



Surprise package

A small footprint proves no obstacle to the style or substance of this stunning inner-Melbourne abode

STORY JACKIE BRYGEL STYLING WENDY BANNISTER PHOTOGRAPHY SHANIA SHEGEDYN

Savvy homeowner Carol, who also happens to work for a homewares store, has used her eye and experience to create striking displays throughout the compact townhouse she shares with her partner, Russell. Take this wall (opposite) in the living room, where a vibrant abstract print by an unknown artist pops against a bluestone-clad feature wall, built-in spotted gum shelving and a few conveniently positioned games. "We love getting together here and playing board games," says Carol. The neutral hues of an L-shaped sofa and two timber coffee tables, all from Suite Deals, along with gleaming concrete flooring, allow the eye to be drawn outside. Here, a dramatic water feature and fire-engine red tiles from National Tiles steal the show. >



RUG

Get the look with 'Gäser' high-pile rug in Dark Grey, \$259/2.4m x 1.7m, Ikea.

KITCHEN (this page & opposite, top right)

Moody bluestone combined with accents of timber and creamy-hued benchtops ensures this gorgeous kitchen has good taste stamped all over it. Caesarstone in Snow envelops the expansive island and workbench, while chic black metal bar stools from The Industrial Revolution add further style kudos to the hub of the home.

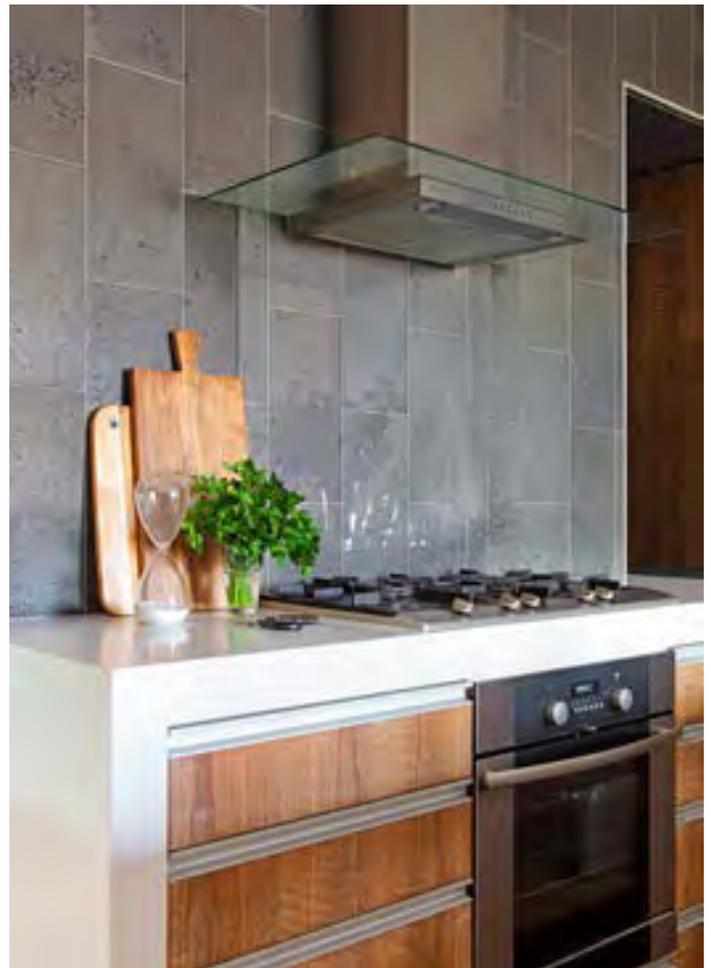
CABINETS

Get the look with spotted gum timber veneer, from \$95/sqm, Finewood Venech.

Every afternoon, when school is out, a young girl and her father pause in front of the house of Carol, a devoted decorator. The pair's stroll home would be incomplete, it seems, without taking time to enjoy the quirkiest of surprises outside this abode – a paperbark with a smiley face pinned to its aged trunk. “The little girl talks to the tree and her dad stands behind it responding to her,” reveals Carol, clearly delighted. This enchanting scene could be taken as confirmation that her artistic touch has achieved its purpose, as it has within the walls of her stunning, character-filled home in the heart of inner-city Melbourne. “Life would be boring without a bit of unpredictability,” Carol declares. “I love the little elements that make us smile. It’s important not to take things too seriously.”

A long-time collector of the quirky and eccentric, creative spirit Carol, who works as a retail manager and buyer at a Melbourne homewares store, has found an ideal setting for her treasured pieces in the cool, contemporary home she shares with her partner, Russell. When the couple first laid eyes on the compact but cleverly thought-out townhouse four years ago, it was love at first sight.

Designed by architect Jane McDougall of Alsocan Architects, the light-filled home – brought to life by an earthy, textured palette of timber, stone and concrete – is brimming with original features. At the front of the house, the sunny lounge and dining room overlook a central courtyard that stars a dramatic red plunge pool and water fountain. From the airy open-plan kitchen and family room, full-length bi-fold doors open onto a leafy courtyard and alfresco zone. Upstairs, a cosy guest bedroom and a decadent master suite imbued with a touch of hotel style entice. “We’d been living in an Edwardian house and were looking for something modern,” recalls Carol. “We



“We love all the stone, concrete and timber – it’s such a great mix” ~ Carol

really liked that this home is so bright and open, with some very different features. Actually, we loved everything about the design.”

Carol’s own aesthetic also hits all the right notes for Jane, who couldn’t be happier with the home’s latest incarnation. “I didn’t know Carol and Russell before, and I didn’t design the house for them, but I was pleasantly surprised by how well their furnishings and items fit the space,” she says. “There’s a great synchronicity as Carol has worked with the existing colour scheme.”

