

Designer brains
The Ikea dining table was the perfect size and shape for the dining nook. Homeowners Matt and Rhiannon, pictured, combined their skills to create Design Orr Build, an interior design and building company. →

retro

A Melbourne duo turn a 1950s clinker-brick house into a **modernist haven**

mod

text natalie walton | photography sharyn cairns | styling simone haag

Simple living

Rhiannon and Matt have kept their interior modern, preferring clean lines and minimalist pieces. The corner wall arm light is from Workstead and the dining chairs were found on the street.





Favourite space

The living room, which now opens onto an outdoor area after the couple added French doors, is Rhiannon's fave place. "It's cosy, filled with our favourite pieces, and the place that we entertain in and retreat to," she says.

Chaos-free kitchen
 "I love my kitchen!" Rhiannon says. "While it's petite in size, its layout is super-functional." Clutter is housed by floor-to-ceiling joinery by Avram Construction.



who lives here?

Interior designer Rhiannon Farmer, her fiancé builder/carpenter Matt Orrand, their toddler Bobby, and Rottweiler Dougie. Designorrbuild.com.au

Inspiration "My greatest design influences would be interior designers Paul Hecker and Hamish Guthrie," Rhiannon says. "I admire their creativeness and attention to detail. I owe much of my skill to them as I worked at Hecker Guthrie for five years."

AFTER LOOKING FOR A MELBOURNE INNER-CITY apartment to call their own about five years ago, Rhiannon Farmer and Matt Orr found a 1950s clinker-brick home in the suburb of Ringwood East. It's an area that's about 20 minutes from the city, surrounded by suburbs such as Fitzroy and Richmond, and where many of the homeowners are long-time occupants of the area. "They are proud homeowners and super-friendly," Rhiannon says. Like many homes in the area, it was a two-bedroom, post-war style house. And painted red. But it was a house.

The walls were painted red. The carpets were red. And the bathroom was fitted with peach-coloured tiles. "In one word, putrid!" Rhiannon says. "The layout was dysfunctional, dark and had no designated space for a dining area or outdoor entertaining area." The house also needed re-stumping and underpinning.

However, Rhiannon is an interior designer – she worked for Hecker Guthrie for over five years – and Matt is a carpenter/builder. Their plan of attack was to →

Hung up
"I love the String system for its clean lines, functionality and ever-changing styling," Rhiannon says of her shelving. The Vox table lamp on the desk is from Fred International. The artwork above the sofa is by Carl Berndtsson.



Mother love
Rhiannon and toddler Bobby snuggle on the mohair throw from Scout House. One day Rhiannon hopes to buy an original David Band artwork. But for now, they have a framed limited-edition tea towel hanging above their Molmic sofa. →

replace the doors and archways, as well as skirting boards. They also pulled out the front living room window and replaced it with French doors. Oak timber flooring was laid and the bathroom was fully renovated, as was the kitchen – which they gutted. At the back of the house they created a dining room area, installing French doors here, too, that open onto a new rear deck and pergola.

Other than the joinery, all of the building works undertaken on the property were built and installed by Matt. Rhiannon, with her experience as an interior designer, fitted out the spaces. Their complementary skills are now part of their business Design Orr Build.

Initially, they had an energy specialist cleanse the house. “Our friends and family thought we were mad; let’s just say we had the last laugh!” Rhiannon says. “We had no hiccups through the renovation phase, and the house has such warm and inviting energy – very different from before.”



Colour pop
Bobby enjoys a cuddle with his mum in the master bedroom. A Rachel Castle framed artwork above the bed adds a pop of colour, along with the Jieldé lamp.



Bathroom redux

The bathroom was renovated, with both the original cast-iron bath retained – but refinished – and the mirrored cabinet. The Offcut stool is by Tom Dixon.



Renovation rescue (left)

Tiles and tapware were chosen with the home’s ‘50s era in mind. The salvaged basin pedestal was refinished in white.

