

Take two talented designers, a boutique development in the leafy Victorian suburb of Toorak, and add free creative licence, and the result is undoubtedly elegant, stylish and stunning.

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STYLING ANDREW FROST AND MASSIMO SPERONI

# DESIGN confidential

The extendable dining table is a bespoke design with a Corian top and polished stainless steel legs. The Zanotta Lia chairs from Space Furniture were reupholstered in leather. The custom-made five-door buffet has a Pilkington Optimirror top and a stainless steel frame.





Acrylic on canvas *Madigan Gulf*, with an acrylic frame is by Sydney-based artist Judith White. The fireplace is an Elegance Simplicity Pure Vision model by Real Flame.

For designers Massimo Speroni of Massimo Interiors and Andrew Frost of Andrew Frost Interiors the makeover of the living, dining and bedroom spaces of this Toorak home encompassed the furniture layout, soft furnishings, wall coverings, lighting, accessories, art, furniture, and custom cabinetry.

Although the residence had a Georgian-style facade the homeowners desired a more modern look, "they're trendy in fashion and interiors and had a more traditional home in the past so they wanted this property to be more contemporary," says Massimo.

The kitchen and bathrooms were already completed so when Andrew and Massimo were engaged to decorate the home, they worked with the homeowners to choose a shade of white paint for the walls and a dark stain for the European oak floorboards to offset the predominantly white, grey and charcoal colour scheme they visualised.

#### GETTING TO WORK

The homeowners are a busy professional couple with two grown children and four grandchildren, so Massimo and Andrew worked closely with them to understand how the foyer, bedrooms and living and dining rooms would be used. This research was important to the project as the couple often host large gatherings for family and friends so there's a need for plenty of comfortable space for children to play and people to sit, eat and move around.

The homeowners desired a light, colourful, contemporary interior featuring classic decor and some unexpected pieces. They liked the spacious feel of the house and wanted to avoid going overboard with furniture.

#### STYLISH JUXTAPOSITIONS

Massimo and Andrew devised a layout for the living area that featured two seating zones, allowing them to avoid crowding the space.



A pair of custom-made four-seater sofas in Cosmic Liquorice fabric by Zinc were sourced from Marco Fabrics. The cushions are from Marco Fabrics and Cameron Comer of Comer & King.

#### MASSIMO INTERIORS TIP

Choose an interior designer carefully as the connection between the client and the designer is important – it becomes like a long-term relationship. Once you establish trust with the designer they will guide you to achieve the look you want. All designers have a different flair, but we need to understand the style and needs of the client to put together a look that the client loves.

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The custom-made 2.5 seater sofa in Barney fabric, by LES Creations from Ascraft. It's accented with a 1950s Saarinen Tulip Side marble-topped table and a 1960s Warren Platner glass-topped side table, both by Knoll Studio, from Dedeco.





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The kitchen features polished granite Bianco crystal benchtops, a Franke sink, a Gessi Just Pull-out tap, a Zip HydroTap for filtered water, Kai swivel stools by La Palma and a Miele slim-line rangehood, multi-function wall oven, gas cooktop, built-in coffee machine and integrated dishwasher.



The Roman blinds are made of Renross fabric by Mermel. The cubist ice buckets and vases came from Italy, while the bespoke pendant lampshades are in Kravet Pelagos Archipelago Haze fabric with a frosted acrylic diffuser and custom chain by Diaz Lighting.



"Initially the living area was very large and it was a bit tricky because the fireplace was located to one side of the room," says Massimo. "To unify the room we used a floor rug, so we could create separate seating areas to enjoy different activities."

Firstly, they marked out where the fireplace, TV and sofas would go and a cavity above the living room's fireplace was sealed off in order to display artwork. To create a sense of balance and drama and to provide extra seating, Massimo and Andrew worked out a symmetrical placement of two large sofas facing each other, separated by two luxurious ottomans.

The second seating area near the fireplace was designed for reading or relaxing by the warm glow of the fire. A rich layering of

different materials for the furniture and decor, such as polished timber, stainless steel, marble, glass, acrylic, linen, cotton velvet and silk created contrast with the pared-back kitchen and dining areas.

A subtle palette of white, silver, grey and charcoal was selected to provide a backdrop to any accent colour such as the aubergine fabric of the cut-velvet Louis XV French Bergere lounge chair. Australian artworks also injected colour to the space. Massimo and Andrew proposed paintings which represent the warm hues of outback landscapes, which were echoed in their choice of scatter cushions. The centrally positioned coffee table was topped with an array of clear acrylic obelisks and a marble Renaissance statue, and finally a luxurious custom-made grey wool/silk blend rug was placed to subtly tie the seating areas together.

