

# FORTUNE'S FAVOUR

Luck, luxury and relaxed living all meet at ALMO

Words Lauren Clarke Photography Damian Kook





Peaceful tones of white and grey flow through the home's interior



Fortune is built into ALMO, a recently renovated home in Victoria's Albert Park. This 1920s abode has a history that's rich with the romance of a life-changing roll of the dice.

"So the story goes... the owner bet on a horse race. Their horse won big and the proceeds went to build the house. The horse's name was Almo. And in honour, Almo is proudly built into the stained-glass window in the entrance," shares owner Sue Jackson. "They say you should never let the truth get in the way of a good story, and this story may have well morphed over the century, but it's nice to think of anyway."

From lucky beginnings, good things grow. Whether this story is true or not, it's undeniable that ALMO is a home that feels luxurious and abundant in high-end style. This is a result of a recent refurbishment from designer Penny del Castillo from Studio del Castillo, who was employed to give this older building with owner-managed renovations a modern makeover.

"There was a lack of continuity from front to back and the entire space needed a facelift," says Penny. "The client was inspired by other projects she had seen on our website and felt it was time to hit the 'refresh button' and bring



### ed's fave

THE THEME OF PEACE IS PREVALENT FROM THE HOME'S EXTERIOR ALL THE WAY THROUGH TO THE BEDROOM, CREATING A VERY COHESIVE SPACE

“I was also keen to create some wow around the Japanese-inspired courtyard and bring a little of that Zen into the main living area”  
— Penny del Castillo

The polished concrete floor is given texture with this perfectly chosen rug



Soaring ceilings in the bathroom create a sense of drama

**“The TV cabinet panelling is made from Biowood, one of the leaders in the recycled timber-look field”  
— Penny del Castillo**

in a designer’s touch to match her contemporary desires.” And so Penny’s work began. She took a transitional design approach to the home, marrying older parts of the building with the newer contemporary extension. “I was also keen to create some wow around the Japanese-inspired courtyard and bring a little of that Zen into the main living area,” she says.

This goal was certainly met. The courtyard sets a tone of peace, with soothing greys paired with verdant greenery. When you step through the glass doors into the kitchen, the theme continues with a stone waterfall-edge bench that flows dramatically to the polished concrete floor. This floor extends into the living area, where storage is abundant without compromising style. A plush sofa beckons the homeowners to lay back and relax, with the perfect rug adding a textural delight while still being hardy enough to withstand challenges presented by the homeowners’ furry friends.

