

AUSTRALIAN

HOUSE & GARDEN

Australian Creatives *at home*

COLLECTED, CREATED, CURATED

11
GORGEOUS
HOMES
*Shop their
style*

Custom
SPACES

*Clever ideas and
insider tips*

FABULOUS FINDS HOW TO SOURCE THE LOOKS

KATE WALKER

Reimagining a FAMILY HOME gave this designer the freedom to *infuse* a sophisticated Caribbean style *throughout* the property.

STORY *Elizabeth Wilson* | STYLING *Julia Green* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Armelle Habib*



EXTERIOR The two-storey 1980s residence has been transformed into a charismatic resort-style home. Landscaping and pool design by Heath Blair, Plume Studio. Pool installation by Laguna Pools. Tectona '1800' sun loungers, Classic With A Twist. Cushions, Lucy Montgomery. Custom umbrellas, Lynch's Window Fashions. **ENTRANCE** Kate in the spacious new entry. Floorboards are Biscayne European oak laid in a herringbone pattern, KWD & Co. Door, 3D Windows and Doors, all painted Dulux Babe. Pots, Kellock Pots & Planters.



Being able to envision and conjure a bold new identity for a 40-year-old property requires imagination and daring. And both were in ample supply when designer Kate Walker reimagined this residence on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. Drawing on her love of what she calls "Caribbean colonial" homes, she remodelled a well-preserved, unassuming two-storey 1980s dwelling into a glamorous, palm-fringed tropical beauty.

When Kate bought the property in early 2020, it had been languishing on the market. "People couldn't see beyond the tired interiors," she says. As soon as Kate viewed the property, she was buzzing with ideas: "I had an immediate vision for the place. It was electric." Above all, she could see it as a perfect nest for herself and her "Brady Bunch" - her partner Anthony, her children, Charlie and Jemima, and Anthony's children, Max and Annika.

Built as a builder's own home, the house sits on a glorious 2000-square-metre block a few hundred metres from the beach with views of the water and a tennis court on site. "The build quality was outstanding and it was in great condition," says Kate, founder and director of design company KWD. She could easily look beyond the salmon-coloured carpets and polished black granite but the floor plan felt back to front. "The house was oriented to face the view, but there was no sense of entry at the street frontage. You walked through the front door into a corridor leading to the laundry. The whole floor plan needed articulation."

Kate workshopped it with local drafting studio Rod Hannah Design. To define the front entrance, they added a portico - the only extension to the existing structure. They reduced the three-car garage to a two-car space to accommodate a new laundry, and enclosed the front verandah to create internal access from the garage. The old laundry became a powder room and two smaller ground-floor rooms were merged to create one sitting room. The new, spacious entry vestibule now connects to a large social kitchen/dining to the left and two living spaces on the right. Upstairs, Kate retained four bedrooms and converted two bathrooms into three. In the vast main bedroom, she carved out space to create a walk-in wardrobe; in the ensuite, she created a luxe hotel vibe by dividing the space into a shower enclave and a mini powder room. At every opportunity she incorporated new glazing to summon light and air. "I wanted this home to breathe," she says.

In decorating the home, Kate let her imagination take full flight. "I adore the style of the Colonial-era homes in the Bahamas and Florida Keys," says Kate who named the home 'Biscayne' in a nod to Biscayne Bay, Miami. "I describe the look as 'Caribbean colonial' - the 'Caribbean' referring to a relaxed holiday vibe and the 'colonial' suggesting a sense of history, collection and curation."

The home is painted white inside and out with exterior trims in pastel hues - a reference to the original colours in the home. "It's a very 1980s colour palette," says Kate. "We used pink, blue, yellow, green - even touches of terracotta here and there. We also have potted bangalow palms throughout the home because greenery adds life."

Creating a resort feel was central to Kate's vision, but this wasn't just about sun loungers and candy-pink umbrellas beside the pool: "The resort feel we wanted to create was about activities - we loved big family breakfasts and dinners around the island bench, we played tennis, we lit fires in the outdoor terrace, we played board games - we created moments when we all connected together."

Kate sold her previous home fully furnished, which meant she and Anthony could start afresh when furnishing Biscayne. "The challenge was to make it feel like all the pieces were collected over years," says Kate. "I mixed North American pieces with Asian furniture and European antiques. It was eclectic but it worked." There are fun elements and exquisite finishes and every room has an individual identity.

Best of all, when Kate stepped inside her front door, she felt like she was on holidays. "Sitting on the deck in the afternoon sun having a drink with Anthony and watching the kids in the pool or playing tennis was glorious. You could be anywhere in the world." *katewalkerdesign.com.au.*

"I ABSOLUTELY ADORE THE STYLE OF COLONIAL HOMES. IT'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN DRAWN TO MY WHOLE LIFE." *Kate Walker*

DINING Dining table and chairs, Boyd Blue. Colony console, Stuart Membery Home. Sisal rugs, KWD & Co.



