

MODERN

# HOME

AUSTRALIAN

**WIN!**  
• KING OSCAR  
BREAKFAST PACK  
• A MARION GRASBY  
COOKBOOK  
AUSTRALIAN RESIDENTS ONLY

## GLOBAL STYLE

*Exotic interiors from  
around the world*

**EXPERT  
ADVICE**

*Choose the right  
vacuum cleaner*

*Create a comfy  
and functional  
home office*

Vol 7 No 6

A\$7.95 incl GST  
NZ\$9.95 incl GST



### COOKING WITH POH

Celebrity cook and Masterchef favourite Poh Ling Yeow shares her favourite Malaysian recipes.





# WORK OF *art*

The owner of this newly built three-bedroom house was in search of 'wow factor', and Melbourne-based Italian designer Massimo Speroni certainly came up with the goods.

STORY SUSANNAH HARDY PHOTOGRAPHY STU MORLEY STYLING MASSIMO SPERONI



The clean white finish of the lounge room allows full focus on the extraordinary reproduction of the Thomas Couture painting *Romans of the Decadence*.



## MASSIMO'S TOP DECORATING TIP

Find a focus in a room and work around that. Don't try to do too much altogether, keep it simple, which is sometimes best. And find one spot that can be the main focus, create a colour palette with the space in mind and go forward from there.



Originally the property in Melbourne's fashionable suburb of Malvern was a single residence on a corner block until the land was subdivided and the existing house replaced with two townhouses. Massimo of Massimo Interiors was brought in to design the residence at the back of the property during construction – an ideal situation as he could work closely with his client to maximise the floor space and storage.

With his eye for blending classic styles with contemporary, Massimo introduced unique design ideas, fabulous furnishings and

stunning finishes, creating the unmistakable glamour of an exclusive five star hotel without forgetting warmth, comfort and the owner's personal touch. Now finished the home's interior, which was inspired by the 1847 painting *Romans of the Decadence* by Thomas Couture, is a masterpiece in its own right and has certainly fulfilled the client's brief of having "wow" factor.

### CREATING ART

When Massimo presented the artwork, *Romans of the Decadence* as his inspiration for the interior design, he found that the painting

very much represented what the client was after. "It was definitely something I could work with and make into something personal, special, grandiose," says Massimo. "The rest of the design evolved from there." Starting with a clean and versatile base, Massimo used Dulux Lexicon quarter strength for the walls and ceilings and stunning Elite Grey Polish ceramic tiles underfoot.

He then created an opulent and glamorous finish with the clever use of mirrors, glass and clear furniture. The open-plan layout on the ground floor left little room for pictures however, with only

**ABOVE** The lounge room features a Denver leather lounge suite by Editions, Pasha armchairs from Pedrali and Stone stools by Kartell with cushions custom-made in beautiful fabrics from Warwick, Zepel and Carlucci di Chiavasso.

**TOP LEFT** The lounge area features stylish and unobtrusive contemporary pieces, which together with the soft toned accents and impressive mural, create a finish of luxury, glamour and grandeur.

**LEFT** The landing on the first floor is not a large area but is an elegant corner with a few classic decorative items such as the statue sourced overseas.



Massimo has created an impressive look of modern luxury by cleverly combining pieces such as the clear Kartell chairs, Saarinen table and cowhide rug from Leffler with one or two classic items like the clear Kristal Chandelier from Meizai and a sculpture sourced overseas.



Massimo created a dividing wall between the lounge and kitchen/dining area that enabled him to maximise kitchen storage and install a functional yet stylish Luna White Quantum quartz island bench.

one wall in the lounge area to create something spectacular. Massimo turned to his source of inspiration and reproduced the actual painting for this wall. "I wanted to do something to create the 'wow' factor that the client wanted as well as something that was close to him so I went full on with a big mural," says Massimo who sourced a large reproduction print, professionally

**LEFT** The dining/kitchen area has a lovely open and spacious feel thanks to fresh white walls and white, clear or glass furniture. A classic warmth is infused with opulent pieces such as the gold leaf corbel or the clear Kristal Chandelier from Meizai.



scanned it and printed it offshore onto a textured, washable vinyl wallpaper. The finished product is a similar size to the actual artwork residing in the Musée D'Orsay in Paris.

"It was a big job, I can tell you that!" he says. With an impeccable attention to detail, Massimo also included an appropriate still image on a jpeg for the television screen in front. "We positioned the television in the right spot, I took a photo and I cut out a section of the painting," says Massimo. "Then because I had the original digital version, I made a still of it." Not only is the television now completely camouflaged but Massimo has also made lighter and darker versions of

the still to suit different times of the day so all eyes only experience the fabulous mural: "It really makes that room, and the front door is opposite so when you open the door, that's what you see," says Massimo.

#### EMBRACING CHALLENGE

The house is built on two levels with three bedrooms, a main bathroom and ensuite upstairs and kitchen/dining/living areas on the ground floor. Originally the downstairs layout was very open-plan and during construction Massimo could see there would be difficulties in creating adequate workspace in the kitchen, but he came up with an ideal solution. By building a dividing wall between

#### BEHIND THE SCENES

**Favourite feature:** "I have to say the mural. You don't see something like that very often!"

**Luckiest find:** "The corbel on the column in the dining room, I'd been searching for months to find that piece."

**Favourite room:** "The master bedroom – it has such a luxurious feel that is soothing, with a softness to it, like a luxury hotel room."

