

This is the life

"It's still hard not to smile when coming through the front door," says Brent McMillan of his family's home. Featuring elegant formal living and dining rooms at the front, plus a large open-plan space at the rear, this cleverly redesigned home functions perfectly. "The kitchen and informal living room have become the hub of the house," says Brent. "The kids can play and read there without being far from our guidance, and it's also a wonderful space to cook in."

HALLWAY New flocked wallpaper makes a sympathetic partner to the original features of this early-19th century home. Valentino Stripe wallpaper, GP & J Baker. Vase, Space. Custom rug design by Bloom Design & Decoration made by Designer Rugs. Marseille pendant lights, La Maison. Designer buy: Louis XVI sideboard, \$1999, La Maison. **INFORMAL LIVING** In a home warmed by efficient hydronic heating, Khan the Bengal cat has no problem finding a toasty spot for a nap. Custom-made cushions in fabric from Tigger Hall. Throw, Abode Living. For Where to Buy, see page 236.



Dream RETREAT

For a fortunate Melbourne family, this sensitively renovated heritage home is a dream come true in every sense.

STORY & STYLING HEATHER NETTE KING ♦ PHOTOGRAPHY ARMELLE HABIB





Amanda and Brent McMillan had been dating for just a few months when they took a drive to Melbourne’s south-west byside area to have ‘the talk’ and decide just where their fledgling relationship was heading. “We lived in the inner city at the time, so we escaped the hustle and bustle to relax and chat,” says Brent.

The discussion went well that day in 2005, and as they began the drive back to the city, they passed a beautiful house with a picket fence. Amanda took one look and knew she had found her dream home. “It staggers me that seven years later we were able to purchase that very same house,” says Brent. “For all the cliches and corny statements about dreams coming true, our dream did, in fact, do just that.”

The 1880s double-fronted weatherboard home had undergone various alterations by previous owners. As first-time homeowners, Amanda and Brent – now parents of Mia, seven, and Ava, six – were unsure about the renovation process, so they engaged Terri Shannon of Bloom Interior Design & Decoration to guide them. “It was our first major renovation decision, and we are incredibly grateful that we got it right,” says Brent.

“Amanda and I had a pinboard full of patterns and magazine cuttings, and Terri was able to translate that into reality,” says Brent. “Amanda’s priority was to do something inspiring and significant; mine was to get the structure and liveability of the house right. There was a lot of work done to ensure that the house will remain structurally sound for many years to come and, although no one will see it, that’s of great importance to me.”

‘THE MONEY WE SPENT ON PROFESSIONAL ADVICE SAVED US TIME, AND FUNNILY ENOUGH, MONEY, TOO.’ BRENT

INFORMAL LIVING New herringbone parquet flooring in oak was finished with a custom-mixed stain. Sofa, Myer. Coffee table, La Maison. Side table, Bloomingdales Lighting & Decorator Accessories. Chevron cushion, Aura by Tracie Ellis. Wooden bird figures (on table) and green bowl, Marmoset Found. Rug, Armadillo&Co.

KITCHEN Daughters Ava (left) and Mia enjoy chilling out with dad Brent at the capacious island bench. Joinery by Werribee Joinery & Cabinet Works. Benchtops in Carrara marble from Creative Stone. Astra Walker tapware. Industria stools, Globe West. Pendant light, Emac & Lawton. *Leura Missed* artwork by Michelle Breton.

Smart buy: Baker cake stand, \$60, Country Road. For Where to Buy, see page 236.



'THE HOUSE IS A STONE'S THROW FROM THE CBD, YET IT FEELS LIKE A RETREAT FROM THE CITY.'
BRENT

DINING (above and right) Dark timbers create a sense of enclosure. Dining chairs, La Maison. Glass cloches, Laura Ashley. Urns, Meizai. Chandelier, OneWorld Collection. Artwork by Suzanna Lang. Smart buys: Ceramic vessels (in cabinet), from \$34/each, Mud Australia. **STAIRCASE** Mia skips downstairs to the family-friendly living area. Custom media unit by Werribee Joinery & Cabinet Works. Artwork by Artie Kannavos. **FORMAL LIVING** A simple, fresh colour palette updates the 1880s architecture. Armchair, Meizai. Cushion, Country Road. Ottoman/coffee table, Molmic. Curtains in De La Cuona fabric from Boyac. Custom rug made by Designer Rugs. Artwork by Michelle Breton. For Where to Buy, see page 236.



Winter magic

"We entertain a lot," says Brent. "In a way, that's what the house was designed for." The kitchen acts as the meet-and-mingle spot before guests move on to the elegant dining room. "We also have the formal living room I've dubbed the 'cigar room'; the chairs give it the distinguished vibe of a gentleman's club." A hydronic heating system keeps things cosy in winter. "It's the best heating system we've ever come across. People often say they're surprised how warm the house is, given its age."





◀ With a clear brief, Terri designed a home she describes as 'contemporary classic', featuring a mixture of formal rooms and relaxed spaces. "Work literally started at the front door, with old floorboards replaced with oak parquetry in a chocolate shade," she says. "We had the formal dining and living rooms repainted, the hallway and bedrooms wallpapered, and the bathroom rebuilt after we discovered the original one was structurally unsound."

The rear of the home had been previously updated but was in major need of an makeover. "It was a mix of styles, from Edwardian to Art Deco, so I designed a scheme that would elegantly combine the old and newer parts of the home," says Terri.

Upstairs, the parents' retreat, comprising a bedroom, ensuite and living/office area, was also updated. It now sports sophisticated dark wallpaper, plus a chic bedhead and joinery designed by Terri. "It's my favourite spot, hands down," says Brent. "Have you ever stayed in a luxury hotel that you never wanted to leave? That's the feeling we get from our bedroom."

