

# Heart *and* SOUL



An investment property became the start of a new chapter for one Australian family who have impressed their own unique style on this ground-up build

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Photography: **Annette O'Brien/Chilli Media**

**M**ichelle Hart, an interior designer, and her husband, David, a builder, were not planning to move from their period home in Melbourne, but when the investment property they were building began to take shape the couple had other ideas. “David was building two double-storey townhouses on a plot of land in Bayside to the south of the city: one for a client and one for us to sell,” explains Michelle. “The architect’s plans were already in place when we took the project on, but once the frame went up we got a sense of the space and how it would work.”

The house has an open layout and plenty of storage, which appealed to Michelle, and with the couple’s two children, Serena, 16, and Dominic, 14, now becoming more independent the family’s lifestyle was changing and they no longer needed their large garden. So they decided to sell their old home and move into the new-build.

While David was finalising the structure, Michelle was able to design the décor and ▶





**Opening page (p123):** A hidden extractor hood means the warm wooden wall units can run uninterrupted above the stylish tiled splashback.

**Left:** Michelle wanted interesting points of difference in the scheme, which she achieved through the artworks, oversized pendant and black wash finish on the oak flooring.

**Below:** The kitchen includes a discreet desk area where the family can use a laptop, charge their digital devices and play music.



choose the materials. She selected oak flooring with a black wash finish for the ground floor and walkways upstairs, as it worked well with the black window frames. "Together that set the tone for the rest of the house," she says. "I wanted the palette to be monochromatic with warmth added through rich timber tones and natural textures."

The kitchen cabinetry was custom-made by David's joiners and painted white, with the exception of the outward-facing island façade and a row of wall units above the range cooker, which are an oak veneer. The base units were topped with a white Caesarstone work surface, chosen for its warm tones created by an earthy marble effect running through it. Michelle made a feature of the splashback with white fish-scale tiles and black grout. Further black details appear in the form of the finger pulls on the base units, light cords and other subtle places throughout the scheme, to pull the look together. The plans included ample storage and a hidden scullery, which houses the fridge and microwave and has space for the toaster, blender and kettle. "It's great as any mess is hidden," says Michelle, "and the worktops in the main kitchen area stay clear and clean."

Michelle loved the open, flowing layout of the ground floor, but she was keen to create different



## Q&A

**Homeowner and interior designer Michelle Hart says...**



**What did you find the most useful research tool?**  
I love flicking through magazines and looking at other people's homes. It's always great for inspiration.

**Which elements took up the majority of the budget?**  
We thought about where to spend our money and decided on the kitchen, as it's open-plan and when people come over it's where you hang out. So we spent most on the cabinetry, splashback, appliances and lighting.

**Any tips for people embarking on a similar project?**  
Know what you like and don't like so the designer can gauge what your style is. The design needs to be personal to you, so avoid slavishly following trends as everything starts to look the same.

zones for the dining and sitting areas. As the kitchen is located in the centre of the house, she marked out the floor with tape to see where to place the dining table and sofa and what size they should be. "Our old dining table was too small, and it looked ridiculous," she says. "The room is large with high ceilings, so we needed a bigger table but wanted to be able to walk around and not crash into chairs or for it to feel cramped."

To keep the look simple Michelle bought a beautiful oak table and white bistro chairs. Her focus was on introducing interesting lighting, which she achieved by hanging a striking black pendant over the dining area. David built the sideboard and Michelle painted it a muted blue to bring in some colour. Shades of blue show up again in the living area in a charming painting by Australian artist David Bromley and in linen cushions on the oatmeal-coloured sofa. The use of natural colours and textures, combined with a smattering of leafy plants beautifully connects the inside and outside where there is a convenient outdoor kitchen. "We entertain family and friends a lot more here as it's such a great space to do it in," says Michelle, "and we use the barbecue lots in the summer."

In the master bedroom, meanwhile, there is a calm and minimalist ambience. A huge walk-in wardrobe and ensuite tucked behind the bedhead take away the need for additional furniture and

make it easy to keep clutter at bay. Michelle used neutral tones for the carpet, curtains and headboard, with accents of cool blues and greys. "It's north-facing and attracts plenty of sunlight so it's a bright room," she explains. "The colours make it feel cool and serene." Floor-to-ceiling glass sliding doors open up to a balcony so the couple installed a ceiling fan to allow a natural breeze through rather than use air conditioning.