Splash of red

An old flip-lid school desk is used as a bedside table. The original Jieldé lamp was for a client, but two were accidentally sent so Rhiannon got to keep this one. →





A FLOORING



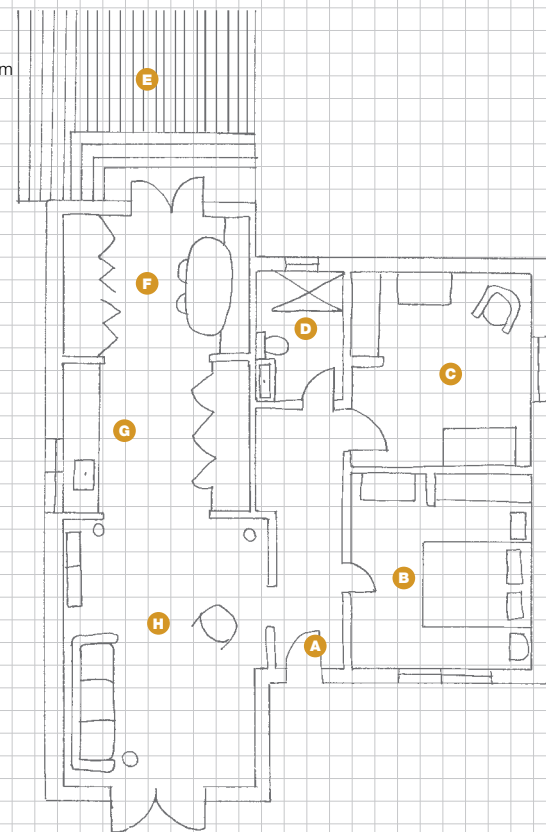
B BATHROOM TILES



C EXTERIOR PAINT

D INTERIOR PAINT

- KEY**
A Entrance
B Master bedroom
C Bedroom
D Bathroom
E Deck
F Dining
G Kitchen
H Living area



Black & white
 Dulux "Trespass" paint was chosen for outside, and Natural White for in. A mini herb garden is by Home By Danscapes.



floorplan & still-life styling christina banos | photography sharyn cairns (lifestyle shots)

FINISHES

FLOORING Oak in **Smoked/Limed (A)**; 15.8cm x 10mm x 1.83m, from \$85 a sq m, Royal Oak Floors. **BATHROOM TILES** **Celestial Bianco (B)**; 60cm x 30cm, \$51.43 a sq m, Beaumont Tiles. **EXTERIOR PAINT** Dulux Weathershield in **Trespass (C)**, \$74.95 for 4L. **INTERIOR PAINT** Dulux Wash & Wear in **Peplum Quarter (D)**, \$74.95 per 4L. For stockists, see page 175.



Shelfie - take that!
 In Bobby's room, a shelf was installed for a changing display. The timber ram is from Scout House.

Bold & bright
 Custom hand-embroidered artwork, from \$100, Castle.

Knitted up
 Curved Hem knit in Bottle Green, \$129, Country Road.

RHIANNON AND MATT'S MOODBOARD

A neutral palette, classic pieces, retro touches and colour pops for a restful, welcoming family home

Good as gold
 Metallic cushion cover in Gold, \$9.95, H&M. 16cm x 16cm.

Classic white
 Bottle ceramic vase in Pure White, \$29, West Elm.

Seeing red
 Vintage Scholar table lamp in Red, \$249.95, Zanui.

Swedish style
 Dalshult/Slåhult dining table in Birch/White, \$299, Ikea. 1.85cm x 90cm.

Old-school style
 Ikea PS cabinet in White, \$99, Ikea. 40cm x 63cm x 1.19m.

Bases covered
 Basic octagonal trivet, \$75, Marble Basics.

Egg-cellent piece
 Eggcup stool in Pine, \$550, Mark Tuckey.

Neutral hues
 Fenton rug in White, \$399, Freedom. 2m x 3m.

Snuggly rug
 Flec throw, \$119.95, Kas Australia.

Retro tunes
 TR82 DAB+ retro-style digital radio, \$139, Bush Australia.