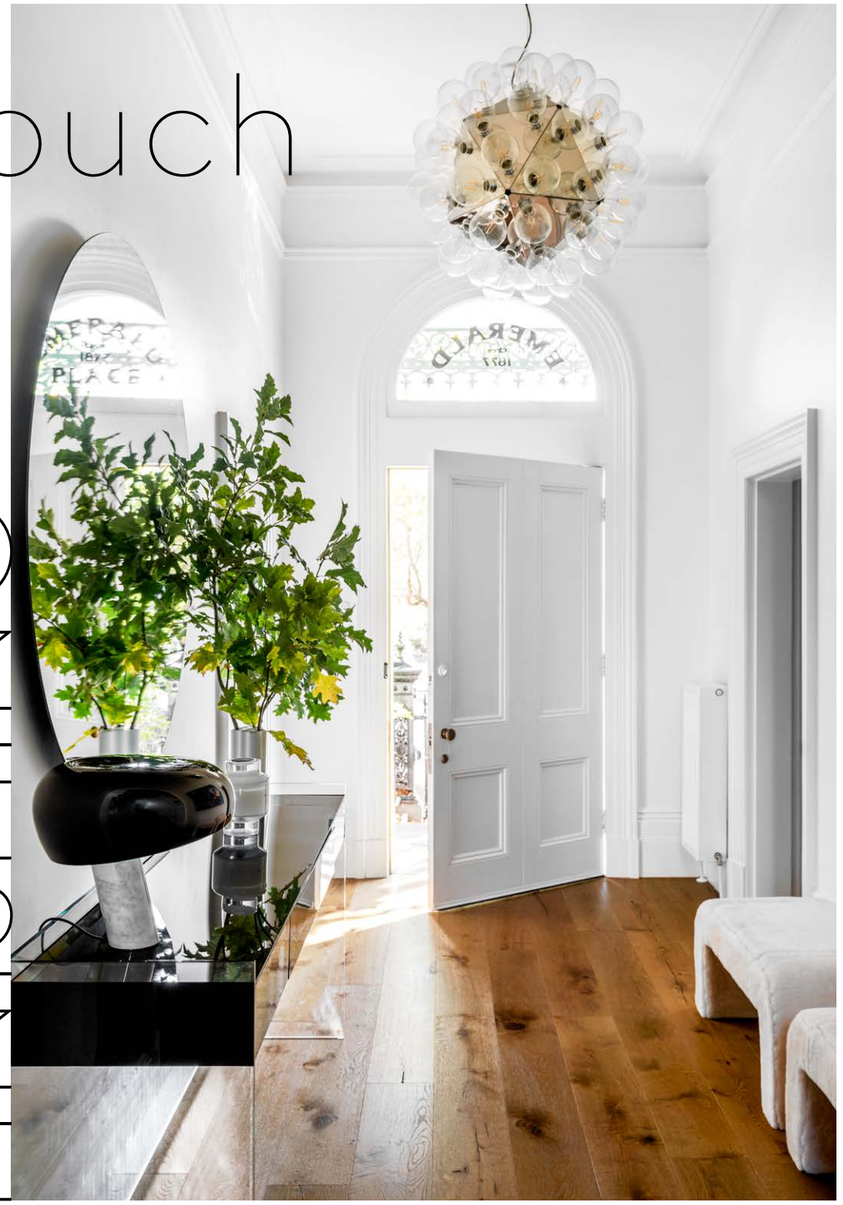
# touch FINISHING



A beautifully restored but bare-bones home rounds out its newfound identity with a decorative flourish.

Words **CARLI PHILIPS** Photography **RHIANNON TAYLOR**

**This page** "We wanted to give the house some spirit and individuality," says interior designer Chelsea Hing. In this corner of the informal living area, that is achieved with a B&B Italia 'Up Series 2000' armchair and ottoman by Gaetano Pesce from Space and a Flos 'Captain Flint' floor light from Euroluce. Resin foot statue on coffee table from House Of Orange. 'Boheme' rug in Charcoal from Colorscope. In the formal sitting and dining room, Knoll 'Platner' armchairs in velvet from De De Ce border a Glas Italia 'Massi Tavoli Bassi' low table by Claudio Silvestrin from Space. Flos 'Overlap Suspension 2' pendant light by Michael Anastassiades from Euroluce. Pink object from Modern Times. **Opposite page** The entry's decor star is a Flos 'Taraxacum 88' pendant light from Euroluce. 'Reeno' bench seats from Grazia&Co. MCM House 'Clements' mirror. Flos 'Snoopy' table lamp from Euroluce. Vitra 'Nuage' vase from Space.

