

**OLD MEETS NEW**

A vintage Bruno Mathsson armchair and Enoki Cumulus lamp are a match made in interiors heaven. "I didn't want anything new to go with the lamp," says Bonney. "After searching, we found this chair. It's so comfortable to sit in it's ridiculous." **Opposite page:** The hallway features an artwork by Jasmin Zara against a backdrop of Porter's Whale Watching shade of navy.



# NEO LUXURY

Interior designer Melissa Bonney brings her signature laid-back style to her family home in Sydney

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOM FERGUSON TEXT BY CLARE PATIENCE





**DARK ARTS**

When a coat of grey paint on the wall left Bonney wanting more, the couple braved a bolder splash of Dulux Black Caviar, which lets the Lisa Madigan watercolour artworks pop.



**I**t's reassuring to learn that even award-winning interior designers like Melissa Bonney of The Designory have moments of panic after buying a house that's ripe for renovation.

When she and her builder partner, Brendon Bott of B2 Construction, first spotted the three-bedroom home in Sydney's Bronte, they swooped in to secure their piece of the coast for a steal – after convincing themselves they could deal with the awkward block and ridiculously dated interior. Then reality set in.

"We bought the house really quickly," says Bonney of the act that quickly threw their lives into chaos, uprooting her two tween girls and toddler son. "Immediately afterwards we thought: 'What have we done?'"

The home had its saving graces though, with the original ornate ceilings in good condition and beautiful wide hallways. And, of course, it had a new set of talented owners on its side, who were willing to coax it out of its funk.

Bonney and Bott got started straight away, transforming the constricted layout into a family home that represented Bonney's signature style, which she describes as "Australian luxe".

"Navy, ink, indigo ... they're colours that I feel very passionate about," says the designer. "I didn't want my 'forever' home to be white, I wanted to inject my personality into the space and give each room a sense of itself."

The couple were careful not to blow the budget on structural changes, instead working within the existing footprint (aside from opening up >

**STUFF OF DREAMS**

Whimsy reigns, from the Muffin & Mani "Ocean Meets Sky" mural from Milton & King (above left) to the textured stone bathroom (above). The family comes together around the kitchen island (top), which boasts a wine fridge and cooktop.





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### DESIGNER EYE

The Arthur G blue velvet sofa (top) adds brilliant colour, while the table from Urban Couture, Kartell Comback chairs and Douglas and Bec pendant (above) mark the house as a long-term kind of love. Bonney’s daughters share a bedroom (above right) – and had a huge say in decorating it!

the downstairs rumpus room) so they could splurge on luxe finishes and furnishings.

“We always start in the living/dining/kitchen areas,” Bonney explains. “It’s important to invest in the spaces you are going to spend the most time in.” This was also a chance to experiment: the blue velvet sofa from Arthur G in the living room was an idea that sat on Bonney’s to-do list for a number of years. “Doing your own home as a designer is a chance to push boundaries. You get to do things you can’t convince anyone else to do.”

Striking just the right note between too much and not enough, Bonney’s aesthetic is dynamic, but also impossibly serene. This can be traced back to her philosophy of making a home’s essential elements sing. “Never underestimate the foundations of a home,” she says. “Walls and floors

are wonderful ways to add really big impact, it’s often a shame to keep them blank.” And in the Bonney household, the walls have a lot of fun.

The dining area has been treated to a textured and rendered finish, and natural stone tiles were used in the bathroom. In classic Bonney fashion, timber features heavily, through the furniture, built-in joinery and American oak floors. “Brendon is a carpenter by trade and has a deep love of timber, and I love timber as a vehicle for warmth and texture,” she explains.

Using a mix of statement shades and earthy neutrals, and contemporary designs teamed with time-worn treasures, the serial renovators have created an environment they can stay still in, if only for a while. “We have a hectic family life, so it’s nice to live in something really calm.” □