

DREAM IT. DESIGN IT. DO IT.

# NEAT TRICK



This Melbourne home had already been opened up at the back, but it was only when the new owner called in the experts that the real magic happened

## cheat sheet

**Who lives here** Bianca McCann, an online customer service representative at fashion label Mister Zimi; her daughter Grace, 11; and their pet cavoodle, Peppa.

**Style of home** A traditional Victorian home in an inner suburb of Melbourne. Though the house had been previously renovated, it needed a total refresh.

**Timeline** Bianca bought in 2009 and was ready to renovate by April 2017. The work began in October 2017 and was completed three months later.

**B**athed in light and layered with lush finishes and shades of blue, Bianca McCann’s updated home in Melbourne was definitely worth the wait. At her first inspection of the property in 2009, with newborn daughter Grace on her hip, Bianca could certainly appreciate the renovation of its Victorian bones by the previous owners. The kitchen, living and dining spaces were open to the backyard by way of expansive glass doors and windows, and she thought the huge sliding doors were incredible. “They bring in so much natural light. It’s not a big block, but those doors make it feel like it is. The architecture was really well thought out and executed. However, it needed a little refresh,” she explains. The cooking enthusiast knew the kitchen could function more seamlessly and wanted to bring a spa-like feeling into the bathrooms and laundry. “I knew I wanted to renovate,” she adds. “It was just a matter of waiting until I could afford to do it the way I wanted.” In 2017, when the time was right, Bianca reached out to interior designer Kate Walker of KWD, requesting a contemporary ‘facelift’ for her home.



## kitchen

New hard surfaces in the form of honed Carrara marble with Albedor cabinetry in Satin White and Antrazite have transformed this space. The tapware is from Zucchetti’s ‘Pan’ range. Teak and leather bar stools. Fenton & Fenton. Customised Bosphorus rug, Loom Rugs.

STYLING ASSISTANTS: AISHA CHAUDHRY, JESSICA RETTALACK



dream it

Bianca wanted to revamp the home’s hard surfaces by switching its existing warm tones to a cool palette of soothing blues and greys – without over-capitalising. “We knew we could update the interior to make it architecturally relevant without unnecessary costs,” says her switched-on designer Kate.

The most significant changes would occur in the kitchen, where additional storage was high on the wish list. “I have a lot of kitchen stuff, but I like the kitchen to be very minimal,” Bianca explains. Tweaking the kitchen layout was also a priority for the busy mum, who loves to entertain at home. “Before, if I was in the kitchen and had a dining table full of guests, I couldn’t see them or interact with them,” she says. Overall, however, Bianca wanted a relaxing retreat for herself and Grace.



kitchen bar

Bianca loves entertaining and surprising her guests with this built-in bar and wine fridge. The cabinetry is Albedor 12mm Faceline with Holly edge in Antrazite, installed by Gravina Cabinets & Interiors.

dining room

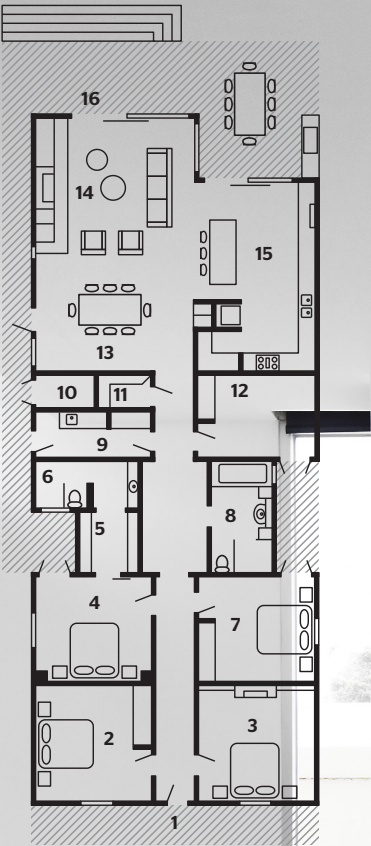
An American natural-oak Huxley table from Jordan fits right in with the cooler scheme. Maggie chairs, also Jordan. Artwork from The Harbour Series by Cressida Beale. Vases, House of Orange.



the moodboard



**CLOCKWISE FROM STOOL** Flat Leather **bar stool** in Teak, \$490, Fenton & Fenton. Albedor flat-profile Holly-edge **cabinetry** in Antrazite, POA, through Gravina Cabinets and Interiors. Wilfred upholstered American Natural Oak **armchair** in Seaspray, from \$5092, Jordan. Luxor large glass **vase** in Indigo Blue, \$90, Greenhouse Interiors. Titanium surface-mount powdercoated-aluminium **lights** in UV Textured White, \$160 and \$184, Lights Lights Lights. Wayfarer wool **carpet** in Bruce, \$68 per sq m, Carpet Court. Smoked oak **flooring**, \$93.50 per sq m, Royal Oak Floors. Zimbabwe leather-finish granite **tile**, POA, CDK Stone.



- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1 Entry        | 9 Laundry        |
| 2 Bedroom      | 10 Shed          |
| 3 Sitting room | 11 Storeroom     |
| 4 Main bedroom | 12 Bedroom/study |
| 5 Walk-in robe | 13 Dining area   |
| 6 Ensuite      | 14 Living area   |
| 7 Bedroom      | 15 Kitchen       |
| 8 Bathroom     | 16 Outdoor area  |

living room

The floor-to-ceiling column of firewood is a feature in itself. The fireplace hearth is Zimbabwe Black leather-finish granite. Nook sofa in Fleck Neptune and Wilfred chair in Seaspray linen, Iko coffee table and Alby leather floor cushion, all Jordan. Cushions and throws, Tigger Hall Design. Poppi artwork by Jai Vasicek.



wishlist

- + **Custom storage** “I wanted the butler’s pantry and breakfast buffet and bar to be hidden,” says Bianca.
- + **Kitchen remodel** “Another priority was changing the orientation of the island bench so that it faced the open-plan living and dining area.”
- + **Bathroom update** “The chocolate-brown tiles and heavy timber in there just had to go!”





### laundry

Dunas ceramic tiles in White Gloss from National Tiles have added a little sparkle in here. The benchtop is Essastone in matt Ash Concrete by Laminex. Pan tapware from Zucchetti. As elsewhere, the flooring is blackbutt timber (new boards laid to match existing) and the paintwork is Dulux Whisper White.

### main bedroom

A curved Reeno bench from Grazia & Co softens the mood in Bianca's space. Flax linen bedding, Bed Threads. Side table, Hub Furniture. Lamp, stylist's own. Green Square carpet in Ashen, Godfrey Hirst. Artwork by Debbie Mackenzie.



### design it

“It was important to show Bianca the possibility of what we could create with clever space planning and beautiful joinery to really uplift the look of the property,” says Kate. By retaining as much of the existing layout as possible, and leaving the windows and doors untouched, Kate was able to deliver a design that stuck to the budget. Easy surface updates in the wet rooms and on the fireplace surround (including the hearth and joinery) would provide a refreshed modern look.

Bianca’s favourite colour, navy, was the starting point for the material palette. “We incorporated this tone in key elements that worked back with some very contemporary finishes: terrazzo, timber veneers, stainless steel and stone,” says Kate. Marble surfaces and inky charcoal-hued cabinetry would inject new life into the existing timber kitchen. When it came to decorating, Bianca wanted to keep the colour palette reigned in. “I’m actually a bit scared of too much colour!” she admits.

Working with Fiona Luxton of Luxton Architecture to make the furniture selections, Bianca was drawn to tonal shades of blue, grey and touches of tan leather. Artworks, chosen by her, further highlight the soothing blue tones she loves. “The blue is so relaxing – it’s like being by the water,” she says.

### do it

With Kabsav Projects on the build, the renovations were completed swiftly, with minimal stress. “They were just the greatest guys, and so easy to deal with,” says Bianca. “It made the whole process really effortless.” The process was helped along by the fact that Bianca and Grace didn’t have to live among the dust and debris. “As luck would have it, a house two doors down was up for rent, so we took on a short three-month lease.”

The new kitchen is a source of pride and joy for both owner and designer. “The joinery is beautifully manufactured,” says Kate. “It takes the kitchen to a whole new level.” The sleek cabinetry by Albedor, installed by Gravina Cabinets and Interiors, gives Bianca plenty of space to stash her cookbooks, supplies and equipment. “It’s so well thought out and perfectly designed with all my storage requirements in mind. I don’t think I have one empty cupboard,” she says with a laugh.

Repositioning the cooktop and reorienting the island has increased the functionality of the kitchen and opened up the space to the living and dining areas. Bianca says that while her 11-year-old Grace doesn’t do a lot of cooking yet, she will often sit at the roomy island bench or on the sofa while Bianca is in the kitchen. “She likes to stay close,” says her mum, adding, “We love our home. I wouldn’t change a thing.” **10**

See KWD’s work at [kwdandco.com.au](http://kwdandco.com.au). Kabsav Projects: [kabsav.com.au](http://kabsav.com.au)

### lessons learnt

#### “Budget constraints can be worked around”

KATE, INTERIOR DESIGNER

“There was a pain point during this project where it almost didn’t go ahead because the material prices came in too high. So the client and I had to make some very sensible choices, spending money where it was most important and then saving money where we could.”



### the best bits

**+ Process** “I really looked forward to my meetings with Kate, and I had full confidence in her aesthetic,” says Bianca. “It was a breeze as everything she suggested was to my taste.”

**+ Kitchen** “Storage was very important in the kitchen and we absolutely nailed that. I have it in spades.”

**+ Terrazzo tiles** “I think the bathroom tiles are my favourite finish in the house. Along with the kitchen’s marble.”

**+ Finishing touches** “The art piece in the dining room is by my friend Cressida Beale. It ties in so beautifully with the custom Loom rug in the living area. My other favourite is *Poppi* by Jai Vasicek [above the fire]. I just love it.”

### bathroom

Glossy white wall tiles and grey terrazzo floor tiles appear in both the home’s bathrooms. The vanity and mirror in this larger space are faced with Navlam sandblasted oak veneer from New Age Veneers. Pan tapware, Zucchetti.