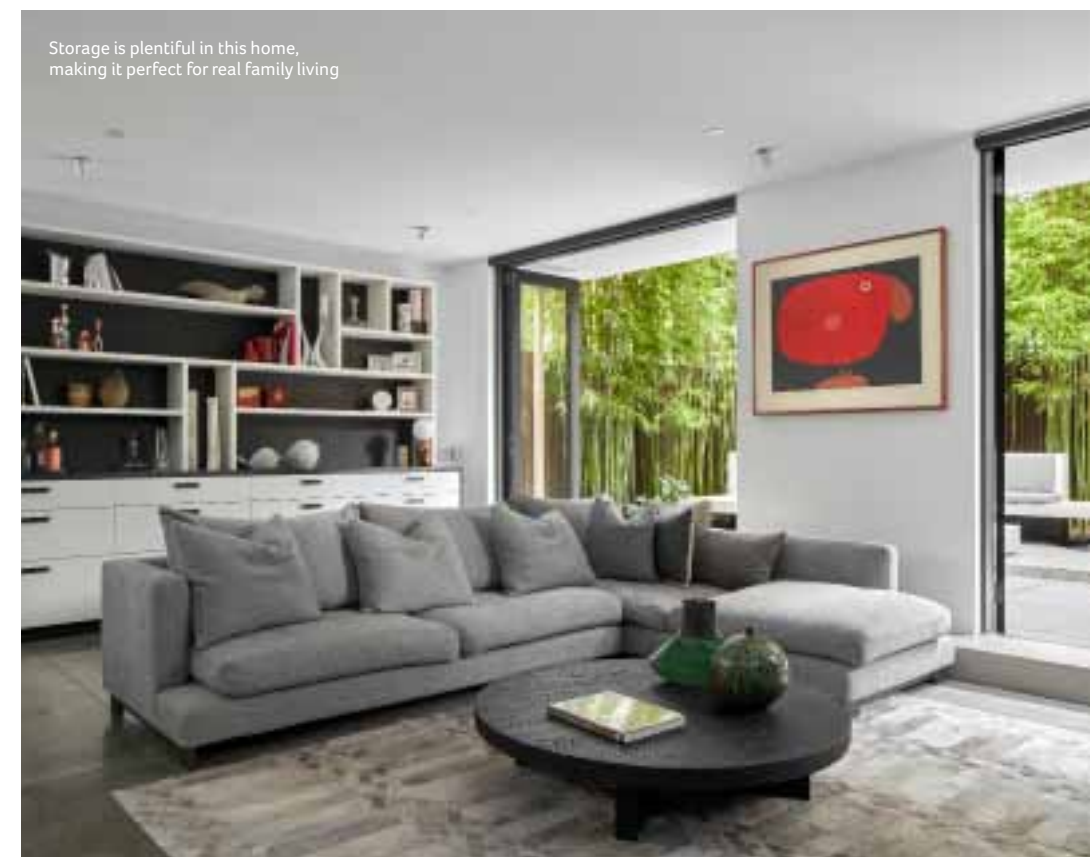
“Pets make design decisions more interesting,” says Penny. “We needed to ensure the owners’ pair of cats did not claw the rug in the living room and turn it into a tattered ball of string!” Never one to shirk away from a challenge, Penny ensured the clients’ satisfaction. “I arranged for several sample rugs to be thrown on the floor for a few weeks so they could be tested before a financial commitment. Natural cowhide worked a treat,” she says, adding that the cats investigated, sniffed, and rolled their little faces on it but had nil interest or ability to “hook in” and destroy.

Away from the living room, the peace continues. Large-format tiles make the bathrooms feel larger than their architectural footprints, with custom-built timber-veneer wall-mount cabinetry adding warmth. A deep freestanding bathtub tempts the owners to relax, climb in and soak their worries away at the end of a long day at work.

The master bedroom makes a statement, with pendant lights extended from the sweeping ceiling to emphasise the room’s height and add to that sense of luxury. Restraint in colour and design shines in this space, making it feel like the perfect



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Storage is plentiful in this home, making it perfect for real family living





place to rest. Colour restraint throughout the home allows the homeowners' artwork to take centre stage. "The client has some wonderful original art pieces," says Penny. "It was a pleasure to work with such vibrance and enviable proportions."

Pairing back the use of colour also added longevity to the design — a deliberate choice by Penny. "The monochromatic palette provides a brilliant classic backdrop and base for all other furnishings and artwork long-term," she says. "As the family dynamics continue to develop, the palette will be super easy to work with. The atmosphere is elegant and sophisticated with a pop of fun ... somewhat like an art gallery."

Sustainability was also considered in this renovation and Penny chose eco-conscious solutions whenever practical. "The TV cabinet panelling is made from Biowood, one of the leaders in the recycled timber-look field," she says, listing just one of the home's environmental solutions.

A comprehensive refurbishment like this can be a gamble. Yet, much like the original owners of ALMO, the homeowners today are clearly winners thanks to their professional design team. "This project highlights the importance of engaging an interior designer with experience to get it right first time," says Penny. "We see numerous people spend good money after bad in an attempt to tackle 'interior design' decisions on their own. There were a few moments where we pushed the clients' boundaries but, in the end, they trusted our direction and are thrilled with the results."

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## we love

THE ZEN-INSPIRED  
COURTYARD, WHICH IS  
THE PERFECT PLACE TO  
SIT AND RELAX

