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plus
Good taste isn't
restricted to one era;
and neither is this
tasteful abode
P16



ROOM to grow

THINGS ARE LOOKING UP IN
BOUTIQUE'S MONTE CARLO

gardening
PLANNING FOR
A BOUNTIFUL
SPRING & SUMMER
P20

make it
THE BOLDEST
OF SERVING
SUGGESTIONS
P30



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Welcome home

Who says everything in your home has to be perfectly symmetrical and co-ordinated? Well, that's the decor philosophy I like to live by. Sure, symmetry and balance have their place but there's a lot to be said for the relaxed feel that comes with mixing and matching things simply because you like them.

You'll often find what you like generally ties together and the end result is a cohesive look, but one with meaning.

In this week's issue, interiors blogger Kate Challis reveals her love for imperfection when decorating: "anything too perfect, too colour co-ordinated and too symmetrical tends to feel uptight and rigid."

I like her thinking. It puts a lot more 'you' into the look of your home. Check out Kate's heart-and-soul approach to decor inside.

Plus, we show you how to create a cheap and easy wall sculpture that will have your guests talking.

Enjoy the read.

Natalia

Natalia Perera
Editor



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Hiding behind this unassuming 19th-century shopfront, located a stone's throw from the city and on Fitzroy's hippest shopping and dining strip, is the home of Kate Challis, Andrew Holo, their three-year-old son Jasper and two friendly Burmese cats, Chai and Poo.

Chic and stylish, the converted shop enjoys the best of both worlds: a genuine inner-city vibe and all the comforts of a traditional home, including a surprising sense of privacy and tranquility.

Given the beauty and loveliness of this charming family abode, it comes as no surprise to discover Kate is the author of an inspiring interior-design blog, *Urban Kaleidoscope*. ☺

Eight Perfection: the sunny, colourful living room. Above: These bookshelves were custom made. Top: Pretty blooms on the dining table.

Mix & match

Embracing all kinds of styles and eras brings much decor fun



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Left: A large bedroom mirror reflects the peaceful scene. Right: Jasper's on the run. Below: In the dining room, Kate's passion for mixing eras and styles is executed with aplomb. Bottom: Soak up some splendour: the beautifully appointed bathroom.



She also possesses the enviable talent of introducing life, colour and warmth to interiors with the perfect balance of old and new, and minimal and luxury.

"I like to mix high-end pieces with Ikea, as well as with vintage, antique and op-shop finds," Kate explains.

"Your living space makes such a difference to your wellbeing and sense of self"

KATE CHALLIS

When Kate and Andrew bought the building eight years ago, it had been sitting on the market for more than a year after being passed in at auction. The couple obviously spotted potential where no one else could.

"It was once a bookshop, but had been converted into a residence. But the Tuscan

villa style - all terracotta and Italian tiles - just didn't suit the location, or us," Kate says.

Some people would rethink living in a small, inner-city house with minimal outdoor space when they started a family.

"A lot of people thought we would move when we had Jasper, but we love being close to everything, the raw, urban feel of the area and the strong community feel," Kate says.

So instead of moving, Kate and Andrew embraced the process of finding exactly what they needed to live comfortably.

Their home's transformation was a slow one, because Kate says the couple "needed to live here before changing too much, to learn about the space".

Minor structural alterations followed, including replacing the floorboards and enlarging the doorway leading from the dining area to the kitchen. These changes greatly improved the overall feel and flow.

After that, Kate's decorating skills came to the fore, including her eye for a bargain.



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Love it!
The pendant lights in the stairway are from Volker Haug.



her appreciation of design, and her gift for creating relaxed, stylish spaces.

"I've really cobbled it all together myself and it has taken a long time to find everything. But I passionately believe your living space makes such a difference to your wellbeing and sense of self, so it is worth investing the time," Kate says.

The living room, in what would have been the shop, is lined with custom-made bookshelves and is enlivened by the brilliantly-hued pink Madeline Weinrib rug Kate snapped up on sale.

The rug is the perfect backdrop for two stunning Cassina Utrecht armchairs, an elegant Tolomeo floor lamp and the Art Deco walnut cabinet Andrew found in an op-shop and carefully restored.

Simplicity is the key for the kitchen. "We haven't really done much to it as it functions perfectly well," Kate says.

A full-length curtain in an old-world green toile pattern cleverly separates the kitchen from the laundry. A stack of whitewashed CD drawers serves as the pantry - a perfect example of Kate's inspired repurposing.

"These drawers initially housed Andrew's collection of CDs, so there are still a few old labels, including 'Dead Guys with Wigs'



Baroque music," Kate says with a laugh.

In the main bedroom upstairs, aqua raw silk curtains, a 1950s chair re-covered in purple velvet, and a travel chest that belonged to Kate's grandmother imbue simple luxury.

But the bathroom is where Kate's decorating confidence and talents are truly showcased. With its crystal French chandelier, Catherine Martin for Porter's Paints Lace wallpaper, and a vintage drinks trolley, it's elegant decadence at its best.

Jasper's room is an enchanting mix of



sophistication and fun. A wall decal of a climbing sloth, a stylish Louder bed and vintage wallpaper all add up to a kind of imperfect perfection.

"I adore imperfection ... anything too perfect, too colour co-ordinated and too symmetrical tends to feel uptight and rigid. They're not feelings you want to convey in your home," Kate says. 🏡

Get in touch

Urban Kaleidoscope
www.urbankaleidoscope.com.au

Eight CD drawers whitewashed and reinvented as a pantry. Above right Fresh drawers are placed throughout the home.

Left In the kitchen, a pretty curtain conceals the laundry. Far left, middle and below middle Arrangements of fascinating objects. Far left Kate bought this cute sloth decal from a French store. Right The main bedroom features a mix of textured fabrics.



Postscript with Kate Challis

(pictured below left)



Your favourite place to relax in the home?

The bathroom, since installing the chandelier and wallpaper, whenever I walk into this room it makes me happy. Having a bath with the crystals of the chandelier reflecting on the tiles is sheer magic.

Your favourite piece of furniture?

The red lacquered table made by my friend, Marianna Kennedy. The lacquer work is done according to an 18th-century recipe and has 30 layers of meticulously applied lacquer.

How would you describe your decorating style?

Ecclectic. I am a maverick and love mixing different styles: antiques with modern pieces, mass produced with bespoke and ornamental with simple.

Tips for people renovating or decorating their home?

Only have pieces you love. Start with one amazing piece for a room (it might be a rug, a wall colour, a piece of art or a light fitting) and use that as your source of inspiration. And give it time and allow it to evolve.

