

LIVING AREA

A plush Coco Republic 'Nirvana' sofa creates a cosy nook alongside 'The Aether' fireplace by Aurora Suspended Fires. Glass doors invite the outdoors in.



before & after

HOME TRUTHS

A pair of expert renovators take on a derelict house and turn it into a contemporary beachside home built for family fun

WORDS **VICTORIA BAKER** PHOTOGRAPHY **TOM FERGUSON**



ARTWORK: TWO MINDS BY DIANA BROADHURST, THEDESIGNHUNTER.COM.AU

Who lives here: Melissa Bonney, director of interior design and building business The Designory; her husband Brendon Bott, owner of B2 Construction; their children Bella, 15; Liv, 13; and Nixon, 4, and the family dog Loki.

The project: A top-to-bottom reno of a rundown house, resulting in a five-bedroom, three-bathroom family home with a pool.

Timeline: The project took six months, including seven weeks of planning and approval, plus a lot of extra hours on nights and weekends.

The budget: "As a builder and designer we were able to build more cost-effectively than most," says Melissa. "The cost for a client would have been approximately \$1.2 million."



THE KITCHEN

Solid American black walnut timber joinery is balanced by the fresh white flooring and large granite island benchtop from Marable Slab House.

Finding a 'renovator's delight' is actually a positive for a family that includes a builder and an interior designer, so Melissa Bonney of The Designory and her husband Brendon Bott of B2 Construction acted fast when they found this unlivable, dark and dated house with lots of small rooms, including two separate kitchens. They designed a home for their family, with spaces for individuals and plenty of room to come together as a family or with friends. "That's what designing a house is all about - creating a space that resonates with the people living there and allows them to function seamlessly," says Melissa.

DREAM IT.

Melissa and Brendon's wish list

- + A tropical feel** "We really wanted to create that feeling you get when you're on holidays. A tropical resort-style house was a key focus."
- + Sunlight:** "Light was one of our priorities as the house was so dark."
- + A second living area:** "We're a blended family with teenagers and a toddler, so we need multiple living zones."
- + A great kitchen:** "As keen cooks, we wanted the kitchen to be central to the living and outdoor areas."



DESIGN IT.

Having worked on nine of her own renovations previously, Melissa is used to being her own client, but still finds it challenging. "I love so many different looks and I find making those final decisions incredibly difficult," she says. This project was extremely quick, with only seven weeks to plan, document and get approvals before building started. "I always start with a concept," says Melissa. "As someone who is constantly on the internet, Instagram and Pinterest and reading magazines, there were a lot of ideas to refine and pull together into a cohesive plan." She and her team reconfigured the existing space (to take advantage of the Complying Development approval process), removing internal walls to create an open-plan living, dining and kitchen area downstairs, and adding skylights and oversized doors and windows to maximise the natural light. Upstairs was designed to include a master suite with a walk-in wardrobe, ensuite and palm-shaded balcony, as well as four bedrooms. "Upstairs is all about calm, so we chose luxurious wool carpet and designed lots of joinery to hide everything away."

ARTWORK: (ON WALL) GHOST GUM TREES BY TALI TALI POMPEY; AND STANDING PIECES, ABORIGINALCONTEMPORARY.COM.AU. AY ILLUMINATE PENDANT LIGHT, SPENCE & LYDA, SPENCEANDLYDA.COM.AU. ENOKI 'CUMULUS' PENDANT LIGHTS (OVER DINING TABLE), THE DESIGN HUNTER, THEDESIGNHUNTER.COM.AU

DINING AREA

Five walls were removed downstairs to create an open living/dining/kitchen area, but the project was carried out within the building's existing footprint.



“

A project will always cost more when you don't have the planning and selections done before you start. Making decisions on the fly always increases costs – and mistakes!” MELISSA BONNEY, OWNER

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BATHROOM
‘Pietra Grey’ limestone tiles from Marble & Ceramic Corp are a bold choice. This room was extended to fit a double vanity and ‘Latis 1600’ bathtub from Omvivo.

DO IT.

With the short time frame for building, Melissa’s biggest challenge was keeping the design documents up with the building process. “There were multiple changes made during the build itself because of the speed of the project,” she says. “We changed our minds on the downstairs flooring a number of times before settling on the single-pour epoxy resin finish. Feature elements, such as the curved and battened walls, window details and joinery were all debated, changed and finalised as the work went on. “Making decisions on the fly always increases costs,” adds Melissa. There were a few surprises along the way, such as a lot of “treasure” buried in the backyard, including an old oven. Melissa loves the master bedroom the most. “It’s possibly one of the most calming rooms I’ve ever created and I retreat there often with a cup of tea and a book,” she says. “The family’s most-used space is definitely the oversized kitchen island. It’s a place for congregating, for conversation, for eating together, and for entertaining. It means family to me.”
See more of Melissa’s work at the-designory.com.au.

COURTYARD
At the front of the house, a custom shower from Brooklyn Copper welcomes the family home from swims.

MASTER BEDROOM

Bespoke joinery and curved battened walls create a peaceful haven. An Ay Illuminate pendant light from Spence & Lyda completes the look.



STUDY NOOK

A clever office and library has been created downstairs that looks out over the custom-designed seating area and outdoor shower.





COURTYARD

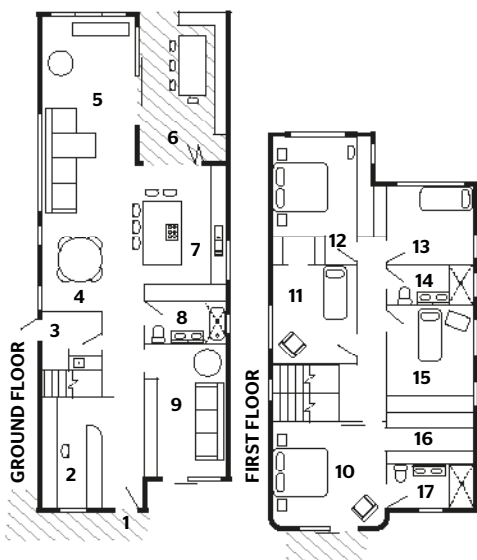
Glass doors lead out to the entertaining area. The 'DCS' barbecue from Fisher & Paykel is built in to the bench seat, making it a space-saving choice.

“

We built the dream house with everything we could possibly need or want. We really got it right with this house

MELISSA BONNEY, OWNER

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1. Entry
2. Study
3. Laundry
4. Dining area
5. Living area
6. Outdoor dining
7. Kitchen
8. Bathroom
9. Media room
10. Master bedroom
11. Bedroom
12. Bedroom
13. Bedroom
14. Bathroom
15. Bedroom
16. Walk-in robe
17. Ensuite



EXTERIOR

The facade is painted in bold Black Caviar by Dulux, contrasting with the timber accents and 'Dogal' marble cladding from Surface Gallery on the front fence.