

MELBOURNE *Design* REPORT
WITH KAREN MCCARTNEY & SARAH-JANE PYKE

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HOME COUTURE

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DESIGN HOTSPOTS



When designer Shareen Joel converted her 1980s home from dated to dreamy, the result was a

contemporary do-over with subdued French accents.

These pages In the living room, a collection of artworks is displayed salon style. In the top row, artworks are by (from left) Todd Hunter, Huseyin Sami, Tom Polo, Jonny Niesche, Robert Owen and Gemma Smith. In the middle row, a work by Michael Staniak hangs above paintings by Karen Black and Robert Malherbe alongside works by Michael Muir, Claudia Damichi and Karen Black. In the bottom row, a landscape by Guy Maestri hangs above a work by Aida Tomescu. The large colourful work is by Robert Owen, beside which hangs works by Dane Lovett and Tom Polo, with a yellow work by Makinti Napanangka to the right. Antique table. John Pawson bowl/sculpture on a mirrored bench. A Cassina 'LC2' armchair by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand is placed in conversation with the B&B Italia 'Charles' sofa by Antonio Citterio.

NOUVELLE
BEGINNINGS

Words **CARLI PHILIPS** Photography **SHARYN CAIRNS**



This page, clockwise from top left A vintage artwork sits on a shelf above the sink in the scullery. The kitchen island and benchtop were fitted with a volcanic stone. In the background, the French doors are from Shareen's personal collection. Cassina 'Cab' bar stools by Mario Bellini. New American oak floorboards were installed. **Opposite page, from top** Looking from the entrance into the dining room, an antique side table holds a small artwork by Scott Redford. The adjacent larger work is by Colin Pennock with another all-white piece by Gemma Smith behind the dining table and Cassina 'Cab' chairs. Moooi 'Container' round black table by Marcel Wanders from Space. In the study, where the cedar walls were charred and finished on site, Cassina 'Cab' chairs attend a Knoll 'Tulip' table by Eero Saarinen. Blue Armchair artwork by Clara Adolphs. Nemo 'Lampe De Marseille' wall light. On the shelves, a vintage artwork by an unknown artist sits beside a still life by Pam Tippet.



It's hard to imagine that just a few years ago this home was in an 80s time warp of chequerboard marble floors, padded silk upholstered walls, heavy drapes with scalloped pelmets, shiny granite benchtops and decorative columns. When Melbourne-based designer Shareen Joel and her husband bought the house it needed a contemporary rethink but it also had some major drawcards and much potential. "It was beautiful, in a *Dynasty* kind of way, and immaculate, as if nobody had ever lived there," says Shareen.

As an architectural designer, interior architect and registered building practitioner, Shareen recognised instantly the value of the structure's solidity. Any glimmer of doubt was appeased by Michael Schuurmans at Visioneer Builders, the company she enlisted to work on the renovation. In a twist of fate, it turned out that Michael was the original foreman on the house in the 80s. "I drew up the floor plan before we even bought it to ensure we could get everything in. When I showed Michael he confirmed that not only was it a brilliant house but that we could definitely do what I wanted," says Shareen.

While she planned to retain the house's single-storey pavilion concept, it needed to be widened to reconfigure some new spaces and utilities. Working with architect Tarryn Joyce, Shareen raised the ceilings throughout by removing a heavy, angled bulkhead running along the south side. She stretched internal openings to elongate the doorways, some of which were replaced with antique French doors. Outside, the parapets were lifted to conceal gutters and downpipes, and the facade shaved of decorative details, including ornate window frames and coining, for a seamless and slimmer appearance. »