The master ensuite has the same monochrome and timber backdrop which features throughout. The eight-drawer vanity unit and mirrored cabinet above ensure toiletries, hair dryer, straighteners and other beauty products are easily accessed. Hexagonal wall tiles, a display shelf and a hanging plant add interest. "I love adding greenery to my home; it makes it feel alive," says Michelle. "I wanted to mix the right amount of pattern and texture to make it feel relaxed, inviting and warm but still unique."

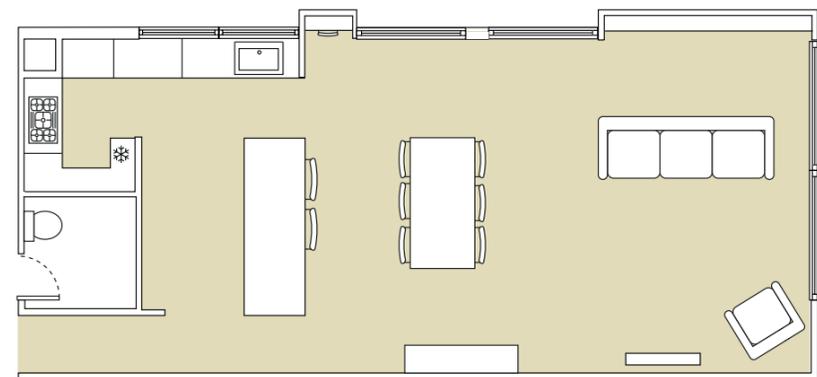
The children's bedrooms are the same size and fitted with a built-in wardrobe, desk and shelving in each. Serena took an interest in her room décor and went with her mother to choose the stylish black and white wallpaper. "We used pastel pink and grey accessories just to soften it a bit," says Michelle. Filled with personal touches, this is a home that, even though it is newly built, feels as though the family have been living there forever. **KBB**