With the decorating and styling complete – for now, at least – Carol cherishes spending time in her lovely home, while savouring the fact that one of Melbourne’s most vibrant food and shopping strips is at her doorstep. “Russell and I go cafe hopping on my day off and on weekends,” she says. “It’s a little like being on holiday here. This is the perfect place for both of us and it’s filled with things that make us happy. We couldn’t ask for more.”

DINING ROOM (right) Guests receive an unforgettable welcome when they enter the dining room, courtesy of Carol’s ‘absailing man’, which dangles from the ceiling. “I found this guy at Typo and just attached strings!” she says. A table from The Industrial Revolution, teamed with navy dining chairs found at Leonard Joel auction house, gives the room a classic yet contemporary vibe, as do the Ikea aluminum ‘Foto’ pendants. A large mirror visually expands the space, while also reflecting the bluestone tones of the stairs. >



WE LOVE

The clever canopy

This breathtaking modern bed frame is part of the home's original design. To create it, spotted gum flooring was extended up to the ceiling and over the bed, then completed with square-set downlights and recessed shelving. "I adore this timber wall and canopy as it conceals part of the drawer and shelving area without closing it off," says Carol.



THROW

Get the look with Scout Lifestyle 'Geo' baby alpaca wool throw in Grey & White, \$286, Hard To Find.



“You can never have too much storage” ~ Carol

MASTER BEDROOM (opposite & above left) The home’s incorporation of the unexpected amps up a notch in the spectacular master suite. Photographic images of Melbourne by an unknown photographer grace the wall. An Ikea floor rug softens the spotted gum-framed sleep zone, as do mocha-hued table lamps from Supply & Demand. Cool charcoal and pale-grey linens along with a selection of cushions from Bed Bath N’ Table and Supply & Demand spell comfort and relaxation. Continuing the five-star vibe, the walk-in robes – positioned behind the bed – have been kitted out in the same timeless timber as the bed canopy.

ENSUITE (above right) Open to the master bedroom, except for the toilet hidden behind a wall, this fabulous ensuite feels more pamper room than bathroom with its broody bluestone shower and whitewashed spotted gum vanity in full view. “Everyone says ‘Wow’ when they see our bathroom because it’s so different,” says Carol. “The space is smallish but it seems bigger because it’s open.”

A White Stone above-counter basin, available through Reece, and a Sussex ‘Scala’ mixer tap complete the contemporary scheme.

GUEST BEDROOM (right) Carol’s harmonious use of warm neutrals and muted greys has turned the upstairs guest room into a charming retreat, with an Ikea jute rug holding the space together. “I’ve chosen these tones as a base so I can easily change the feel by adding colours with cushions and artwork,” says Carol. The bedlinen was sourced from Bed Bath N’ Table while the Madras Link cushions and woven-linen chair are from Supply & Demand. “I love the cushions because they add a feminine touch to a fairly structured and masculine-looking room,” adds Carol. >





COURTYARD Here, industrial edginess, courtesy of an exposed brick wall, meets sun-drenched sanctuary. Russell's handiwork – a panelled timber table – and chairs snapped up by Carol on Ebay reflect the Intergrain charcoal decking stain. A colour burst comes in the form of Supply & Demand cushions.



INSIDE STORY

Who lives here?

Carol, who works as a homewares retail manager and buyer, and her partner, Russell, a company director.

How would you describe your style?

Carol: "A little eclectic. If I see something I like, it tends to work somewhere. I don't go out looking for something to fill a particular spot."

Are you inspired by the latest trends?

"Yes – especially as I work in a homewares store. I also look at home magazines. That said, you have to be guided by your own personal taste. I like things I find pleasing to look at and that make me laugh."

What is your most sentimental item?

"Russell! He can stay! Actually, he built the outdoor table we keep in the courtyard and I don't think I could ever get rid of that. It will always travel with us, whichever home we may be in."

What was your biggest splurge?

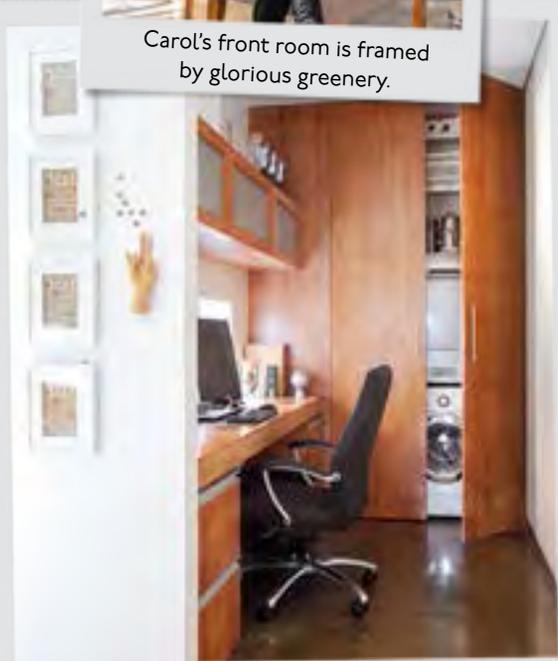
"The surround sound system. We love sitting in the lounge room listening to our music, even though we have totally opposite tastes. I tend to like whatever Russell doesn't!"

Is there anything you would change?

"Maybe a bigger space for the fridge. But living in the inner city, we eat out a lot anyway."



Carol's front room is framed by glorious greenery.



Discreetly tucked away, the visually appealing study and laundry make clever use of space.

CONTACT

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PLANS

dry sitting dining entry
courtyard kitchen living

Ground floor

bed wir ens master
ens pool bed wir

First floor