

AUSTRALIAN

THE THREE BIRDS *Reimagining the renovation*

HOUSE & GARDEN

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Future VISION

A forward-thinking renovation has delivered a home that's just right in the present too.

STORY Jackie Brygel | PHOTOGRAPHY Lillie Thompson

KITCHEN/DINING Esmeralda quartzite from Signorino, one of the owners' favourite elements, is used for the benchtops, splashback and as panelling in the bespoke bar unit. Cabinet handles and knobs, all Linear Standard. Archier 'Highline' pendant lights, Est Lighting. Diiva barstools, Grazia & Co. *Happy Hour* painting by Antonia Mrljak from James Makin Gallery. The Gubi 'Beetle' dining chairs from In Good Company feature custom upholstery. Antique bench seat. European-oak flooring, Tongue N Groove Flooring (throughout).



More often than not, the renovation of a house is undertaken principally to meet the current needs of its residents. Not so, however, in the case of Vicki and Nick. To these grandparents of six, the future was foremost in their minds when they approached Melbourne interior design practice Studio Tate and builders LNX Constructions in 2019. Nick and Vicki's vision was clear: future-proof the residence so it would become a forever home in the truest sense. "We decided we needed to update the entire house for the years ahead," says Vicki. "We wanted to ensure we can stay here for the rest of our lives."

It's not the first time Vicki and Nick - who live here with their French bulldogs Inky and Billy - have renovated the home. "We bought the property in 2006 and have made a few small improvements along the way," says Vicki. "But the house was starting to look a bit tired overall. We began with the idea of adding a butler's pantry, and it soon turned into a full-scale renovation."

Completed in November last year, the considered redesign has put every centimetre of the single-level house and its 500-square-metre corner block to optimal use. As well as gaining a butler's pantry, the laundry increased in size to make room for additional fridges and linen storage. The main ensuite was expanded and reconfigured to accommodate a roomy walk-in shower (with built-in bench seat in case mobility becomes an issue). A plethora of smart storage solutions in many of the rooms also enhance liveability.

To Vicki, the home's glorious wraparound courtyard garden has long brought her joy. "It's one of the main reasons I've always loved living here," she says. Studio Tate's design

director Alex Hopkins and associate designer Liz Ride delighted in the fact that the house presented as a "country cottage nestled in an urban setting". "The house is embraced on three sides by the garden, which Vicki has loved and nurtured for a long time," says Alex. "From our perspective, it was very important that we captured that as part of the story of the interior."

For this reason, every opportunity was taken to connect the home to its magical backdrop. Picture window-style sliding doors flood the home with natural light, revealing a sea of flowering plants ▶



"WE WANTED TO CREATE A GEM. THE GORGEOUS JEWEL COLOURS USED IN THE KITCHEN RUN THROUGH THE FURNISHINGS TOO. IT'S A PRETTY FABULOUS PALETTE!" ALEX HOPKINS, INTERIOR ARCHITECT



THIS IS THE LIFE

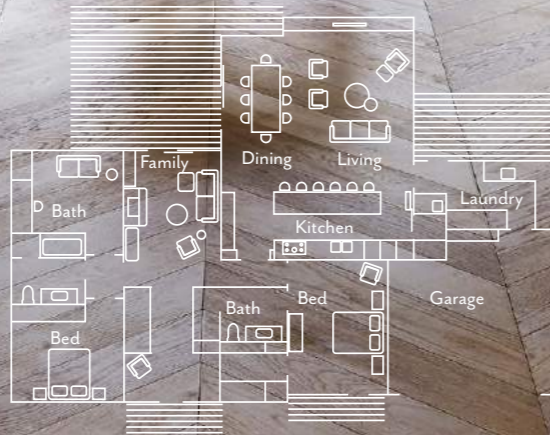
Over a one-year period, Vicki and Nick's house was dramatically reborn, with LNX Constructions charged with the building works. "Although it's only Nick and Vicki who live here, this is still very much a family home," says Alex. "The finishes are wonderfully durable, and many of the rooms also have dual purposes, making them very versatile." Vicki concurs: "It's such a joy to be here. It's a very practical house for us - and will continue to be so."

KITCHEN Esmeralda quartzite, Signorino. Qasair 'Lismore' rangehood and Miele cooktop, both E&S. Diiva barstools, Grazia & Co. Archier 'Highline' pendant lights, Est Lighting. **BUTLER'S PANTRY** Opposite top Sussex 'Scala' mixer tap and AFA 'Cubeline' undermount sink, both Reece. Esmeralda quartzite, Signorino. **DINING** Custom-upholstered Gubi 'Beetle' dining chairs from In Good Company. The dining table is part of Vicki and Nick's existing collection. Flower arrangement, Flowers Vasette. Glass and mirrors by Viridian (throughout).