**Biggest challenge:** "The plumbing – ideally I wanted the plumbing to run outside the house but the column was the solution for that. Sometimes you have to compromise – things happen in construction and you have to come up with the best solution for the budget, for the client and for you as the designer."



the lounge area and kitchen it allowed room for additional kitchen storage plus an island bench and created a bridge between the two spaces. The dividing wall created ample workspace in the kitchen as well as another spot for guests to mingle and chat.

Another issue arose during construction – the plumbing had to run inside the house according to the council. This left a column in the dining area, which Massimo included in the interior design by installing a gold leaf corbel with a custom-made marble top attached. “Everything else is white or clear, nothing too bold,” says Massimo. “So I thought I would make something beautiful to look at when you walk in the front door and need to put your keys down.” It took some time to source the right piece but the result is an eye-catching feature that blends with the overall interior design, adds classic warmth to the neutral base and ultimately turned a negative into a fabulous positive.

#### MODERN CLASSIC STYLE

Massimo sourced magnificent furniture and decorative pieces from overseas as well as closer to home, mixing classic and contemporary styles to create an eclectic picture of modern luxury. The ground floor features mostly white or clear furniture items such as a Denver leather sofa from Editions and Pasha armchairs in polycarbonate from Kartell.

However, pieces such as a full-length gold leaf mirror and the corbel on the wall in the dining area brighten up the stark and stylish background. “As soon as you introduce the gold, it brings in this warmth,” says Massimo. “You don’t have to put in a red cushion to make it warm, which I find a bit obvious.” Instead Massimo has sourced subtle and stylish fabrics for soft furnishings from Warwick, Charterhouse and Zepel.

In the dining area, the Saarinen tulip table has been teamed with transparent Louis Ghost chairs from Kartell, while a fabulous

“UPSTAIRS THE GLAMOUR CONTINUES IN THE MASTER BEDROOM, WHICH IS NOTHING SHORT OF MAGNIFICENT.”



The combination of the mirrored feature wall and mirrored bedside table with fabulous contemporary Bourgie transparent table lamps gives the master bedroom an opulent French flavour.



Massimo had the soft furnishings in the master bedroom custom-made in exquisite fabrics. The sheer curtains are Eros Silver from Warwick and the main curtains are Sateen Silver from Zepel Fabrics. The cushions are equally divine and feature a Moroccan geometric print called Bangla Spring from Warwick.

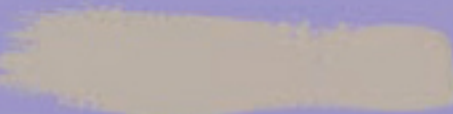


## COLOUR CODE

For all the walls and ceilings Dulux Lexicon quarter strength was used, while Dulux metallic designer paint in Pewter Illusion featured in the downstairs powder room.



Dulux Lexicon quarter strength



Dulux Pewter Illusion

**RIGHT** The sleek and stylish main bathroom has been fitted with a luxury spa bath as well as large rectangular Elite Grey Polish ceramic tiles, a vanity surface of Quantum quartz in Luna White, and fabulous 'Love Me' tapware from IB Rubinetterie in Italy.

**BELOW** The ensuite to the master bedroom is wonderfully sleek and luxurious, featuring a mirrored wall with two cleverly disguised side cabinets and a smart white vanity with twin basins and Quantum quartz benchtops in Luna White. The floor and walls have been covered in Elite Grey Polish ceramic tiles with contrasting Lumina Bianco ceramic tiles for the shower area, falling above.



antique clear Kristal Chandelier from Meizai adds a classic touch of decadence.

Upstairs the glamour continues in the master bedroom, which is nothing short of magnificent – a custom-made king-size bed is covered in soft white 'Mystere Snow' velvet fabric from Warwick. The wall behind the bed has been completely mirrored, while the remaining three walls feature beautiful wallpaper in Chichester

Platinum by Designers Guild. To complete the hotel-style luxury, a stunning regency chandelier hangs overhead and nearby is a fabulous ensuite with a double shower, beautiful mirrored and stone surfaces as well as imported Italian tapware.

## HOME SWEET HOME

Overall this property shows Massimo's belief in the value of creating a luxurious yet

comfortable home space. "In a society where difficult economic times make us feel uncertain about the future, we tend to forget about the good things in life," he says. "We should enjoy a little luxury and come home to a place of serenity and comfort, as simple as a beautiful bedroom to relax in or a living space that we are proud of and can share good times in with family and friends." For Massimo, it is just as important for the client to feel that

they are part of the creation, as it is for him to design using his personal style and unique flair. This is certainly the case with the owners of this Malvern property: "we always get that overwhelming proud feeling when friends and family drop by and comment on how our house has that 'wow' factor!" they say.

For more information on Massimo Interiors call 0414 656 449 or visit [www.massimointeriors.com.au](http://www.massimointeriors.com.au)