

# AHEAD OF THE CURVE

In Melbourne, a bold renovation delivered fabulous heritage-meets-modern design and a futureproof family home.

STORY *Judy Pascoe*  
STYLING *Nicole Bell*  
PHOTOGRAPHY *Derek Swatwell*




**FOYER** There's play space galore for Isobel (left), Amelia and their sisters in this delightfully revamped home. A strapped dado wall, painted Bristol Shadowy Evergreen, defines the new extension. SuperTuft Escape Velour carpet in Chase helps reduce noise. **HALLWAY** Edwardian details sit comfortably alongside modern designer pieces. Oluce 'Atollo' table lamp, Euroluce. Antique console table, Miguel Mereilles Antiques. Artwork by James Geer. The double doors lead to the formal living room. **Local hero:** Conehome Mega Arch pendant light with large cones, \$1552, LAAL.



**LIVING** Formal but not straitlaced, the living room walks the line between contemporary and traditional beautifully. Alfred sofa, Jordan. Flos 'IC' floor lamp, Euroluce. Gubi 'Mategot' drinks trolley, Luke Furniture. Artwork by Luke Sciberras. The chandelier is original to the house. Linen curtains, James Dunlop Textiles. Nonn 'Journal' coffee table, District. **Designer buy:** Redondo armchairs, from \$5395 each, Hub Furniture.





Melburnians Sarah and Ben are parents of four - a sizeable tribe these days. Although the time is still a way off, picturing a future in which all four of their daughters - Lucy, eight, Charlotte, six, Amelia, four, and Isobel, two - would be adults living in the family home was incentive enough for the couple to embark on an extensive renovation.

Sarah and Ben bought the circa 1905 house in the city's inner south-east in 2012, falling for its Edwardian period features and generous rooms. They also recognised its potential to evolve into a long-term home for their family. In 2013, the couple met with architect Rachel Nolan of Kennedy Nolan and began planning how to futureproof their home.

The first thing to go was a poorly designed 1980s extension at the rear. "It was unnecessarily high, blacked out the garden and interrupted the flow of the floor plan," says Rachel. "It was important to Sarah and Ben that the house be filled with natural light and that the south-facing backyard receive as much sun as possible. They also wished to retain the home's significant heritage features." ▶

## THIS IS THE LIFE

"We love the connection between the indoor and outdoor spaces – a collaborative effort between Rachel Nolan and Amanda Oliver," says Sarah. "These days, we spend a lot of time in the kitchen/dining area with family and friends," says Sarah. "In winter, we tend to gather around the open fire in the family room or escape to the living room for some grownup conversation – when the children let us!"



Demolishing the extension cleared the way for a contemporary addition with a less intrusive footprint and more functional floor plan, including zones for the family to spend time in together and more private spaces to retreat to when ‘me time’ is needed. Being generous and enthusiastic hosts, Ben and Sarah also wanted a home that was conducive to entertaining.

A key decision was locating the girls’ bedrooms together in the original part of the home and creating a luxurious main suite for Ben and Sarah on the first floor of the replacement extension. “The bedrooms really are sanctuaries – so quiet and beautifully proportioned,” says Rachel. They are also well serviced, thanks to the addition of two new bathrooms, and convenient to communal living spaces.

Rachel played with scale and shape in the new zinc-clad addition that accommodates the kitchen/dining and family areas. A white-painted brick wall runs along the spine of the building, anchoring the architecture and linking old and new. A circle motif ▶



**COURTYARD** Floor-to-ceiling glazing maximises natural light at the south-facing rear of the home. Butterfly chairs, Angelucci 20th Century. Travertine flooring, CDK Stone (throughout).  
**KITCHEN/DINING** The textural splashback and rangehood cladding is made from a mix of Elba and Calacatta marble from RMS Stone. Rear bench is Neolith composite stone; island benchtop is Elba marble. Miele appliances. Qasair rangehood. Custom dining table, Made by Morgen. Gubi ‘Beetle’ dining chairs, and Hay ‘About A Stool’ stools, all Cult. Aggregato Salisceni pendant light, Artemide.

**DINING** Behind the smart but unassuming doors lies a butler's pantry – one of Sarah's favourite features. **FAMILY** Sumptuous Cleo sofas and Kelly armchairs, both from Jardan, and a Jetmaster wood-burning fire encourage lingering. B&B Italia 'Fat-Fat' coffee tables, Space. **Designer buy:** Old Yarn Antique Zigzag rug, from \$9000, Loom Rugs. **MAIN ENSUITE** Mounting the mirror on the window frame allows light and green views in too. Carrara marble, RMS Stone. American oak joinery. Traccia basins, Astra Walker. Scala tapware and similar mirror, Reece. **STAIRWELL** Circle details on the balustrade and cabinet reinforce the graphic 'voice' of the extension. Alexander Girard dolls from Space. Bespoke cabinet. Akoya pendant light, Living Edge. ▶





'WE FEEL  
RELAXED FROM  
THE MOMENT WE  
STEP THROUGH  
THE DOOR.'  
*Sarah, owner*





## The Palette

Bristol Shadowy  
Evergreen  
(extension  
feature)

Dulux Navy Trim  
(cabinetry)

Dulux Natural  
White (main  
walls)

**SIDE ENTRANCE** The lushly planted side entrance leads directly into the kitchen. Landscaping by Amanda Oliver Gardens. *Dichondra* creates a living carpet around slate steppers from Mintaro Quarries. **FRONT ENTRANCE** Retaining the home's Edwardian character was important to Ben, pictured with Isobel (left) and Amelia. Slate steppers, Mintaro Quarries. Plants include *Miscanthus tranmorrisonensis*, prostrate rosemary, *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy' and *Westringia fruticosa* 'Smokie'. For *Where to Buy*, see page 190.

'WE LOVE THE CONNECTION  
BETWEEN THE INDOOR AND  
OUTDOOR SPACES.' Sarah





runs throughout: a large circular skylight over the dining table, a round window in the kitchen, rotund chairs in the living room, mirrors in the bathrooms, right down to the pulls on the bespoke cabinets. “The graphic profile is part of the home’s personality,” says Rachel.

The design approach was “more experimental” in terms of colour and texture in the extension, says Rachel. It’s based on a modern yet serene palette of blue and green, a change of pace from the neutral scheme at the front of the home. Interior designer Nicole Bell was tasked with choosing the furniture, art and decorative items; her selections tie the contemporary and traditional together beautifully.

Sarah and Ben’s brief also included two off-street car spaces. “The challenge was including the parking but still making the front yard look like a garden rather than a carpark,” says Rachel. Rather than paving, landscaper Amanda Oliver opted for granitic sand - visually ‘soft’ but stable enough for cars to drive on - with loosely planted beds of textural, low-maintenance plants.

Every inch of the home, inside and out, is calm, peaceful - and now futureproof to boot. “We feel relaxed from the moment we step through the door,” says Sarah.

**H&G**

*Kennedy Nolan, Fitzroy, Victoria; (03) 9415 8971 or kennedynolan.com.au. Nicole Bell Design, Malvern East, Victoria; 0408 697 332 or nicolebelldesign.com.au. Amanda Oliver Gardens, Fitzroy North, Victoria; amandaolivergardens.com.au.*

### *The Layout*