This page "Every room should have something phenomenal in it," says Chelsea. Leila Jeffreys' photographic print, *'Dexter' White-bellied sea eagle,* fits the bill in the formal dining where it is placed on an equally striking Edra 'Scrigno' cabinet from Space. Flos 'IC Lights T1' table lamp from Euroluce. An artwork by Simo Novakovic is reflected in the Glas Italia 'Marlene' mirror from Space. Bust from House Of Orange. On the dining table, Kartell 'Abbracciaio' candleholder from Space and Tom Dixon 'Bash' tray from Living Edge. Opposite page Upstairs, in the adults' TV room, Knoll 'Womb' armchairs and Minotti 'Still' side table, all from De De Ce. Maxalto 'Imprimatur' sofa by Antonio Citterio from Space. Molteni&C '45°/Tavolino' coffee table by Ron Gilad from Hub. 'Joy' ottoman from Jardan. Flos 'Noctambule' floor lamp next to the fireplace and 'Arrangements' pendant light, both from Euroluce. Glas Italia 'Kooh-I-Noor Specchi' mirror and Gebrüder Thonet Vienna GmbH 'Allegory' desk by GamFratesi, both from Space. 'Distressed Geometrics' rug from Colorscope. Tom Dixon 'Spin' candelabra on coffee table.

Statuesque and spacious, this double-fronted Victorian terrace was so empty by the time the home owners enlisted interior designer Chelsea Hing that she says her clients were practically "camping out".

The home had been thoroughly and sensitively renovated by architect Stephen Akehurst, but the owners held off on furnishing until they had lived there for about a year. It became apparent that while they had a few solid but safe pieces, these weren't plentiful enough for a house this size. Beautiful but bare, it was devoid of the personality that furniture, accessories and art offer.

"It's a cracker of a house, but I don't think they realised how much it takes to pull together something this big," says Chelsea. "They had the basics so they could move in, but it wasn't much more than a camping store. They had a house but it wasn't a home."

Chelsea packed it with personality, elevating the interiors with decorative details and even a small refurbishment in places. "The entire home lacked life and vitality, which became our brief to correct," she says. The conceptual approach involved "celebrating the grandeur of the period while breaking down its formality for modern living and entertaining". »

**These pages** "Once the pendants went in, it was so clear how transformative they were in a house of this size – such gestures did all the heavy lifting," says Chelsea, referring to the Vistosi 'Peggy 9' pendant light from Mondo Luce in the informal dining area at the rear. 'Contour' dining table from Zuster with 'No.811 Hoffmann' armchairs from Thonet. Fiam 'Rialto' glass console from Fanuli. Kartell 'Mr Impossible' desk chair and gold 'Gnome' stool, both from Space. Flos 'Captain Flint' floor light from Euroluce. *Walking In My Shoes* artwork by Daniel Anderson above desk. Candleholder on dining table by Anna Varendorff. In the foreground, a Walter Knoll 'Living Landscape' sofa from Living Edge with cushions from Jardan zones the adjoining informal living area. B&B Italia 'Alanda' coffee table by Paolo Piva from Space. Hay 'Slit' side table beside sofa from Cult. 'Boheme' rug in Charcoal from Colorscope.

**SPEED READ**

» The owners of this classic double-fronted Victorian terrace dating back to 1877 enlisted Melbourne architect Stephen Akehurst for a full renovation. » They lived in the house for a year with the bare minimum before calling on designer Chelsea Hing to assist with a fit-out encompassing art, lighting and furnishings. » Chelsea flipped the traditional rooms at the front of the house, pushing the sitting room forward so it could better flow into the shared rear living room. » "The conceptual approach was to celebrate the grandeur of the period but to break down its formality for modern living and entertaining," says Chelsea. » The front rooms were painted Dulux 'Endless Dusk' to delineate them from the rest of the house and create an inviting after-dark mood. » Dramatic pendant lights were used in every room as anchor points for the large proportions.

This page A pair of Cassina 'Lady' armchairs flank the master bedroom's fireplace joined by a pair of Visual Comfort 'Liaison Statement' sconces by Kelly Wearstler. Minotti 'Still' side table from De De Ce. ClassiCon 'Tube' floor light by Eileen Gray from Anibau. Opposite page, from top Also in the master bedroom, a Maxalto 'Alcova' canopy bed by Antonio Citterio from Space is a modern interpretation of a classic piece. 'Savannah' rug from Armadillo. Cultiver bed linen. Flos 'Bibliotheque Nationale' floor lamp. Looking from the front door down the hallway, a large artwork by Sidney Teodoruk titled *Alone In America* leads to stairs lined in a 'Flaxman Stone' stair runner by Roger Oates from Milgate.

