

SMALL SPACE SOLUTIONS

CLEVER IDEAS FOR TRICKY ROOMS

australian

# home beautiful

before  
& afters  
Inside  
Australia's  
winning  
renos

*the* colour &  
decorating *issue*

Instant updates with the latest  
paints, patterns & fabrics

KITCHENS +  
BATHROOMS  
Timeless designs

Outdoor style

Set the scene  
for entertaining

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PAGES OF

*stunning homes*

- + Modern elegance + Holiday style
- + French provincial + Country charm

INDOORS • OUTDOORS • RENOVATE • DECORATE • FOOD



## pattern play

With an eye for style and penchant for prints, Carolyn has infused her Melbourne home with character and colour

STORY & STYLING RUTH WELSBY PHOTOGRAPHY RHIANNON SLATTER



**MASTER BEDROOM** (top) Carolyn's family home showcases her flair for combining fabrics and finishes. **CASUAL LIVING ROOM** (bottom left) An eye-catching table lamp and mirror, both from Retail Therapy ID, offer high drama against floral wallpaper (see details on page III). **FORMAL SITTING ROOM** (bottom right) Even Carolyn's collection of glass bottles and white ceramics is awash with texture and pattern.

**DINING ROOM** The wooden dining table, a family heirloom, is surrounded by second-hand dining chairs which Carolyn updated with black gloss paint and orange fabric (visit Retail Therapy ID). A handwoven wool rug from Loom adds colour and texture to the polished concrete floors, while bi-fold glass doors open out onto a sunny terrace where Carolyn's sons, Fintan and Lorcan, like to play. >

special  
COLOUR  
& DECOR  
issue



rug  
'Old Yarn  
Kilim' rug,  
from \$3600/  
335cm x  
255cm,  
Loom Rugs.

ARTWORK (BOTTOM RIGHT) PAUL MARGOCSY



**UTTER THE WORD** minimalism to homeowner Carolyn and she'll look at you as if you're speaking another language. For this self-confessed colour addict, the word simply isn't in her vocabulary. "I thought I'd try and live with a clean, crisp white palette to see what all the fuss was about, but I just couldn't stop pattern and colour from creeping in and taking over," she confesses. "They add such personality and warmth!" – two attributes desperately needed in the cramped and dated Melbourne home Carolyn, an interior designer, and her husband, Leonard, a retail designer, took on.

The 1950s weatherboard cottage had been unloved and unrenovated for years, but the couple saw its enormous potential immediately, and its location on a large plot in a quiet tree-lined street was perfect. They began peeling back the decades, modernising and extending the single-storey three-bedroom house until, eight months later, it had doubled in size. The result is a light-filled, family playground complete with a spacious open-plan living and dining room, glamorous central kitchen, large rumpus room – perfect for the couple's two boys, Fintan, nine, and Lorcan, seven – and numerous quiet spaces in which Carolyn and Leonard can relax and unwind.

Usually tasked with creating dream homes for other people, Carolyn took on the chance to indulge her design passions for her own family, and she didn't hold back. "The layout was driven by practicality, but the real fun came with the decoration," she says. "My philosophy is, if it makes your heart happy you should go for it. Sometimes more really is more!"

Drawing inspiration from design magazines and the vibrant work of American interior designers Jonathan Adler and Sarah Richardson, Carolyn has turned combining hues into an art form. A firm believer that there's no such thing as 'clashing colour', she has created relaxed yet engaging rooms overflowing with charm. "I love creating pretty vignettes and beautiful places for the eye to rest in a room, and little surprises as you journey through the home – like the clerestory windows in the dining room [page 109] and the black wallpaper in the bedroom [page 115]," she says. >

**KITCHEN (left)** Sandwiched between the formal sitting room and open-plan dining and family room, the kitchen resides at the heart of the home. Carolyn converted an old laundry into a large pantry, a feature she has fallen in love with and now tries to include in her clients' homes, space permitting. To add shine and texture, Carolyn created a stunning pressed-metal splashback using panels from Schots Home Emporium ([schots.com.au](http://schots.com.au)). Simple pendant bulb lights give the room a contemporary edge.

**FAMILY ROOM (opposite)** "I love playing with pattern and scale, it adds real energy and drama to a room," says Carolyn of her Romo 'Kimura' wallpaper from Marco Fabrics. The bamboo bookshelf, flanked by 'DSW' Eames chairs from Living Edge, was picked up at secondhand emporium Rabbit & Hares, [rabbithares.com.au](http://rabbithares.com.au).



**splashback**  
Try 'Leaf' pressed-metal panels, \$36/61cm x 61cm, Schots Home Emporium.



**wallpaper**  
Romo 'Kimura' wallpaper in Linen, from \$210/roll, Marco Fabrics.

## Inside story

### Who lives here?

Carolyn, 42, who runs her own interior and building design company, Retail Therapy Interior Design; her husband, Leonard, 44, a retail designer; and their sons Fintan, nine, and Lorcan, seven.

