



"TO ME, MORE EXPENSIVE IS NOT NECESSARILY BETTER. I KNOW HOW TO SAVE MONEY AND WHERE TO SPEND IT." *Kate Walker, owner*

ENTRY Soaring ceilings create a grand first impression. Parquet console table, Pottery Barn. Classic Ring one-tier chandelier, The Montauk Lighting Co. Door hardware, Domino Brass Fittings. Artwork by Zoe Young. **FRONT GARDEN** Stands of *Betula pendula* 'Moss White' (silver birch) grace a landscaped lawn by Blac Design. Corten steel horse sculpture by local artist Matt Hill. ▶

'I WANTED THE HOME TO FEEL PEACEFUL, AIRY, LIGHT AND BRIGHT WHILE BEING GUTSY, WARM AND INVITING. AND I MUST SAY I AM A FIRM BELIEVER OF #GREENISTHENEWBBLUE.' *Kate*



FORMAL LIVING A hardy indoor-outdoor plant, the rhaps palm relaxes this living space. Custom sofa, ottoman in Kate Spade 'Lunch Date' fabric in Slate, and swivel armchairs in Kelly Wearstler 'Askew' fabric, all Sorrento Furniture. Metro side tables, Porcelain Bear. Custom wool rug by KWD. Pask Pharmacy floor lamp, The Montauk Lighting Co. Artworks by John Bokor.

FAMILY ROOM opposite Dutch Shipyard shelving from Restoration Hardware is home to a plethora of treasures, many sourced from Cromwell. A bank of family photographs justifies the name of this room. Giant Monopoly board, Restoration Hardware. KWD ottoman covered in Mulberry Home Walton' wool fabric in Stone from Elliott Clarke.

Set to embark upon a full-scale renovation and extension to her much-loved Melbourne home last year, the universe threw Kate Walker - founder and director of KWD - a curveball when she was approached unexpectedly by a local agent about selling her property, lock stock and barrel. Despite it not even being listed on the market, Kate found herself throwing caution to the wind and bravely sold the home and its contents, walking out with little more than her two children and dog, and the clothes on their backs.

Soon after, a poky 1980s yellow-brick house situated on a generous block nearby appeared in her real-estate search. While others saw an unattractive dated prospect, Kate's vision for the home was inspired. "People were unsure of what to do with it, but as soon as I saw that roofline and the orientation, I knew exactly what how I would attack it!" Kate named the property Beechwood.

The house, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, had been on the market for some time until the sought-after designer snapped it up and undertook the enormous challenge of transforming it over a fast and furious 12 weeks - the timeframe of the settlement. Family and friends called her crazy, but Kate had her eye on the prize right from the word go. "They couldn't see the finish line through my eyes," she recalls.

An ability to see beyond the obvious is what has helped make Kate one of Australia's most coveted designers - Beechwood being just one example of her extraordinary vision. But Kate is the first to admit that this project wasn't without its challenges and that there were many times along the way where she second-guessed herself. "The KWD team stood behind me though, reminding me that this is what I do, and to trust my gut," she says.

Initial plans for the home were grand and included removing walls, increasing floor space and adding a second storey. But operating on a limited timeframe that didn't allow for council approval meant a quick rethink and, as it turned out, only a minor punch-out in the kitchen and laundry were required.

For Kate, it was about creating a functional floor plan and incorporating spaces to enjoy with her children, Charlie, now 14, and 12-year-old Jemima. The KWD ethos of creating a home to bring a family together was the driving force behind the renovation. "We used every single square inch of the footprint, and while the house isn't much bigger than my previous home, it's so much ▶





more functional and feels so spacious," Kate says. The house has a central entry foyer from which a staircase rises to small sitting room, part of the original structure. "It's a hangout for Charlie where he does his homework and chillaxes," say Kate. To the left are three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a family room. Behind the staircase is a sizeable laundry. To the right are several communal

areas - living, dining, kitchen - then the main bedroom and ensuite. Verandahs wrap around much of the building and the manicured backyard has an enticing swimming pool, fringed by plants and the bushscape beyond.

