

## HOME STYLE



JOANNE HAWKINS

Photos: Chris Groenhout



Artwork: Carly Williams

# Hats off to a classic



This family didn't look far to find a 1960s brick beauty to convert into a funky blend of old and new

**M**ILLINER Carla Murley knew her mid-century house in Beaumaris was “the one” the minute she walked inside. So much so, four days later, Ms Murley and husband Troy had not only bought the house, but had also sold their renovated home nearby.

“Our previous house was another Beaumaris classic but it was a weatherboard on a large block, which was just a little too much upkeep for us,” Ms Murley said. “Luckily, someone else was looking for what we had.”

Despite jumping into a relationship with their new home rather quickly, Ms Murley would be the first to admit it wasn't exactly love at first sight.

“I had actually walked past the house many times but it was horrible: the gardens were completely overgrown and, to be honest, it looked more like a toilet block than a mid-century gem,” she recalled.

But Ms Murley, a veteran of three previous renovations, could see the potential in the 1960s three-bedroom brick house where others, perhaps, couldn't.

“The natural light was incredible and there were already two living areas, which isn't common in these smaller mid-century houses,” she said. “I could see that it wouldn't take a lot to turn it into a home big enough for us to comfortably live in.”

So the family, which also includes daughter Ruby, now 10, and son Oscar, 8, moved in while they finalised the plans for their renovation.

Their idea was to extend both ends of the house, opening up the living area into a new kitchen on one side, while adding a new main bedroom and ensuite, and a studio for Ms Murley's millinery business, Murley & Co, at the other.

Elsewhere, the existing layout would be slightly rejigged, with the old kitchen becoming a laundry, and the previous laundry becoming a family bathroom.

With a friend's “phenomenal” builder husband on board, the renovation started, with the family saving money by living on site during the build. All went well until the asbestos roof was taken off.

“A roofing company put on some tarps, which, unfortunately had massive holes in them,” Ms Murley recalled.

“It rained constantly and the house was flooded. Fortunately, we had put most of our stuff in storage

during the reno, apart from my babies' memory boxes, which were ruined. As was the beautiful cork ceiling in the second living area, which was something we'd desperately wanted to keep. It was definitely the low point of the build.”

But there was a silver lining as they decided to visit that year's Canterbury Art Exhibition and “blew a lot of cash on something to make us feel better”.

That pick-me-up — a bright artwork by Kirsten Jackson called *Happy Me* — now takes pride of place in the main bedroom.

Thankfully, the rest of the renovation went smoothly. Keen to ensure the new parts of the house blended with the old, the couple recycled whatever they could, including the original kitchen handles, which were used in the laundry, and rafters, which were used for shelving in Ms Murley's studio.

In the new bathrooms, vintage cabinets — including one that was originally in the house but had been thrown out for rubbish and later rescued — were repurposed as vanities.

“I like everything to tell a story,” Ms Murley said.

To that end, a “pared-back, slightly masculine” colour palette of black, white and timber offsets the couple's many vintage-furniture finds.

Some pieces, such as the Alrob chest of drawers in the main bedroom, are from Ms Murley's grandparents' Sorrento holiday house, while others, like Ruby's bed and the bookshelf that has become Lego storage in Oscar's room, are hard-rubbish finds.

Outside are lucky scores, with the garden full of mature, low-maintenance plants, such as century plants and prickly pears, inherited from a local development site.

With the garden pretty much sorted and the reno over, Ms Murley intends to stay in their home for some time. “The floorplan will still work for us when the kids are in their 20s,” she said.

That said, Ruby and Oscar, who are avid fans of *The Block*, are keen for their parents to renovate again.

“It would have to be something pretty spectacular for us to contemplate doing that,” Ms Murley said. “But there are some amazing mid-century houses in Beaumaris, so never say never.”

[murleyandco.com](http://murleyandco.com)



Artwork: Kirsten Jackson



Owl artwork: Fiona Slater



Artwork: Nomi Drew

## Postscript

WITH CARLA MURLEY

### What do people comment on the most when they visit?

I think they are always surprised by how big the house is. From the street, it looks quite tiny.

### Three favourite shopping haunts

My absolute favourite is a junk shop in Moorabbin called Vintage Shabby Retro Warehouse. I do love a bit of a forage. I also like Sandarne, which is a fabulous homewares shop in Sorrento that does fantastic soft furnishings and giftware. And Nook Vintage, in Fitzroy, where I found the hospital cabinet that is now Oscar's bedside table.

### Favourite spot in your house?

I love our bedroom as it's slightly sunken. I like nothing better than lying in bed and looking out at my neighbour's six gum trees. I don't close the curtains at night, so it's quite a view, especially when there is a full moon.

### Any more plans for the house?

We're going to put in a pool and extend the deck outside. Our great dane, Lola, takes up a lot of space, so when she's lying on the deck, there's not a lot of room left for us.

### The biggest party you've had here?

We had a cracker of a party here for my 40th in 2016. There were between 60 and 70 people and it went on until about 5am. Luckily, I have elderly neighbours who obviously couldn't hear us as I didn't get one complaint. It did take me about two weeks to clean up afterwards, though.

### What does home mean to you?

Troy and I both work full-time so home is a no-fuss, relaxing environment where we can spend time together as a family.