#### BALANCE AND PROPORTION

For the dining room Andrew and Massimo designed two oversized pendant light fittings in a print which echoes the pattern on the living room ottomans. A reproduction portrait of Maria De Tassis, a member of the family who began Europe's first postal service, painted circa 1630 by Anthony Van Dyck,

#### BEHIND THE SCENES

**Colour code:** Dulux Natural White was used for the interior walls.

**Favourite space:** Massimo and Andrew agree that the living area is their favourite space as it seamlessly blends their style and the homeowners too.

**Biggest challenge:** To combine the aesthetic styles of two designers in a unified vision which satisfied the brief. Italian-born Massimo is influenced by classic and modern European architecture, art and design, while Andrew studied interior design in the USA and has a more modern design aesthetic. By combining their skills and approaches the men were able to create an interior which pleased the clients and themselves.

#### Luckiest find:

Andrew: The acrylic obelisks from Milan. I love the classical shape of them – they give a nice contrast between the classical shape and the contemporary material used. Massimo: The Renaissance statue that sits on the coffee table. I spotted it while looking for other furniture and knew it would be a great contrast to the modern coffee table.

Boyd Blue square mirror with a silver foiled hand-carved timber frame rests on a bespoke powder-coated console in Nickel Pearl by Dulux, with a Bianco statuario marble top.



#### ANDREW FROST INTERIORS TIPS

It's a great idea to choose large upholstered pieces in neutral shades like silver, greys and charcoals, then introduce colour through artwork. That way you can pull colour from the artwork and carry it through to accessories.



A custom-made leather armchair and footstool in Pique orange top-grain leather by Scandinavia VII with stainless steel frames create a cosy nook alongside a Domino side table by Molteni from Hub which has a polished chrome base with a grey oak top insert. The curtains are made of Vague fabric by Decortex Firenze.



rests on the buffet, bringing a touch of old world charm to this clean, crisp space which houses a large, extendable dining table for entertaining.

In the master bedroom the homeowners wished to display a painting behind the linen-upholstered bed, and Massimo and Andrew took inspiration from its hues, selecting pale gold, burnt orange, turquoise and green scatter cushions to bring together the artwork and the subtle landscaping visible through the floor-to-ceiling windows and doors. It was important to have a design that flows to the outside areas, which includes a blue stone paved courtyard garden with landscaped hedges and trees and a custom-made fountain.

To complete the master bedroom, a welcoming leather occasional chair with a coordinated footstool, a luxe black throw at the foot of the bed and geometric ottomans which reference those found in the living room were chosen.

#### FINISHING TOUCHES

Cream Roman blinds were chosen for the living and dining area windows to create a light, clean look. "We didn't want to use anything that was too flashy or too heavy and we decided that Roman blinds were best as they were more discreet and would keep the architecture of the windows intact," says Massimo.



The master bedroom features acrylic painting on canvas *Flourish* by Queensland-based artist Colin Sweeney, which inspired the selection of scatter cushions from Cameron Corner of Corner & King.

In the bedrooms textured curtain fabrics which coordinated with the carpet created a subtle backdrop for the statement artwork and furniture.

Hand-blown glass table lamps with linen shades and silver leaf bases were placed in the living area to establish an intimate, warm appeal. The same lamp shape was used in the master bedroom but hand-blown amber glass was selected instead. "The colour of the lamps in the bedroom was predetermined by the artwork," says Massimo. "We needed something grand in scale because the artwork was taking over the space, yet the lamps are also subtle as they're delicate and clear."

Care was taken when choosing durable fabrics in order to establish a child-friendly yet sophisticated space. In particular the clients appreciated Massimo and Andrew's choice of aubergine striped Aramasa Charolite fabric by Zinc from Marco Fabrics which was used for the Louis XV chair.

Overall, both Massimo and Andrew agree that the home is a seamless blend of both their styles and the homeowner's too. As Massimo explains, "Every detail, every object and every decoration – from the fabric to the wall colour to the artworks has been thought about in detail – the home is together as one." MH

The master bedroom's king size custom-made bed is upholstered in vintage linen by Westbury Textiles and is accented with a black faux fur throw from Cruz. Wool carpet from Chaparral Carpets.



#### LITTLE BLACK BOOK

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