The home is north-facing and every room enjoys a view of the garden, so it was only natural that the inspiration for the interior came from the home's surrounds. ►



KITCHEN/DINING *Jemima, Kate and Charlie in their practical cooking space. The island measures 1.7m x 2.2m and features a soapstone top. Two-pack polyurethane joinery by Gravina Cabinets and Interiors. Joe stools, Classic With a Twist. Darlana Linear pendant, The Montauk Lighting Co. Vases and dinnerware, Red Hill House and Til Foley. **LIVING** Shiplap lining boards cover the wall; there's a hidden door behind the fireplace that leads to the main bedroom. Rubelli 'Pila 47' chairs in a faux bois fabric from South Pacific Fabrics (left). Marcella high-back chairs (right), Cromwell. **ENTRY** below far right Italian oak flooring graces the communal areas, and moulding details add character to the walls. Sculpture, Cromwell.*



H&G AT HOME WITH

MAIN BEDROOM *this page and opposite top left* Kate's retreat is calm and spacious. Canopy bed, Restoration Hardware. Adelboden table lamp, Bobbin bedside chest, Fiona chair and Strathraven dressing table, all Cromwell. KWD ottoman in a Kravet fabric from Elliott Clarke. Jan Kath 'Polonaise' rug, Cadrys. Sisal carpet. Lounge chair and footstool covered in GP&J Baker 'Ferns' fabric. **JEMIMA'S ROOM** The quirky Lee Jofa 'Hunt Slonem Hutch' wallpaper is a big hit. Alexander bed, Provincial Home Living. **CHARLIE'S BATHROOM** The check tiles – Square Charcoal Concrete in Doe Grey from Earp Bros – are a modern classic.





Kate worked alongside Peta Donaldson of Blac Design to bring her landscape-design vision to life, ensuring the natural shades of the exterior, such as sage green, grey, white and terracotta, were cleverly reflected as the palette inside. The striking result is tonally considered and celebrates a modern farmhouse aesthetic. Texture also played a key focus throughout the renovation, with aged materials, hand-chiselled tiles, brass tapware, luxurious flooring and a rich repertoire of linens specified for the fitout. Artworks were privately commissioned while chairs were reupholstered in bespoke fabrics - with every single detail and touchpoint thought through. However the hard finishes - namely the kitchen timber veneer two-pack joinery boasting visible woodgrain - inevitably stole the show, and the homeowner's heart.

Kate admits the greatest challenge for her with Beechwood was to practise what she preaches to her clients every day, and not include every single thing on her wish list. "I had to be clever with what I left out - and the things I didn't put in were actually my best decisions. I had to hone down on the style, hone down on my time and budget constraints, and get the very best specification within that framework, and I believe I achieved that." ►
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LIFE & STYLE

Kate shares some firsts and favourite things.

MY FIRST ADULT HOME was an old cottage in Malvern and I was so proud of it. I rented a room to one of my sisters to help pay the mortgage. **MY INTEREST IN DESIGN** was sparked when I was a child. My father was in the tile industry and my mother was an interior decorator.

FIRST CAR? A red Ford Falcon, bought from my brother. **NOW?** A Land Rover Discovery. It fits all my KWD samples in the back and I'm constantly transporting extra children around the place. **I'M READING** *Lovability* by Brian De Haaff, a primer in building a successful business.

MY ALL-TIME FAVOURITE MEAL is my mother's curried sausages with mashed potato.

DECORATING GURUS? I'm currently getting inspiration for soft furnishings from Kit Kemp and kitchen designs from Mick De Giulio.

MY NO. 1 SCENT is Coco Mademoiselle by Chanel. **NEXT SPLURGE?** Another Matt Hill sculpture for my garden.

FAVOURITE COLOUR COMBO? I love blue and white. I also adore sage green.

I'M A HUGE FAN OF Australian artists including John Bokor (top left) and Debbie McKenzie (bottom left).

CURRENT FABRIC PASSION? Plaid! I love it for cushion covers and throws.

FLORAL FANCY? Margaret Merrill roses.

NEXT HOLIDAY? I'm heading to New York and then to High Point Market in North Carolina to source furniture and have some girlfriend time away.

I can't wait to experience Manhattan.

I'M FOLLOWING @kellywearstler. Her hotel design, wallpapers, lighting and furniture are incredible. **MY HAPPY PLACE** is the mountains. We spend every weekend over the winter season in Mount Buller, and try to get spend time in US alpine resorts in January. **I'LL NEVER TIRE OF** shingles. I love them left natural or painted. It's the texture that I love. I adore a shingle roof, particularly for British Colonial designs. H&G



'I'M A BIG FAN OF AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS AND I'D LOVE ANOTHER SCULPTURE FOR THE GARDEN'



H&G AT HOME WITH

US \$210C \$350



HOME AT LAST

With a deft design plan and unwavering vision, leading Melbourne designer Kate Walker has turned a boxy '80s house into a comfortable homestead on the Mornington Peninsula.

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