**Above left:** The 3m-long island becomes a convenient serving counter when Michelle and David entertain friends.

**Opposite page:** A black shadow line runs through the cabinetry to complement the black window frames.

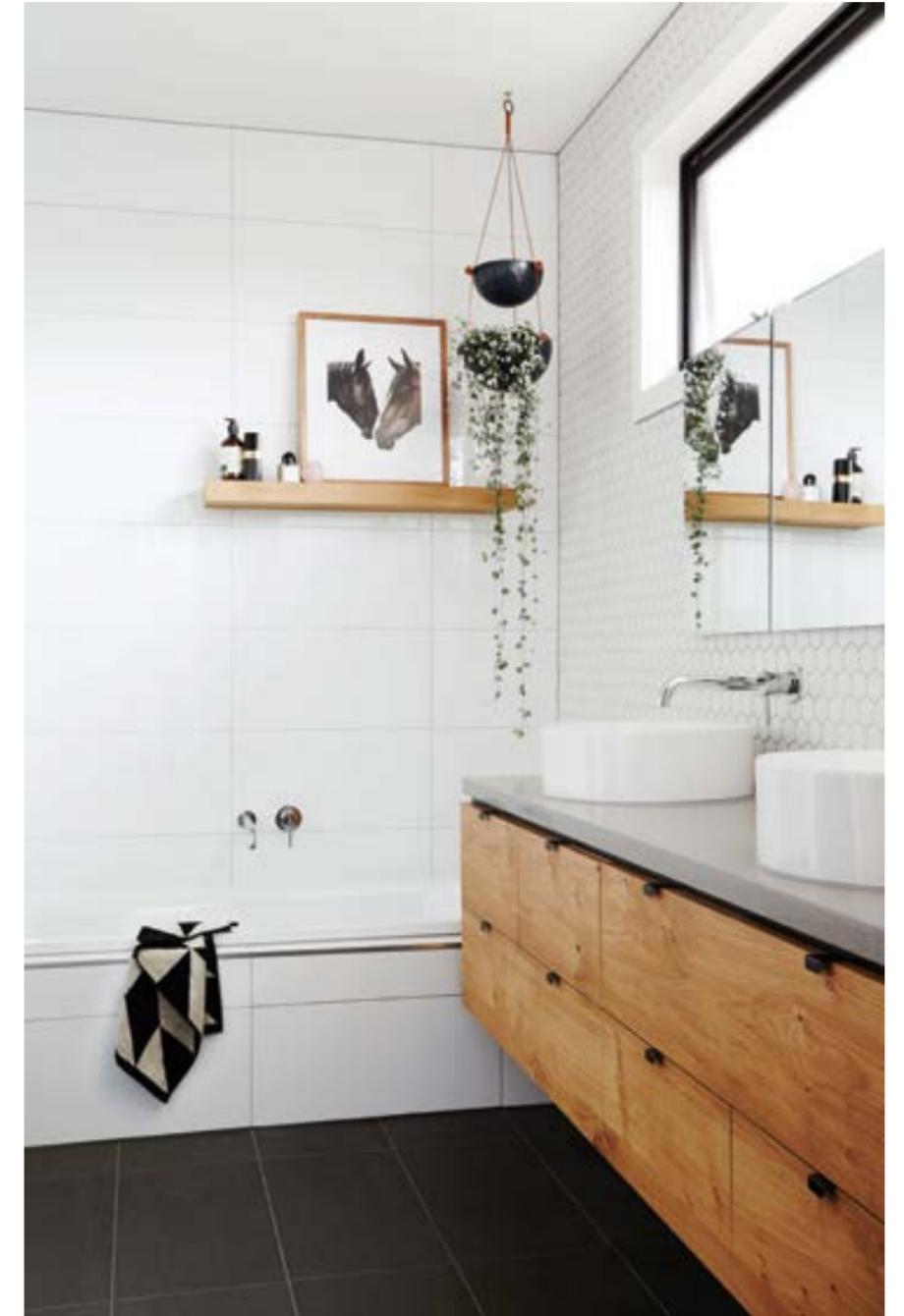
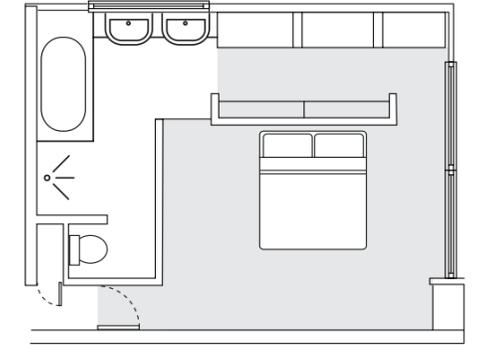


**Above:** Natural materials and neutral shades combine to make the living area a calm place to hang out. Subtle hints of colour are provided through art and accessories.



**Left:** In the master bedroom, the couple have black-out blinds behind the sheer curtains. Michelle loves using blue accents in the summer months, but she changes the throw and cushions for warmer shades when the weather cools.

**Below:** The wall-hung brassware keeps the look clean and simple in the master ensuite. Michelle chose round basins and curved taps to break up the square, straight edges of the bath and furniture.



**Right:** In Serena's room a metal and timber stool serves as a bedside table. The subtle black details seen in the rest of the home continue here through the shelf brackets and table lamp.



## SourceBook

### DESIGN

**Interior designer** Michelle Hart, Bask Interiors ([www.baskinteriors.com.au](http://www.baskinteriors.com.au))

### KITCHEN

**Cabinetry** Bespoke. For similar try Naked Kitchens (01328 838854 or [www.nakedkitchens.com](http://www.nakedkitchens.com))

**Worktops** Frosty Carrina, Caesarstone (0800 158 8088 or [www.caesarstone.co.uk](http://www.caesarstone.co.uk))

**Appliances** Range cooker, Ilve (0845 548 3130 or [www.ilveappliances.co.uk](http://www.ilveappliances.co.uk)); Extractor, Smeg (0344 557 9907 or [www.smeguk.com](http://www.smeguk.com)); Dishwasher, Bosch (0344 892 8979 or [www.bosch-home.co.uk](http://www.bosch-home.co.uk))

**Tap** For similar try Blanco (01923 635200 or [www.blanco.co.uk](http://www.blanco.co.uk))

**Paint colour** Natural White, Dulux (0333 222 7171 or [www.dulux.co.uk](http://www.dulux.co.uk))

**Flooring** European oak with black wash. For similar try The Natural Wood Floor Company (020 8871 9771 or [www.naturalwoodfloor.co.uk](http://www.naturalwoodfloor.co.uk))

