



## FROM THE GROUND UP

LISA RICKERT IS AS WARM AND INVITING AS THE GORGEOUS, LIGHT-FILLED HOME SHE SHARES WITH HER HUSBAND AND TWO CHILDREN. THE DESIGN MAESTRO'S NEW ORLEANS ABODE REVEALS THE SPECIAL ROLES THAT REBUILDING AND UPCYCLING HAVE PLAYED IN HER LIFE.

BY ALLY MCMANUS, PHOTOGRAPHY MADELINE ROSE





From a disaster igniting entrepreneurial inspiration to breathing new life into family heirlooms, there's a lot of passion, creativity and talent within the four walls of Lisa Rickert's beautiful abode. As the CEO and creative director of the family-owned paint brand, Jolie Home, as well as the co-founder and CEO of the historically inspired furniture retailer, Ave Home, Lisa is a fount of knowledge on all things interior decorating related.

Australian Country caught up with the furniture design and home decor expert when she was recently in Sydney launching a beautiful new suite of paints, top coats, brushes and embellishment products for furniture, walls, cabinets, floors and accessories. The range is designed to help people revolutionise and transform their homes in creative and high-quality ways.

The New Orleans native grew up immersed in rich history and art, which no doubt has influenced her passion for design as well as her most recent business, Jolie Home, which launched earlier this year. "The response to the brand has just been incredible," Lisa says. "Our big mission is being a heavy customer-focused brand with creative transformation. It's really about your story. It's about what you are doing to make life beautiful, or inspire some change, whether it's visual or emotional. So Jolie is designed to step you through each stage of whatever transformation you're doing."

Jolie Home products are sold through small shops and retailers that offer workshops and hands-on advice, which ensures loads of information is readily available to customers. "At the end of the day, we want everyone to be successful," Lisa says. "When you are, you have



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**These pages:** Lisa's New Orleans home had to be completely rebuilt in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It's now a family sanctuary and a showcase for her design inspiration.





*These pages:* Lisa uses a palette of blues to bring life to the predominantly white interiors. A keen advocate for sustainability and upcycling, her motto is "If it doesn't bring joy, paint it".

such a sense of accomplishment. This self-proud moment is worth sharing with others, whether it's through social media channels, or just with your family or friends that might visit your home. We're selling inspiration. And then we're giving people the tools and the guidance that comes with it. Jolie is about helping make life beautiful."

Lisa credits her strong upbringing to helping her gain the confidence and resolve to become a creative entrepreneur, as well as the resilience to get through the challenges of a natural disaster. "I grew up in a small, French Quarter hair salon, so my parents were hairdressers, but I was timid," she says. "I saw the challenges, the ups and downs of small business, and thought my ticket to happiness was getting a degree in finance, an MBA and working for big corporations. But something was missing for me. I was always trying to convince my husband why I needed to redecorate the house. I'd stay up late and do photography projects, or whatever creative endeavour grabbed my attention. Something had to change."


And indeed it did. Lisa and her family lost everything in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina hit and they had to rebuild their home from scratch. "As devastating as Katrina was for our family, it really gave me an opportunity to embark on a totally new rebuild," Lisa says. "And there's nothing more creatively satisfying than designing your space from the ground up. It was kind of like a blessing in disguise." →





Given there was so much loss throughout the community, there wasn't a lot of furniture available locally to purchase. "I was buying some things online because a lot of what we had was not salvageable, so things were coming in that didn't necessarily fit the style or what I was anticipating," Lisa explains. "It really pushed me to think about transforming not only the walls and floors, but to think of furniture and accessories as also being transformational objects." Lisa's loss also had another silver lining: it ignited a passion deep within her to pursue her vision in the home decor industry.

"I think Katrina really allowed me to have that jumping-off point, and the courage to believe I can actually do something both personally and professionally that I'm passionate about," she says. "Since then, I've felt like the world is boundless. I now design furniture and have launched my own paint company. It's really exciting and with Jolie, there's just so much about giving back and giving more in terms of helping people through these creative processes.

"But also, as people around the world are becoming more aware of the environment and acknowledging ways we can help, the idea of sustainability, 



**These pages:**  
With two young children, Lisa's home has to be practical as well as pretty. The eat-in kitchen is a popular spot for catching up.



upcycling and reduction of waste, really plays into the Jolie brand.”

Moving to the topic of furniture, Lisa shares the story behind her favourite piece: a small, mid-century-style desk that now lives in her son’s room. “I was very close to my grandparents,” she explains. “Both my parents worked full-time, so I spent a lot of time at my grandparents’ house and when I was very small, this desk seemed very big. It’s all about scale, right? It was where they put all of their bills; they used it every day. And underneath the top was a piece of glass with photos of my brother and me.

“When both my grandparents passed away, it was one of the pieces that I wanted to keep and hold on to. So I totally transformed the desk and gave it a fresh new look. I see it every day and it just brings me back to childhood.”

The conversation then flows into colours, namely her favourite hue. “I have so many favourite colours!” Lisa says. If she had to pick one right now, though, it’s Swedish grey, which is found in the Jolie Signature Neutrals Collection. “It’s the perfect greige [grey-beige],” she says. “It’s a warm grey and in interiors, we’ve seen a lot of grey



during the past few years. But it can sometimes feel very cold and minimalistic, so Swedish grey is a great balance for people to start warming up their interiors, bringing a bit of life back in. And it’s a safe and easy colour for people to jump in. I have a Swedish buffet painted in the colour in my dining room, and we embellished it with some building wax and brushstrokes.”

**This page:**  
The experience of rebuilding after the 2005 hurricane directed Lisa to a new career in furniture design and house paints.