« Practically, this involved flipping the front two rooms, pushing the sitting room from the front of the house further down so it could link up to the living room. Steel-framed glass doors connect the two spaces for an easy transition but also close shut to create a contained, private adults' retreat.

Striking metallics and bold expressions pack a punch, while bordeaux-hued velvet 'Platner' chairs make a glamorous statement under the 'Overlap Suspension 2', a diffused cocoon-wrapped pendant light with interlocking rings by Flos. To delineate these formal rooms, Chelsea painted them in Dulux 'Endless Dusk', which exudes a "night-time mood".

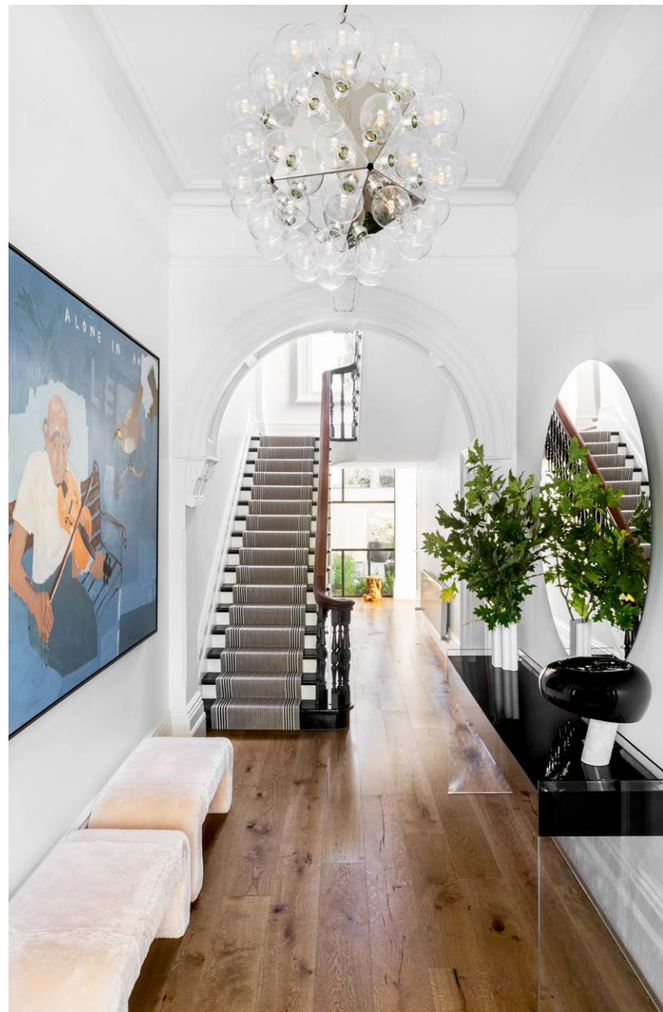
In contrast, the open-plan rear living, dining and kitchen provided an opportunity to create a more contemporary, everyday environment for the family of five to share together. Informed by a monochrome palette, it's approachable and comfortable, combining "old favourites with new classics, the mid-century and the iconic", says Chelsea, referencing Thonet's 'Hoffmann' chairs, B&B Italia's 1980s re-edition 'Alanda' coffee table and Kartell's 'Mr Impossible' desk chair. "It's uplifting and bright," she adds of the generous modern space that's occupied by a massive Vistosi 'Peggy' nine-arm pendant light in blown glass hanging over the dining table.

Statement lighting is ever present, used tactically to aid with volume and scale but also for decorative and dramatic impact. "Lighting was a big focus," says Chelsea. "We treated pendants like sculptures as they allow the eye to dance around the room. Because of the grand proportions, the lighting was completely transformative."

On the ground level, two kids' bedrooms are divided by a shared ensuite and sit across the hall from the front formal rooms. All under 10 years old with developing personalities, the children briefed Chelsea themselves, which resulted in three different-coloured bedrooms – blue, green and lilac.

Upstairs, off the second landing, the L-shaped master suite already had a four-poster bed, awkwardly positioned facing across from the fireplace. While not part of the original brief, things here were reshuffled so it now sits between long vertical windows flanked by elegant drapes. Above the fireplace are two dominating candelabra-style sconces by Kelly Wearstler and a "monstrous cream rug that gives the space a sense of luxury and serenity".

On the second landing at the rear, a ballroom-sized area was converted into an adults' den and an adjacent study became a guest bedroom. Both are kitted out in a marvellous mix of pieces under the watchful eye of a necklace-like Michael Anastassiades modular pendant.

While the rooms brim with layers, the budget was fairly conservative for a house this substantial, which meant choosing wisely. "We had clear parameters and had to be super-strict," says Chelsea. "It was tight. The aim was to make it look like a million bucks despite not having that to spend – styling the project in a relaxed but still softly formal way to bring it all together." |5

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