**Splashback** Fish-scale tiles. For similar try Douglas Watson Studio (01491 629960 or [www.douglaswatsonstudio.co.uk](http://www.douglaswatsonstudio.co.uk))

**White pendants** Mud Australia (020 7706 4903 or [www.mudaustralia.com](http://www.mudaustralia.com))

**Barstools** For similar try Another Country (020 7486 3251 or [www.anothercountry.com](http://www.anothercountry.com))

### DINING/LIVING AREA

**Dining table** For similar try Benchmark (01488 658020 or [www.benchmarkfurniture.com](http://www.benchmarkfurniture.com))

**Bistro chairs** For similar try Cult Furniture (020 8185 6960 or [www.cultfurniture.com](http://www.cultfurniture.com))

**Sideboard** Bespoke. For similar try West & Reid (020 3669 3997 or [www.westandreid.co.uk](http://www.westandreid.co.uk))

**Pendant** Under the Bell, Muuto at Houseology (0330 363 0330 or [www.houseology.com](http://www.houseology.com))

**Octagonal mirror** For similar try Not On The High Street (020 3318 5115 or [www.notonthestreet.com](http://www.notonthestreet.com))

**Sofa** For similar try Sofa.com (0345 400 2222 or [www.sofa.com](http://www.sofa.com))

**Rug** For similar try Woven (020 3176 8993 or [www.woven.co.uk](http://www.woven.co.uk))

**Wooden side table** For similar try Benchmark, as before

**Floor lamp** For similar try Made (0344 257 1888 or [www.made.com](http://www.made.com))

**Artwork** Bromley & Co ([www.bromleycollection.com](http://www.bromleycollection.com))

### MASTER BEDROOM

**Bed** For similar try Button & Sprung (0333 320 1801 or [www.buttonandsprung.com](http://www.buttonandsprung.com))

**Carpet** Grey wool. For similar try Alternative Flooring (01264 335111 or [www.alternativeflooring.com](http://www.alternativeflooring.com))

**Paint** Natural White, Dulux, as before

**Sheer curtains** For similar try Natural Curtain Company (01394 775670 or [www.naturalcurtaincompany.co.uk](http://www.naturalcurtaincompany.co.uk))

**Throw** Iced Dye by Lumiere Art & Co ([www.lumiereartandco.com.au](http://www.lumiereartandco.com.au))

### SERENA'S BEDROOM

**Bed** The Family Love Tree ([www.thefamilylovetree.com.au](http://www.thefamilylovetree.com.au))

**Wallpaper** For similar try The Scandinavian Design Center (020 3868 6562 or [www.scandinaviandesigncenter.com](http://www.scandinaviandesigncenter.com))

**Metal stool** For similar try Cult Furniture, as before

**Lamp** For similar try the Junction table lamp at Heal's (0333 212 1915 or [www.heals.com](http://www.heals.com))

**Shelf** For similar try Ferm Living at Made in Design (020 7692 4001 or [www.madeindesign.co.uk](http://www.madeindesign.co.uk))

### MASTER ENSUITE

**Wall tiles** Hexagon mosaic wall tiles. For similar try Victorian Plumbing (0345 862 2878 or [www.victorianplumbing.co.uk](http://www.victorianplumbing.co.uk))

**Floor tiles** Charcoal porcelain. For similar try Topps Tiles (0800 783 6262 or [www.toppstiles.co.uk](http://www.toppstiles.co.uk))

**Vanity unit** Bespoke. For similar try West & Reid, as before

**Countertop** Oyster, Caesarstone, as before

**Basins** Kohler (0844 571 0048 or [www.kohler.co.uk](http://www.kohler.co.uk))

**Brassware** For similar try Zucchetti at BATS Bathrooms (020 8870 0066 or [www.bathroomsourceonline.co.uk](http://www.bathroomsourceonline.co.uk))

**Mirrored cabinet** Bespoke. For similar try BATS Bathrooms, as before

### COST

A similar kitchen would cost around £30,000, a similar master bedroom (including wardrobe cabinetry) would cost around £10,000, and a similar ensuite would cost around £15,000



**Above:** The polished concrete floor gives the terrace a contemporary look. Custom-built cabinets house the barbecue and its accessories.