

# *The big* **REVEAL**

You'd never pick it from the street, but behind this Melbourne home's turn-of-the-century frontage lies a contemporary addition perfect for family life.

STORY & STYLING JUDY OSTERGAARD / PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL



**LIVING** / Walls of windows create a modern conservatory effect. Jessica and her sisters love to play in this large space next to the kitchen.

**HALLWAY** / Owner Katie at the stained-glass entrance. She adores the lofty ceilings throughout the home. Console, Perfect Pieces. FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 220.



## H&G HOUSES



**B**uilt in 1897, this elegant villa in leafy inner Melbourne has loads of charm. When Katie and Mark Davies bought the 380m<sup>2</sup> four-bedroom house in 2010, the front section still retained its turn-of-the-century character. The interior, however, had been renovated in the 1980s. Despite this, the internal spaces felt cramped and very much outdated.

The couple asked Geoff Challis, principal at Venn Architects, to design a larger open-plan living area for the rear and create more bedroom space on a new first floor. “We were after a family home that we could grow into,” says Katie, with daughters Jessica, four, Zoe, two, and one-year-old Heidi in mind. “We wanted to maintain the beautiful ceiling height throughout and have loads of natural light. We also wanted the front of the house, which was a bit tired, to be improved in keeping with the history and style of the original home. The back addition was to be ultra-modern, with timeless and understated finishes.”

In line with the brief, the original front rooms and central hallway were retained and updated. A portion of an adjoining room was used to add an ensuite and a walk-in wardrobe to the main bedroom. A guestroom with ensuite was created opposite. Further along is a study and sitting room with a small courtyard. The hall then opens up to a roomy new kitchen, dining and living zone with a wall of dark-framed doors and windows that take in the large garden and new pool. The high ceiling in the hallway continues into the kitchen and dining ►

*‘We wanted to maintain the beautiful ceiling height throughout and have loads of natural light.’*

*Katie Davies*

**LIVING /** Katie and Jessica in the home’s sunniest spot, with views of the garden on three sides. Nook sofa and side table, Jardan. Cushions, Spacecraft. Armchair, Great Dane. Coffee table, Zuster. Rug, Halcyon Lake. Pendant light, Tongue+Groove. Artwork, *Dream State* by Erin Flannery.

**DINING /** In the centre of the room, the recycled-timber dining table can seat up to 10 people. Table, Charles Scott. Billiani Doll chairs, Hub Furniture Lighting Living.

**Designer buy:** Spinning Light BH2 pendant light, \$675, Great Dane. **FOR WHERE TO BUY,** SEE PAGE 220.



### ***This is the life***

"Our house is very relaxed and we want it to be known among friends and family as a fun place to come and hang out," says Katie. "We really love the living room as it's somewhere we can all be together as a family, even if we're doing different things, be it watching golf, cooking, making arts and crafts or pushing prams! And of course, the outdoor area with the pool and trampoline is magnificent in summer."





**MAIN BEDROOM** / A cane piece from The Family Love Tree picks up the wood tones of the Zuster bedhead and integrated side tables. Throw and cushions, Urban Home Republic.

**JESSICA'S ROOM** / A playful Pop&Scott swing table is perfect with the loopy wallpaper.

**Smart buy:** Trellis wallpaper in Habitat Blue, \$100/sheet, The Wall Sticker Company.

**ENSUITE** / Bluestone tiles ground the white scheme. Vanity, Caesarstone. Stool, Zuster.

**STAIRCASE** / The treads are black japanned Victorian ash. Powder-coated aluminium rails.

FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 220.

## THE PALETTE

*Dulux Lexicon*  
half strength  
interior, throughout

*Dulux Monument*  
external timber  
details

Add a dash of

*Taubmans Portofina*



*‘The timber feature wall is a backdrop for the cantilevered staircase, which seems to float in the space.’*

*Geoff Challis, architect*



◀ area and soars to double height in the living zone. “This area is the centrepiece of the house,” says Geoff. “It’s stunning in scale but relaxed in style.” On the eastern side, a timber feature wall acts as a backdrop for a cantilevered staircase, which appears to float in the space. “It’s designed to be as seamless and lightweight as possible,” he says. Upstairs are three bedrooms, a bathroom and play area.

Now 580m<sup>2</sup>, the house has a clean, contemporary aesthetic throughout, says Geoff. “The natural, neutral tones complement its heritage, its original brickwork and surrounding greenery.” White smoked-oak lining boards on the walls, chocolate-coloured oak floorboards in the front section and black and white joinery create a high-contrast palette that serves to highlight the contemporary furniture.

In the new section, the flooring is a dark-tinted polished concrete, softened with rugs. Venn Architects also assisted in selecting new furniture throughout the home. “I’d spent many years living overseas so I hadn’t accumulated much and Mark sold all his stuff on eBay!” says Katie. “However, the house is still very much – and probably always will be – a work in progress.” ▶

**Venn Architects, South Melbourne, Victoria; (03) 9682 4222 or [www.vennarchitects.com](http://www.vennarchitects.com). Eckersley Garden Architecture, Burnley, Victoria; (03) 9421 5537 or [www.e-ga.com.au](http://www.e-ga.com.au).**



# H&G HOUSES



## FEATURE PLANTS

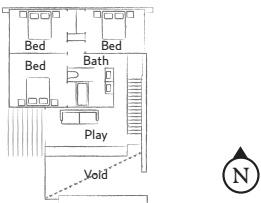
**BACK GARDEN**  
**Lilly pilli**  
*(Syzygium australe*  
 'Hinterland Gold')  
 Sacred bamboo  
*(Nandina domestica)*  
 Paroo lily (*Dianella*  
*caerulea* 'Lucia')  
*Acer palmatum*  
 'Dissectum Seiryu'  
 Boston ivy

**FACADE** / Fortunately, the original tiles and stained glass were intact when the couple bought the property. Fresh paint on the trims smarten the red brickwork.  
**ZOE'S BEDROOM** / Designed by Little Liberty, most of this room's accessories are from Talo Interiors. Cot, Kiddie Country.  
**GARDEN** / Bathed in all-day sun, the north-facing pool is bordered by timber decking and stepping stones in honed bluestone from Granite Works.

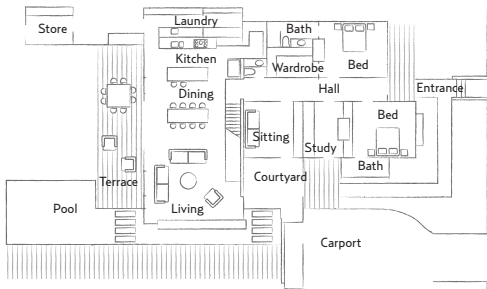
**H&G**

## THE LAYOUT

FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR





## ***Reno snapshot***

**Location** A leafy suburb in Melbourne's south-east.

**Budget** \$1 million+.

**Style** Victorian old-world charm mixed with modern, sleek, clean lines.

**Motivation** "We bought knowing we would renovate," says Katie.

**Game changer** "We wanted everything to be open and airy – Geoff came up with the amazing wraparound pool that the living area was designed around so water could be seen from all angles."

**Words of wisdom** "Research the architect and builder and talk to some of their clients."