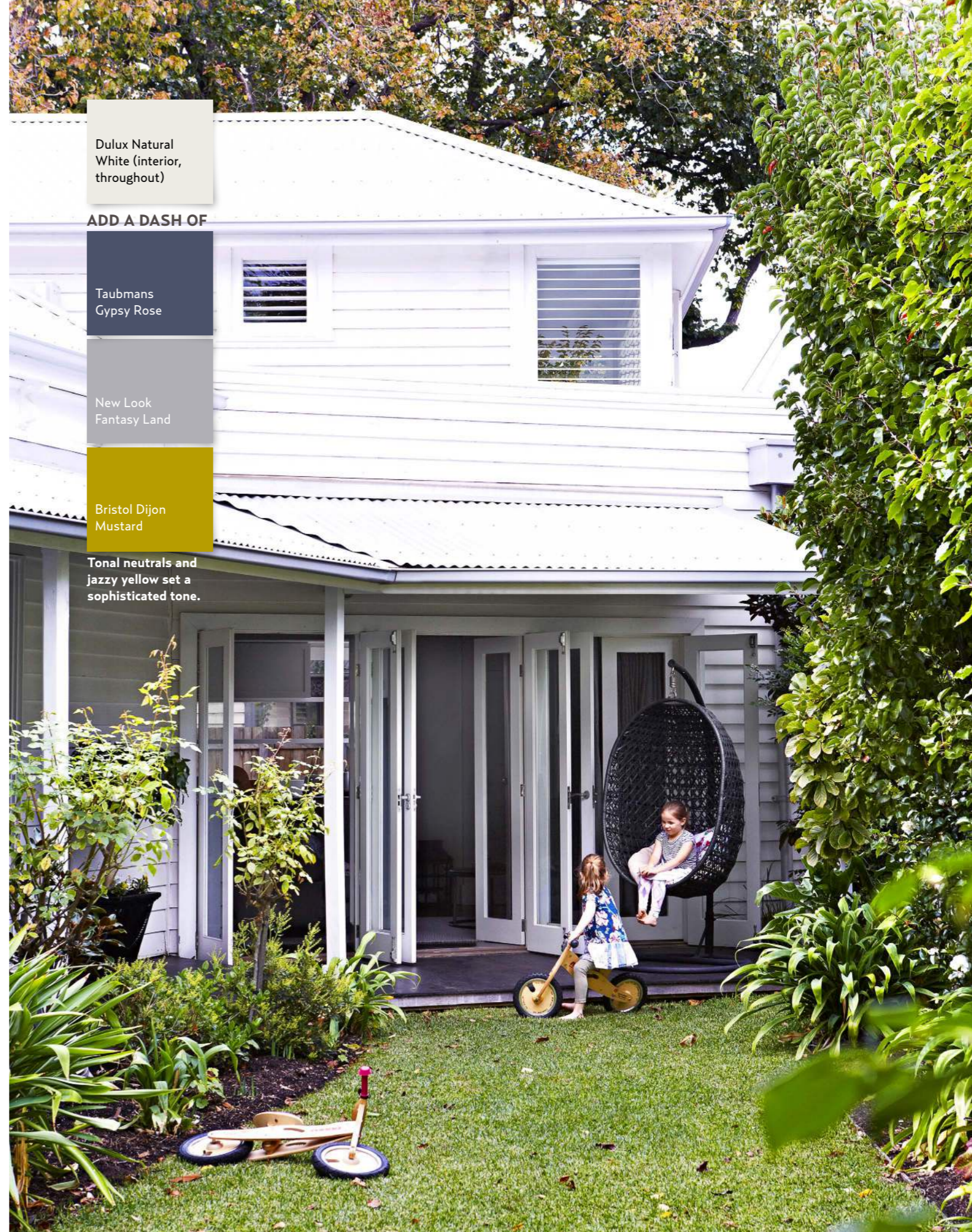
After a remarkably smooth five months, the renovation project was finished on Amanda's birthday in 2012, although the property is still a work in progress, says Brent. "Redeveloping and landscaping the backyard is definitely the next step, and then we'll build a studio and a dog-friendly yard." Clearly contented, he and Amanda are looking forward to their future here. "It's our dream home, and we are very happy to continue living that dream." #

Bloom Interior Design & Decoration, Williamstown, Victoria; (03) 9397 4343 or www.bloominteriordesign.com.au.

'HAVE YOU EVER STAYED IN A LUXURY HOTEL YOU NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE? THAT'S THE FEELING WE GET FROM OUR BEDROOM.' BRENT

MAIN BEDROOM Layers of elegant textiles are both opulent and inviting. Pompadour Vajours wallpaper, Osborne & Little. Bedlinen, Aura by Tracie Ellis. Yellow cushion, Linen & Moore. Ravine carpet, Hycraft Carpets. **DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM** The clawfoot bath is an antique but the overall sense of light and spaciousness is delightfully modern. Tapware, Astra Walker. Wall tiles, De Fazio Tiles & Stone. Floor tiles, Jatana Interiors. Shutters by Think Shutters. Smart buy: Herringbone bath towel in Flax/Ivory, \$48, Cool Galah. **BACKYARD** Opening off the living zone, this is the perfect place for the girls to hang out. For similar woven hanging chair, try Domayne. For Where to Buy, see page 236.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



Dulux Natural White (interior, throughout)

ADD A DASH OF

Taubmans Gypsy Rose

New Look Fantasy Land

Bristol Dijon Mustard

Tonal neutrals and jazzy yellow set a sophisticated tone.