### Any nerves about designing your own home?

Carolyn: "I specialise in extensions, renovations and new builds with an emphasis on efficient spatial planning, so the pressure was really on to get the spaces working perfectly for us – which I can happily say we achieved!"

### Any decorating tips for design novices?

"Transitional spaces like an entry hall can take a lot of colour, pattern and drama, as you're not in them for long. It's a good opportunity to push the boundaries!"

### How would you describe your home's style?

"I think it combines an American East Coast design aesthetic with an energetic colour palette."



“Colour is a wonderful design tool, as long as you’re conscious of balance”



wallpaper  
Romo ‘Tamino’  
wallpaper in  
Ivory, from  
\$210/roll,  
Marco Fabrics.



fabric  
‘Alhambra’  
in Fuschia,  
from \$121/m,  
Warwick  
Fabrics.

< Carolyn’s furniture collection, which has evolved over the years into an engaging mix of old and new, adds warmth and personality to the newly renovated rooms. From her grandmother’s hand-me down dining table to her late sister’s treasured artwork, each piece holds a special memory. “Mixing up furniture allows you to introduce texture and patina – interior design shouldn’t be static,” she says. “I like altering my little displays and adding in my latest finds.” An avid Ebay buyer and antiques shopper, she loves nothing more than turning other people’s junk into covetable gems. “The lamp in the entrance hall was a hideous aqua when I bought it, but I sprayed it white and had a lampshade made from silk I bought in India,” she says.

Travel has had a huge influence on Carolyn’s design style: a recent trip to India fuelled her with inspiration to play with saturated colour, while she draws on an American East Coast aesthetic – from New York lofts to Hamptons beach houses – to create spaces with refined simplicity. It’s an eclectic mix that works wonders, especially when teamed with easy Australian living spaces. “It’s wonderful to be reminded of my experiences and travel as I look around. It’s these touches that make a house a home.”

**FORMAL SITTING ROOM** (opposite & above right)

Carolyn’s favourite space, the welcoming sitting room takes pride of place at the front of the house. Designer wares, such as the Noguchi coffee table, sit comfortably next to second-hand armchairs reupholstered in floral fabric. The woven rug and floor lamp are from Ikea, while the sofa and cushions were custom-designed by Retail Therapy ID ([retailtherapyid.com.au](http://retailtherapyid.com.au)). To give the room some subtle texture, the walls, painted in Vivid White by Dulux, are panelled in MDF with a vertical routed detail. “When you have a basic 1950s home with limited architectural detailing, pattern provides visual interest,” says Carolyn.

**ENTRANCE** (above left)

Carolyn and Leonard’s home begins in dramatic fashion, with the entry covered in gold Romo ‘Tamino’ wallpaper from Marco Fabrics. An exotic custom-made silk lampshade, teamed with a mix of vibrant ornaments from Retail Therapy ID, adds saturated colour to the antique sideboard, found on Ebay. Try Touch Interiors for a floral ceramic stool. >

ARTWORK (THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE) JENNIFER BURNS



“I love playing with pattern and scale, it adds real *energy* and drama”



**BATHROOM (above)** The family bathroom exudes refined elegance, from the deep freestanding Recollections bath to the mirrored cupboard doors and dainty glass doorknobs from Handles Plus. Moody charcoal walls are painted in Dulux Raku, as is the vanity, which is topped with curvaceous white basins (try Candana, candana.com.au). Colour is incorporated with a Missoni towel, a selection of framed greeting cards on the wall and candy-striped light shades from New York.

**MASTER BEDROOM (left & opposite)** A striking palette of midnight black, sunshine yellow and vibrant orange fills the room with life. “The pops of saturated colour layered over monochrome mean that I can change the whole feel of the space with new linen, lampshades or cushions,” Carolyn explains. A macassar ebony bedside table that Leonard made, table lamp from Retail Therapy ID and gold gilt mirror are glamorous accents.



wallpaper  
Nina Campbell  
'Manaus' in  
Black, \$260/  
roll, The  
Elephant  
Room.

*we love*  
**Pattern mixing**  
Carolyn fuses floral patterns with graphic prints to great effect. “I enjoy the challenge of mixing patterns,” she says. Here, leafy Nina Campbell ‘Manaus’ wallpaper is juxtaposed against geometric Pop by Sheridan bedlinen, available at Sheridan outlets. The result is a collage of colour and print, with plenty of unexpected flourishes. >

# style notes

## source book

### Interior & building designer

Carolyn Burns-McCrave, Retail Therapy ID, 0425 801 130, retailtherapyid.com.au.

**Stores** Loom Rugs, loomrugs.com.au.

Marco Fabrics, 1300 162 726. Schots Home Emporium, schots.com.au. The Elephant Room, theelephantroom.com.au.



**MASTER BEDROOM** Carolyn upholstered this armchair in a 10-year-old fabric that will stand the test of time.



**FORMAL SITTING ROOM** Eclectic displays fill each room with character, such as this arrangement of books, coral and hydrangeas.

"If it makes *your heart happy* you should go for it - sometimes more really is more"



**BOYS' BEDROOM** Star-spangled bedspreads from Ebay and a red feature wall create a cheerful American theme.

