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TOP ROOMS



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Each year the *H&G* team sees hundreds of beautiful rooms.

Over the next 40 pages we've showcased 50 of Australia's best of 2003, as chosen by the *H&G* judges

Photography by John Collings, Dan Magree, Andrew Eiton

16 modern classic

Scandinavian style proves timeless, especially when classic birch furniture is involved. Perhaps the biggest surprise in this sun-bathed reading room is to learn that most of it was done as a renovation 10 years ago by architect Steven Whiting for a previous owner. The backdrop of white rendered walls, with creamy concrete floor tiles and grey concrete tiles around the hearth look as good now as they did then. The new owner called Whiting back to 'customise' the space, so he added a luxurious hand-tufted rug, a classic 1930s-style birch chair, a moldable birch screen for privacy, birch stools and a new modern artwork. Because people often move house every two to five years, Whiting prefers to keep backdrops classic yet simple; rather than put granite and marble into the architecture he advises to invest in pieces that can move with you, especially artworks and quality rugs that you can roll up and take. He also points out that lighter timbers and lighter colours are more enduring. Above the striking arrangement of fireplace logs is a cupboard that hides a television, with sound provided by tiny Bose speakers suspended from the ceiling.

Architect/interior designer: *Suters Architects, St Kilda, Vic; call (03) 9593 8588.*

18 sea change

Panoramic sea views were made the star attraction in this living room by keeping windows uncluttered and choosing low-lying furniture that virtually hugs the floor. Rather than go for an obvious 'beachy' theme, the design team at Nexus, headed by Sonia Simpfendorfer, opted instead for a more subtle urban approach while still respecting the location. They chose clean shapes, interesting textures and softness and generosity in the upholstered furniture, creating a simple, calming home base for the busy couple who live here. The walls are painted Dulux Water Chestnut, a soft, stony colour that gives a warm glow to counteract the endless expanse of ocean. The plush, dark carpet gives visual strength and a feeling of solidity, while echoing the inky blue of the ocean at night. Two red armchairs look sculptural silhouetted against the large windows, and can be swivelled to face the sea.

Interior designer: *Nexus, South Melbourne, Vic; call (03) 9690 2277.*

17 well manored

Lighter, less cluttered and more glamorous than traditional English country style, the fabulous fabrics in the master bedroom of this Adelaide mansion invite waking up early to just relax and luxuriate. The twist is the light and warmth of a pale yellow colour theme that designer Tricia Barker has introduced through a variety of fabrics and in much of the custom-made furniture. We especially love the use of modern oversizing in the design of the day bed. Soft furnishings (curtains, cushions, bedspread) were designed by Barker and custom-made by Mardaw Interiors. The day bed, armchair and ottoman were also designed by Barker and custom-made by upholsterer Scott Mathie.

Interior designer: *Tricia Barker, Norwood, SA; call 0413 114 820. Mardaw Interiors, Norwood, SA; call (08) 8362 6706. Scott Mathie, Malvern, SA; call (08) 8271 7358.*

19 heart of glass

Floor-to-ceiling glass plays a major role in this Perth bathroom, giving a sense of space while providing privacy. You enter this ensuite from the bedroom through a walk-in wardrobe and then through sliding glass doors. The circular motif on the doors gives the bathroom a quirky, retro twist. While a circle is a simple device, repeating it creates its own pattern — and a fun solution to lack of privacy. Glass is a big decorating element today, and here it's been used with just the right sense of scale, right through to a vanity mirror that stretches to the ceiling giving the room a sense of balance and harmony. The neutral colour scheme creates an easy flow of space, and has been designed to be elegant, simple and serene. This bathroom is part of a light-filled apartment that's home to Harvard-trained architect Lance Chu — he designed and developed it along with his wife and co-director of SC Land, Chenghan Tan, and architect Ross Sta. Maria of Impressions.

Developer/architect/designer: *SC Land, East Perth, WA; call 0411 100 004.*

Architect: *Impressions, West Perth, WA; call 0411 181 417.*



Exterior paint colour is Dulux Silver Mink. Terrazzo floor tiles polished inside and honed outside. Inside, the dining table is an Aero steel frame topped with plywood stained to resemble wenge. This complements the colour of the kitchen cabinets, designed by Enviro Studio and made by Kad Kitchens in navlam veneer stained in dark wenge from New Age Veneers. For stockists see Resources.

20 terrific terrace

Looking into this living area through new glass walls we can appreciate how this once-dilapidated terrace house has been transformed. The owners asked Tone Wheeler of Enviro Studio to revitalise their 1880s four-storey terrace. The house was in great disrepair; ceilings had fallen in and it had white ant damage. At some stage the house had been turned into a 12-room boarding house. It was dark, cold and dank. The solution was to remove a room at the back to draw in light, resulting in a tall beautiful room which fully opens onto a courtyard. Connecting old and new is a transparent bridge-like structure which sits lightly towards one side of the dining/living/kitchen and allows guests to pause and look over the space, taking in the new open, light-filled living space. To minimise the impact of the western sun, the sliding doors and windows are set back 900mm, to provide a deep reveal and shade, as well as enhancing privacy. ▶

Architect/designer: *Enviro Studio, Surry Hills, NSW; call (02) 9332 1985.*