KITCHEN “This is the space where we all congregated – I love a huge dining bench,” says Kate of the kitchen (this page and opposite). The benchtop stone is Amazonia from Gladstones Granite and features veining in olive green, charcoal, light grey and taupe. Custom joinery and stools designed by KWD. Door fronts in weathered oak by Farmers Doors, painted Dulux Snowy Mountains. Kew handles, Hepburn Hardware. Zellige Blanco Matt splashback tiles, National Tiles. Tapware, The English Tapware Company. Kelly Wearstler ‘Cleo’ pendant lights, and Cara sculpted pendant (above dining table), The Montauk Lighting Co. Majestic oven, Ilve.

What timeless pieces would you invest in?

- I believe your home is a reflection of your personality and your life to date.
- I love a curated and collected interior – it’s interesting and invites curiosity. Don’t be afraid to mix high-end investments with affordable items.
- A home should tell a story of your past and your present, so I would invest in pieces that bring heart to your space; a piece of art, or a silk rug, which I consider to be artwork for the floor.



“I LOVE A COLLECTED INTERIOR. A HOME SHOULD TELL A STORY OF YOUR PAST AND PRESENT, SO INVEST IN AND KEEP PIECES THAT BRING HEART TO YOUR SPACE.” *Kate Walker*



“IT’S INCREDIBLE WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH SOME CLEVER SPACE PLANNING, DECORATIONS, PAINT AND WALLPAPER.” *Kate Walker*

LIVING Cape Colony sofas, Stuart Membery Home. Cushions, Lucy Montgomery. Cape chairs, Boyd Blue. Gypsum coffee table, Coco Republic. Benit Sculpted pendant light, The Montauk Lighting Co. Sisal rug and custom silk rug, both KWD & Co. Curtains in James Dunlop Textiles 'Kyoto Snow', made by Lynch's Window Fashions. *Mystery in the Making* artwork by Georgie Wilson, Greenhouse Interiors. Giraffe duo (on mantelpiece), Cromwell. **LANDING** This landing opens onto the back deck. Wideboard Biscayne European oak floorboards and sisal rug, both KWD & Co. Artwork at bottom of stairs is by Matt Lucas. Sophia flush-mounted light, The Montauk Lighting Co.



Describe your signature style. The KWD style is about recognisable design hallmarks and principles of symmetry, detailing and considered joinery. We consciously amplify the existing architecture and look at how the home sits in its environment.

Who has influenced your style? I take inspiration from history, architecture, European and American magazines, landscape architects, artists and fashion designers.



"I HAD AN IMMEDIATE VISION FOR THE PLACE. IT WAS ELECTRIC." *Kate Walker*

MAIN BEDROOM The main bedroom suite includes a hall table and coffee table, Cromwell. Sofa from Boyd Blue, custom upholstered in Kelly Wearstler 'Dame' fabric in Ivory from Elliott Clarke. Artwork by Zoe Young. Rugs, KWD & Co.

WALK-IN WARDROBE *Opposite top left* Joinery designed by KWD, made by DMA Kitchens with door fronts by Farmers Doors. **ENSUITE** The ensuite's shower and powder room doorways are framed in stone. The dramatic floor of the shower enclosure, designed by KWD and made by Marble Mosaics, features four different stones. Hawthorn Hill basin from The English Tapware Company, customised with an Amazonia stone benchtop. Custom shield mirrors, Outlines. Wall sconces, The Montauk Lighting Co.



What's on your wish list?

A Charlotte Keates artwork. Her work is so sought after now. It sets my soul on fire.

Your essentials to ensure a room hits the right note?

- Natural light. Think about how the light will filter into each space.
- Consider the furniture layout to ensure you can move well in the space.
- Lamps, for ambience.
- Make room for artwork.
- Hidden treasures: the scent, the ambient temperature, mood music.

POWDER ROOM If the walls of this room could speak, they would sound like elegant water birds cavorting with dragonflies at dusk. This amazing 'Heron' print wallpaper by Gucci, depicting graceful birds against a pink background, is the hero of this opulent room. Kate has taken this room, located at the front of the home in a compact space that used to be a laundry, into a whole new luxurious realm designed to uplift guests on arrival. Ceiling painted Dulux Prancer. Shelf in Cosmopolitan Quartzite, Gladstones Granite. 'Juliette', table lamp, The Montauk Lighting Co. Floor tiles in Rosso Verona and Portogallo marble, both KWD & Co.



KATE WALKER

SHOP THE LOOK

Opulent colours and finishes add glamour to a treasured room.



1 POWDER ROOM Wallpaper, Gucci. Kelly Wearstler **wall lights**, The Montauk Lighting Co. Antique **mirror**, Nicholas & Alistair. The Water Monopoly 'Paris' **basin**, and Perrin & Rowe **tapware**, both The English Tapware Company. **2** Hunting Season medium leather **trunk box** in Tan, \$1660, Net-a-Porter. **3** 'Finley' **shower** in Brushed Brass, \$710, ABL Interiors. **4** Persian Ghom silk **rug**, \$31,700, Cadrys. **5** The Water Monopoly 'Paris' **bath**, \$16,935, The English Tapware Company. **6** Italian brass **mirror**, \$8985, 1stDibs. **7** Dolce & Gabbana Sicilian neroli and lemon **scented candle** in Blue, \$495, Net-a-Porter. **8** Aerin 'Arno' **dinner plate** in Cream, \$190, Palmer & Penn. **9** *Everything Green is Different in Spring* **artwork** by Charlotte Keates, POA, Arusha Gallery.