

The striking artwork above the fireplace is by an Australian artist and depicts an aerial view of a bushland river stream

## french **fancies**

*Combining old-world beauties with contemporary classics, this Melbourne home draws inspiration from different continents to create a truly remarkable and individual space*





*Massimo Interiors draws on the history and decadence of centuries of Italian craft and design, while Andrew Frost Interiors encapsulates the contemporary, fresh and innovative styles of America*



Massimo and Andrew wanted to retain an open-plan feel so they ensured they didn't clutter the space with furniture

Words Alexandra Longstaff  
Photography Stu Morley

**O**n a quiet leafy street in the Melbourne suburb of Toorak, a developer and builder came together to construct a special family home. With a Georgian-style façade to appeal to a more traditional taste and to also reflect a high-end boutique concept, the home became a majestic and exciting new Australian property reflecting both European and American influences.

Massimo Interiors and Andrew Frost Interiors are worlds apart. Massimo Interiors draws on the history and decadence of centuries of Italian craft and design, while Andrew Frost Interiors encapsulates the contemporary, fresh and innovative styles of America.

"The challenge was to integrate the aesthetic styles of both designers into a harmonious

whole that also satisfied the clients," explains Massimo Speroni of Massimo Interiors. "I was born in Italy and am influenced by classic and modern European architecture, art and design, which inspires me to pair contemporary with antique and classical pieces of furniture. Andrew studied interior design in the USA so he brings more of an American sensibility to his design projects as well as the knowledge of a range of classical styles."

This new dwelling was to become the home of an older couple with grown children and a brood of young grandchildren, and this heavily influenced the design of the interior. "The clients wanted something that was light, bright and contemporary but with a few traditional accents," says Massimo. "They wanted something that was restful and peaceful with a level of class and sophistication, while still being

a comfortable child-friendly environment for the grandchildren."

The clients were involved in the design process from start to finish, making it a coordinated team effort to orchestrate the vision. "They liked the airy feel of the house and wanted to keep the space open and not cluttered with furniture. They wanted plenty of space for people to sit, talk and watch TV, and room for children and grandchildren to play. It was important to have a good flow between inside and out. They liked the idea of mixing in a few traditional but classic pieces of furniture with more contemporary examples and wanted something with colour, not only neutrals. The idea was to create quality without being too blingy or shiny," says Massimo.

Many spaces in the home feature contemporary accents. Mirrored façades →



## RENAISSANCE REVIVAL

The classic sculpture on the coffee table is a specimen of masculine beauty and perfection, adding a touch of culture and sophistication to the room

**in short** ♦ This new build is situated in Melbourne's southeastern suburb of Toorak ♦ The interior design is the brainchild of Massimo Interiors and Andrew Frost Interiors ♦ The two firms bring different design elements to the table, one the old-world charm of Europe, the other a sophisticated American ambience ♦ Artworks are utilised, many by local Australians, to lead the design of the space ♦ Other artworks highlight the Renaissance and Classical periods, contrasting with the contemporary features found around the home





A large 1630s' painting of Maria De Tassis hints at classical elements and oversees diners as they eat

### genius trick

Using sophistication as a middle ground, classical and contemporary styles come together in this stylish abode



shine from a selection of carefully chosen modern pieces, and glossy neutrals add an exciting dimension to simpler colours. "They were open to adding a few unexpected pieces to keep it young, fresh and elegant, with a layout suited to host the numerous family gatherings," explains Massimo.

A fresh and fashionable abode incorporating all of the clients' needs might look effortless within these particular four walls but, in reality, it was no easy feat to achieve. Key to the design was the incorporation of a selection of artworks. Art was the catalyst for colour throughout the home, driven largely by the desire of both designers to support local Australian artists. Throughout the rooms, artworks nod to the outback, for example, the piece above the fireplace in the living room, which represents an aerial view of a bushland river stream.

In this room, the designers came up with a number of different options to maximise

space and maintain an open feel throughout. The final decision was a symmetrical design of two large sofas in a charcoal fabric facing each other, separated by two very large ottomans, which were covered in a geometric cut-velvet fabric to create luxury and drama. A second seating area was created near the fireplace to provide a more intimate space for reading or sitting by the fire.

"A rich yet cosy effect is achieved through the layering of materials, including polished timber, stainless steel, marble, glass, acrylic, and natural fabrics such as linen, cotton velvets and silks," explains Massimo. "The juxtaposition of different styles of furniture and accessories also creates a visual counterpoint to the simplicity of the kitchen and dining area."

Massimo explains that it all began with the Louis XV French Bergere lounge chair. The clients loved the aubergine-coloured fabric

on the chair so a colour palette and style were coordinated around this.

The coffee table in front of the fireplace became the centrepiece in this sitting area and is topped by a variety of ornaments — from the beautiful composition of clear acrylic obelisks to the Renaissance white marble statue. "Authentic and classic, this type of sculpture is a specimen of masculine beauty and perfection, adding a layer of culture and sophistication to the room," states Massimo. "An unexpected splash of colour is introduced by a beautiful bunch of yellow roses and, although this is not a permanent accent colour, it brings life and joy into the room."

The unmistakable presence of European and classical artwork throughout the home sets it apart from other abodes, and in no other room is this more apparent than the dining room. A large 1630s' painting depicting the portrait of Maria De Tassis watches over →



Different textures of soft gold, burnt orange, turquoise and fresh greens bring together the artwork and the outside landscaping. The final touch of the faux black throw at the end of the bed helps create drama and glamour

### copy that

Allow your artwork to lead the colour and style of a particular space





## RENAISSANCE REVIVAL

A linen bedhead and American oak bedside cabinets create the perfect neutral background for layering colours

*The unmistakable presence of European and classical artwork throughout the home sets it apart from other abodes*



diners as they break bread. "She looks to the viewer with a hint of a smile," says Massimo. "Her unaffected charisma and charm bring the distinguished pose to life. This painting injects an old-world touch in a clean and modern space, and introduces a European flavour connecting the dining room with the living room, where the Louis XV French Bergere lounge chair and the marble statue reside."

Working as a team, Massimo and Andrew were able to combine the best of both the classical and contemporary worlds. They brought unique ideas to the project and created a finished design that is more than the sum of its parts. **HD**

**more info?**  
[massimointeriors.com.au](http://massimointeriors.com.au)





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*"I was born in Italy and am influenced by classic and modern European architecture, art and design, which inspires me to pair contemporary with antique and classical pieces of furniture"*

— Massimo Speroni

Massimo Speroni p.116



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