingston brass ceiling lights, Tovo Lighting. Custom steel-framed doors, Skyrange. Armchair, Osier Belle. Jasper II sofa, King. For similar rug, try Choices Flooring. Terrazzo floor tiles, Fibonacci Stone.



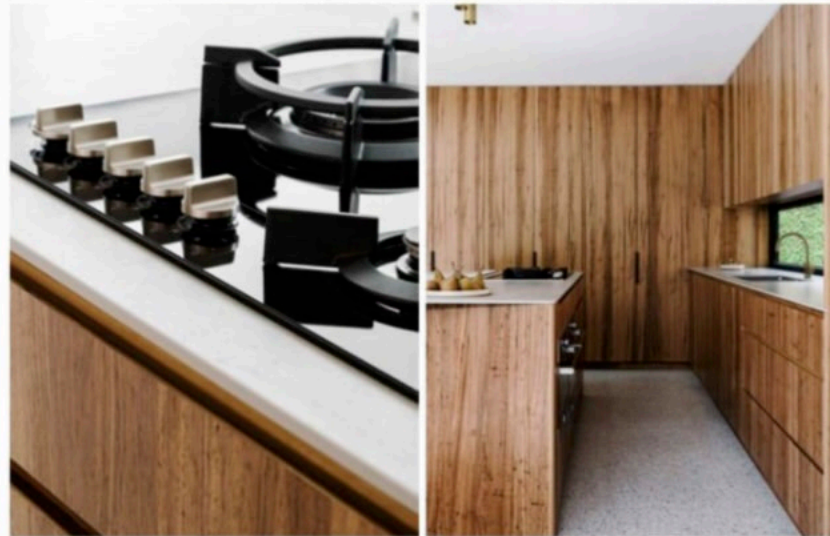
It wasn't, shall we say, the most typically travelled road to renovation glory. Yet, taken in truly unprecedented times, it proved a surprisingly smooth journey - one that culminated in the happiest of outcomes for Melbourne couple Tracy and Nirangjan.

Not simply because the completion of the project late last year coincided with the lifting of the city's extended stage-four lockdowns, but also because it marked a particularly joyous life event: the birth of the couple's first child, son Ashton. "Ashton arrived just as the renovation was finishing," says Tracy, "And so much had happened in the months before!"

Indeed, when Tracy and Nirangjan packed up their car and headed to Sydney to visit Nirangjan's family earlier in the year, the plan was to stay "only a few weeks". At the time, the transformation of the couple's quaint Edwardian cottage on a snug 417-square-metre block in Melbourne's inner north-east was already well underway.

Masterminded by architects Buck & Simple, the renovation was designed not only to dramatically reimagine the core living zones, but to forge a far more congenial relationship between the house and its garden.

"We're based in Sydney and loved the idea of a Melbourne project," says Buck & Simple director Kurt Crisp. "We had a few video calls with Tracy and Nirangjan to discuss how we would manage the process for design and construction. We were willing to work through even the most unconventional solutions." ▶



THE AIM WAS TO REWORK THE LIVING ZONES AND TO FORGE A FAR MORE CONGENIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSE AND GARDEN.

Kurt. "This area includes a feature double-sided fireplace, glass doors to stop the warm air escaping in winter and a circular skylight to bring in much-needed natural light. We also created a new bathroom, laundry and ensuite."

When it came to the materials, organic colour and texture were prioritised in the form of tactile stone and timber set against a crisp white base. "Terrazzo is used throughout the living areas to ground the palette, with blonde timber boards laid in a herringbone pattern creating warmth in the original part of the home," says Kurt. "The central hallway has also been slightly embellished and modernised with black steel-framed doors and a black ceiling, while most of the back wall of the house was replaced with sliding glass doors."

With the garden at last receiving a warm welcome into the home, landscape designer Inge Jabara got to work granting it a leafy new life. A lushly layered landscape envelops the home providing a verdant sanctuary for all - the clan's Rhodesian ridgeback, Khan, included.

Indeed, the completed house and garden, says Kurt, is living its best life. As is the family that calls it home. "It's even better than we ever imagined," says Tracy. ▶

Buck & Simple, Manly, NSW; buckandsimple.com. Momentum Building Group, Melbourne, Victoria; momentumbuildinggroup.com. Inge Jabara Landscapes, Caulfield South, Victoria; (03) 9046 1966 or ingejabaralandscapes.com.au.

And that was just as well. For only weeks after Tracy and Nirangjan crossed the border into NSW, their home town was plunged into a 111-day lockdown.

"We found ourselves in a situation with no client and no architect in the state where the renovation was taking place," says Kurt. "Fortunately, the builder was extremely responsive and we were able to carry out general inspections and monitor the progress over video calls." In fact, with Momentum Building Group doing such a great job, Tracy and Nirangjan were able to extend their interstate stay. The project never faltered.

"Momentum was super-impressive at managing and keeping everything on track, as was Kurt at translating our

garbled thoughts of what we wanted into a final design outcome," says Nirangjan.