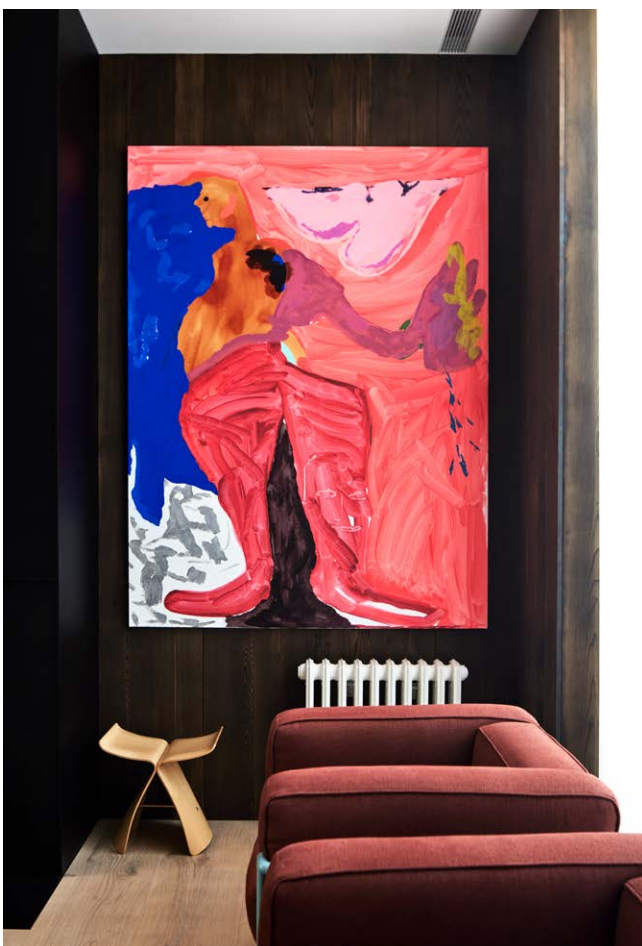


This page Shareen sits on a vintage desk with a vintage timber chair to one side and a Cassina 'LC7' swivel chair by Charlotte Perriand on the other. Cassina 'Superleggera' chair by Gio Ponti and Louis Poulsen 'AJ' floor lamp by Arne Jacobsen. Artwork by Colin Pennock.

Opposite page, clockwise from top left The living room with its B&B Italia 'Charles' sofa and 'Diesis' coffee table is reflected in the Glas Italia 'Noor' floor mirror by Piero Lissoni from Space. In the powder room, an antique mirror is positioned above a custom basin in volcanic stone. In the formal sitting room, the space is anchored by an antique Heriz rug, on which sits a sleek coffee table. B&B Italia 'Tufty-Too' sofa by Patricia Urquiola, antique bergère and Cassina 'LC2' armchairs. An artwork by Tom Polo is exhibited above a Vitra 'Butterfly' stool by Sori Yanagi.

« To cosy up the front study and living room, the walls have been clad in a rich chocolate-hued cedar that was treated on site. “We burnt it with a blowtorch and then wire-brushed it to remove all the soft wood, leaving the hard wood which made the grain pop. I didn’t want timber off the shelf. I love that it still smells charred and a little bit of black is still visible on your fingers when you touch it,” says Shareen. As for the rest of the home’s chalky walls, their surfacing was a happy accident. “Because the house is such solid brick it needed to be plastered before being painted over. When we came back from a vacation early and I saw the untreated plaster I just fell in love with its rawness. There was no way I was going to paint over it. Because it’s not a decorative finish it needed to be waxed over to minimise any marking, but it’s the real McCoy. Had we come back from that holiday on time I never would have known.”

The front portico opens into a generous entrance hall, its glossy floors replaced with American oak. To the right a newly designed powder room features a heavy volcanic stone basin juxtaposed with an oversized distressed French mirror. Opposite, running along the north side, is a timber-lined study followed by a generous lounge featuring an eclectic gallery of artworks and a bank of large windows. Behind a sliding door across the hall is a cosy family room, its dark walls illuminated with a bright artwork by Tom Polo. From the main hall, the floor plan narrows to accommodate a long kitchen and dining area before widening again for the private quarters where there are three bedrooms, all with ensuites. The home’s U-shaped »



SPEED READ

» When designer Shareen Joel purchased this home it was in mint condition and decorated in true 1980s style. » Shareen recognised the building's high quality and solidity, which was confirmed by Michael Schuurmans, a founding director of Visioneer Builders, who, to her surprise, had worked as a foreman on the property when it was built more than 30 years ago. » Shareen both widened and lifted the ceiling by removing the bulkheads and stretching the doorways and windows. » The plastered walls have been left in their untreated condition for a raw, chalky appearance. » Clean, white joinery throughout has been topped with slabs of deep-grey volcanic stone. » The cedar timber cladding has been blowtorched and wire-brushed for a grainy texture. » The home is filled with vintage Italian furniture, modern art and antique French finds.



« configuration frames an internal plunge pool and courtyard that will eventually showcase a large gnarled olive tree.

The house is furnished with Shareen's collection of vintage Italian furniture and a subtle infusion of traditional French features such as a bateau bathtub, classic tapware, a patinated crested mirror, a period chest of drawers and crinkled linen sheers. Combined with crisp-edged joinery and volcanic stone in the kitchen and wet areas, it's a small Parisian nod among the modern.

When Shareen lifted all her archival pieces from storage, she also took out some items to sell. A happy accident saw her move an old Moooi table to the central hall temporarily only to find it looked exceptionally well-suited in the spot. "It reminded me that if you buy things you truly love they will work anywhere," she says. Similarly, an old pair of Cassina 'LC2' armchairs in a rich Bordeaux colour that she had planned to re-upholster also worked remarkably well. "I had every intention of changing the fabric. In fact, I hated that colour until I brought them here. Now, they look surprisingly perfect." shareenjoel.com



This page, clockwise from top An artwork by Gemma Smith enlivens the otherwise monochromatic palette and unfinished plaster walls in the master bedroom. Shareen favours classic features with French accents including the 'Hanley' bateau bath and tapware from The English Tapware Company. The deep-grey volcanic stone seen in the kitchen and powder room also stars on the bathroom surfaces. **Opposite page** In the master bedroom, an artwork by Martine Emdur and a smaller piece by Bronte Leighton-Dore are displayed with a Flos 'Taccia' table lamp by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni on an antique chest of drawers. Cassina 'LC2' armchair.