SITTING Antique chandelier. ND83 armchair by Nanna Ditzel, Great Dane. &Tradition 'Mezcla JH20' coffee table and Nau 'Fat Tulip' sofa, both Cult Design. Rubn Lighting 'James' floor lamp, Fred International. Rug, Artoz Rugs. **MAIN ENSUITE** Armano wall tiles in Sage, Academy Tiles+Surfaces. Compact O2 wall lights, Douglas & Bec. Sussex 'Scala 25' tapware, Reece. Calacatta Antica benchtop, Signorino. Lounge cabinet handles, Linear Standard. **MAIN BEDROOM** The armchair and footstool were reupholstered in Pierre Frey 'A La Table Du Roi' fabric by Recoll Upholstery. Alvar Aalto 'Bell' wall lights, Anibou. Cloud bedside tables, Zuster. Bedlinen, Bedouin Societe. Transpire carpet, Bremworth.



THE LAYOUT



and trees, including bougainvillea, silver birch, ruby lace gleditsia and robinia, even a bubbling water feature. “Vicki and Nick use the courtyard as a third living space,” says Liz.

Inside, both the decorating and materials palette were inspired by the hues in the garden. The kitchen’s striking Esmeralda quartzite, used on the benchtops, splashback and in the rear of the bespoke bar cabinet, is a favourite element. Its tones are echoed in the surrounding joinery and again in the wall tiles selected for the bathrooms. “I have always loved green, so once we saw the Esmeralda quartzite, that was it - decision made!” says Vicki. “We wanted to create a gem,” adds Alex. “The gorgeous jewel colours used in the kitchen run through the furnishings too. It’s a pretty fabulous palette!”

“The layering of colour, texture and detail has resulted in a home that feels fresh, but still warm and inviting,” says Liz. “The house and garden now reflect and enhance each other. The happiest surprise was the willingness of Vicki and Nick to go along for the journey and also the genuine friendship we have built.”

Also true is that this is a home that works for all ages. There’s the hardy oak chevron flooring that has replaced the “forever-covered-in-footprints” black and white chequerboard tiles. The oversize kitchen island is a contemporary take on the ‘country kitchen table’ and has become a popular spot to perch for all, including the youngest members of the family. Fortunately, the quartzite is virtually impenetrable, so messy hands and spills are no big deal. Then there’s that elegant green and gold bar...

To Vicki and Nick, the outcome is everything they had hoped for - and then some. “When we walk in the door, we still can’t quite believe this is our house,” says Vicki with a smile. “We’re not going anywhere.”

*Studio Tate, Richmond, Victoria; (03) 9428 5090 or studiotate.com.au.
LNX Constructions, Bell Park, Victoria; (03) 5272 1680 or lnxconstructions.com.au.*

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



THE PALETTE

Dulux Spanish Olive (open-plan area walls)

Dulux Wimbledon (kitchen joinery)

Dulux Grey Pebble (main bedroom, study)





“THIS IS STILL VERY MUCH A FAMILY HOME.” ALEX HOPKINS



LIVING Above Fogia ‘Bollo’ armchairs, Fred International. Nestle coffee table, Zuster. Garden rug by Amir Aligorgi, Behruz Studio. **SITTING ROOM** Above right Existing fireplace with whitewashed oak fire surround. Calacatta Antica mantel, Signorino. Antique bench. The artworks are vintage finds. **STUDY** Right Flax ‘Kelvin’ table lamp, Euro luce. Arper ‘Catifa Up’ chair, Stylecraft. Graf cabinet knobs, Linear Standard. Cocktail artwork by Billie Justice Thomson, from Modern Times.

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1 Still Life With Silver Tray & Fruit artwork by G Hammond (20x25cm), \$245, Vintage Art Emporium. 2 Flexform ‘Campiello’ 3-seater sofa, \$15,395, Fanuli. 3 Pulpo ‘Stellar Grape’ floor lamp by Sebastian Herkner, \$9150, Domo. 4 Nala wool rug in Natural & Slate (2x3m), \$2415, Armadillo. 5 KitchenAid ‘Classic’ stand mixer, \$849, Winning Appliances. 6 Herringbone European oak flooring, from \$110/m², Royal Oak Floors. 7 Half Cut Champagne coupes by Lee Broom, \$165 each, Space. 8 Wittmann ‘Miles’ side table by Sebastian Herkner, from \$5950, Domo. 9 Circa bath mixer with hand shower in Living Polished Brass, \$2067.10, Sussex Taps. 10 Tillary wall sconce, \$295, Coco Republic. 11 Charles velvet dining chair, \$269/pair, Luxo Living. For Where to Buy, see page 190. H&G

THE SOURCE

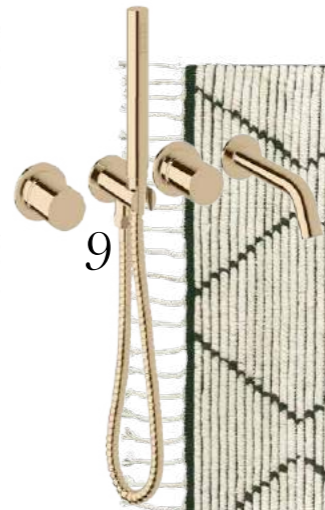
Embrace gem tones, natural stone and texture to create a glamorous and timeless feel.



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Produced by Saffron Sylvester.



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