To Kurt, however, the vision was always clear. "The weatherboard cottage was becoming quite tired. Nonetheless it had loads of charm," he says. "But a cluttered previous add-on was confirmation that we had to give the rear half of the home a clean slate." Certainly, Buck & Simple did that - and so much more. What was once a dysfunctional mishmash of poky rooms is now a light, airy and eminently liveable domain. It's also one in which style forms a bold and beautiful partnership with practicality.

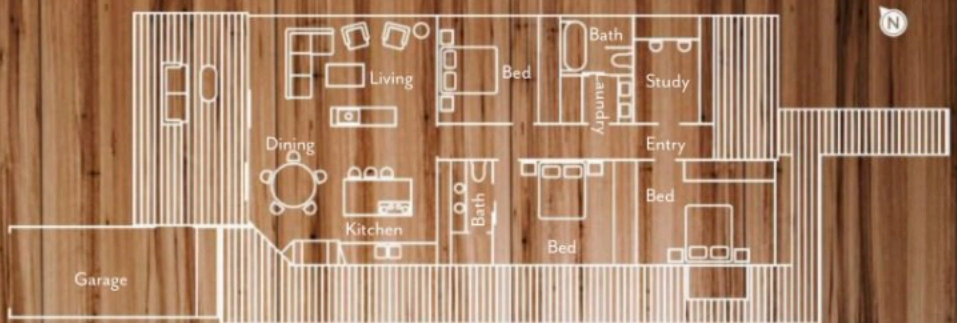
"The design combines the rear living rooms into a single open space for the kitchen, dining and living zones," says



OUTDOOR LIVING Opening the stacking doors at the rear of the home expands the living space exponentially. **KITCHEN** The freestanding wood heater, set on a custom-made plinth, doubles as a room divider in the open-plan area. Asko stove and oven, both E&S.



THE LAYOUT



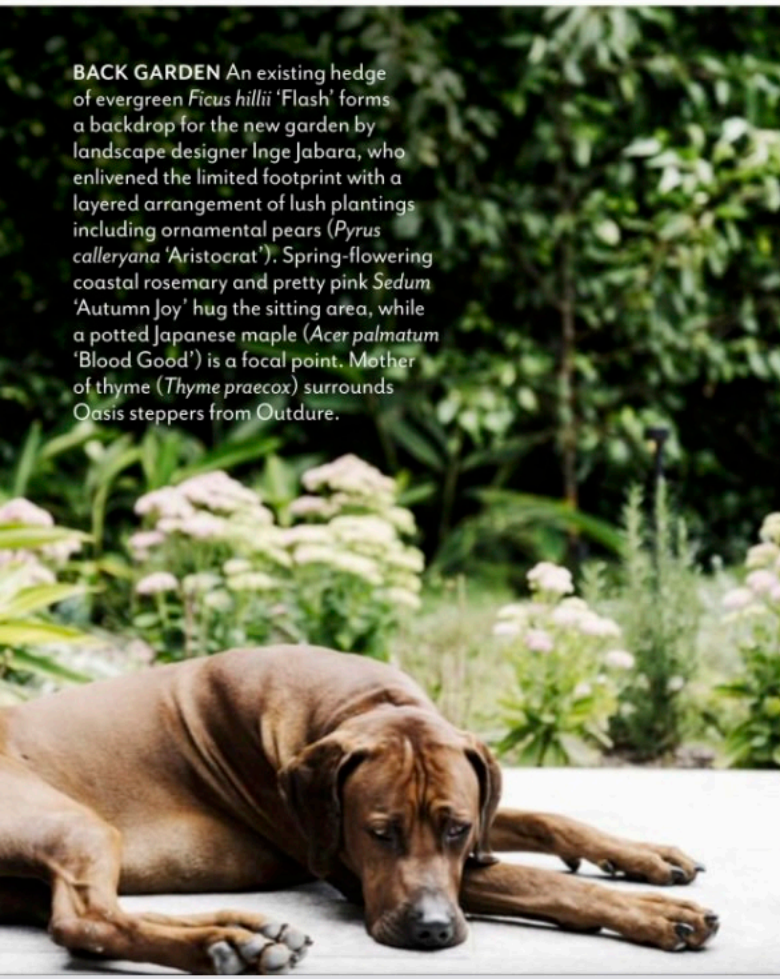
MAIN ENSUITE *Left* Wall mirrors, Temple & Webster. Custom vanity, Phelan Interiors. Nero Marquina marble benchtop, CDK Stone. Tapware, Astra Walker. Roca 'Inspira' basins, Reece. Nextone Grey wall/floor tiles, Signorino. Custom sliding door, Skyrange. **MAIN BATHROOM** *This image and below left* Aura bath, Caroma. All tapware and towel rail, Astra Walker. Limestone wall/floor tiles, Signorino. Kado 'Lussi' basins, Reece. **GUESTROOM** *Below* Artwork from Rodwell and Astor. Bed, Koala. For similar chevron flooring, try Royal Oak Floors. **MAIN BEDROOM** *Opposite* Sunrise bed and Inkster 'Flashlight' pendant light, all Yard Furniture. Joinery, Phelan Interiors. ▶

THE PALETTE

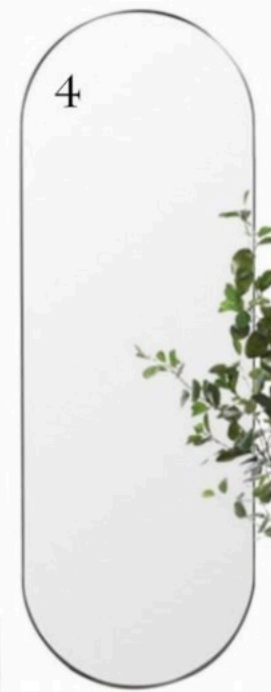
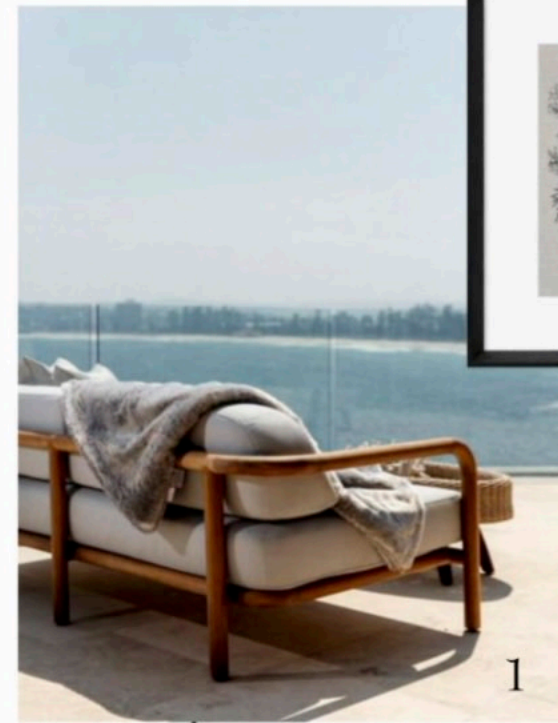
- Dulux Lexicon Half (interior, throughout)
- Dulux Black Caviar (exterior walls and fences)
- Dulux Dieskau (front facade)

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



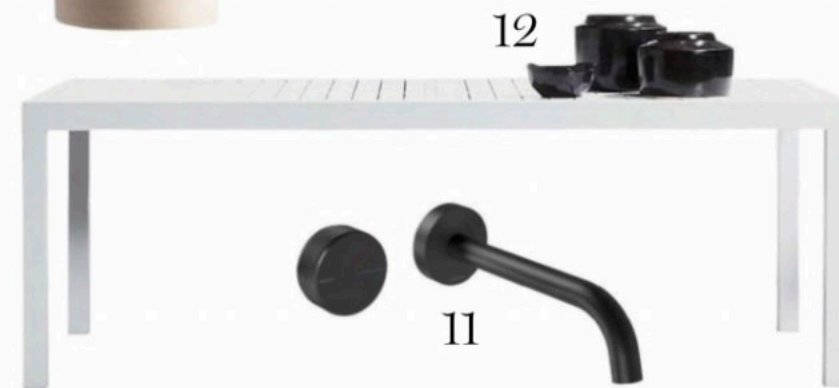


BACK GARDEN An existing hedge of evergreen *Ficus hillii* 'Flash' forms a backdrop for the new garden by landscape designer Inge Jabara, who enlivened the limited footprint with a layered arrangement of lush plantings including ornamental pears (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Aristocrat'). Spring-flowering coastal rosemary and pretty pink *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy' hug the sitting area, while a potted Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Blood Good') is a focal point. Mother of thyme (*Thyme praecox*) surrounds Oasis steppers from Outdure.



THE SOURCE

Outdoor furniture and garden-inspired hues add up to a tranquil interior that's easy care too.



1 Lux outdoor sofa, from \$5980, Osier Belle. 2 Black Bull framed print, \$112.95, Freedom. 3 The Elemental bioethanol suspended fireplace, POA, Aurora Suspended Fires. 4 Bjorn wall mirror, \$397, Life Interiors. 5 Rogue faux oriental ficus, \$169, Freedom. 6 Obelli planter, \$9.95, Freedom. 7 Morgan & Finch 'Andorra' cushion, \$59.95, Bed Bath N' Table. 8 Sika Design 'Monet' footstool, from \$489, Domo. 9 Herringbone Block engineered-oak flooring, from \$110/m², Royal Oak Floors. 10 Linen quilt cover set in Bluestone, \$365/queen size, Cultiver. 11 Axia wall basin/bath mixer set, \$855.35, Phoenix Tapware. 12 Sedona outdoor dining table, \$2299 (includes 8 chairs), Domayne. 13 Terra 'Ceramic Licht' pendant light in Yanadah, \$385, Koskela. For Where to Buy, see page 192. H&G

Produced by Saffron Sylvester.