

KITCHEN Although she's a chef and does a lot of cooking here, Julia was more than happy to keep the existing kitchen for the time being. "It's fine," she says. "I mean, it's not perfect, but it has a walk-in pantry and a decent amount of bench space, and as chefs we learn to work around things." Muuto 'Grain' pendants and Smed stools from Great Dane have updated the space with a splash of Julia's favourite colour. "I love the green view of the garden as well," she adds.

bold ambition

A gracious Edwardian weatherboard with an interior firmly stuck in the 1990s has been dramatically made over to better reflect the personalities of the family who live there

WORDS JOANNE HAWKINS PHOTOGRAPHER EVE WILSON STYLIST PAIGE ANDERSON

cheat sheet

Who lives here Julia Cauchi, owner of catering business Merci Mama; her husband Dane, an emergency doctor; and their daughters: Remy, five, and Sloan, two; plus Ruby, a cavoodle.

Style of home A four-bedroom Edwardian weatherboard in Melbourne's south-east has been given a dramatic decorative makeover.

🕒 After buying the house in 2012, the couple rented it out until they moved in with their then 11-month-old daughter Remy in October 2015. They asked Suzanne Cunningham of One Girl Interiors to help them renovate the dated interior, which was done over a two-year period.

💰 About \$60,000, including floor-sanding, new carpets and painting throughout.



LIVING AREA (both pages) In contrast to the formal sitting room, Julia wanted a light and airy feel in the more relaxed open-plan living/dining area. New items include the sofa from Grazia & Co, the Jordan 'Navy' dining table and the slightly mid-century style 172 Dining Chairs with custom upholstery from Curious Grace. "I didn't want everything to be from the one era or style," says Julia. "I was happy to mix it up a bit." Circular coffee tables, House of Orange. Rug, West Elm.

After "spending far too much money" buying their first home at the height of the market in 2007, Julia Cauchi and her husband Dane were determined not to make the same mistake twice. So, in 2012, when Melbourne property prices had cooled, the couple saw it as an opportunity to upgrade their small two-bedroom cottage to a family home. "We were determined to be a bit more savvy second time around and even though we didn't have any children at that stage, we knew we were heading in that direction," says Julia.

They struck gold when they got "a really good deal" on a beautiful Edwardian weatherboard in the leafy inner southern suburb of Elsternwick. As well as being chock-a-block with period features, the four-bedroom house had a great layout with an open-plan living/kitchen/dining area at the rear, which had been added twenty-plus years earlier. There was only one problem. Although the house was in good condition, its decor was also stuck in the 1990s. "It was just a little bland, with lots of cream, beige and brown – not really our taste at all," says Julia.

It wasn't until three years later when the couple finally moved in with their then baby daughter Remy that Julia was able to start the process of banishing the beige and bringing some personality into their new family home. "Aesthetically, I just didn't love it," Julia admits, "and even though we were planning to extend and possibly put on a second storey down the track, I wanted to freshen it up and make it feel more like our home."

"The house works really well for us, especially as we're spending so much time there at the moment. I really love our big backyard, and being able to see what the girls are up to out there while I'm cooking"

JULIA CAUCHI, HOMEOWNER

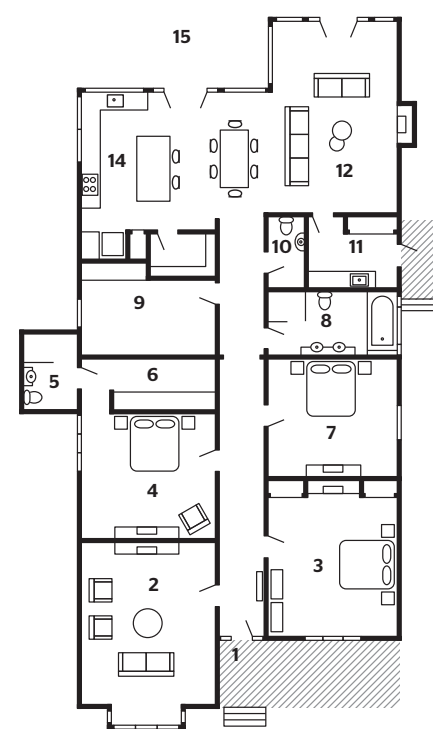
Help from Suzanne Cunningham of One Girl Interiors was sought to pull the couple's vision of a "beautiful yet liveable, relaxed and warm" home together. "Moving from a smaller house into a larger one meant we needed more furniture as well, but I really didn't trust myself to make those choices," says Julia. "I know what I like, but I also like things from lots of different eras and styles so I needed someone who had that eye and could pull it all together."

Although the makeover kept to the existing layout, Suzanne said an important part of the project was to consider future structural renovations and focus on spaces that wouldn't need to be extensively redone down the track. "For example, Julia and Dane may eventually extend the living/dining/kitchen area," says Suzanne, "so we kept the existing kitchen and focused on painting the creamy walls a fresher white (Dulux Natural White), sanding the orange floorboards, changing the pendant lights and adding new furniture, which still had a huge impact."

The biggest transformation is in the main bedroom and formal sitting room in the original part of the house, which both now feature a dramatic dark palette. "Although we all agreed that we wanted the main living area at the back to feel



“We weren’t in a rush to buy everything at once or from the same place and run the risk of it looking like a staged home. We did this renovation over two years, going room by room as our budget allowed” JULIA



- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Entry | 8 Bathroom |
| 2 Formal sitting area/guest room | 9 Study/bedroom |
| 3 Bedroom | 10 Powder room |
| 4 Main bedroom | 11 Laundry |
| 5 Ensuite | 12 Living area |
| 6 WIR | 13 Dining area |
| 7 Bedroom | 14 Kitchen |
| | 15 Garden |

HALLWAY As this corridor links the Edwardian section of the house with the lighter extension at the back, Julia didn't want to go too dark on the hall walls, which are painted a soft grey called Dulux Tranquil Retreat. Console table, Grazia & Co.

SITTING ROOM (below and opposite) This space doubles as a guest room. Ran sofa bed, Innovation Living. Vertigo pendant light, Petite Friture. Twinkles photographic print by Kara Rosenlund. Walls painted Dulux Juvenile.



light, bright and airy, Julia and Dane were very open to considering a different feel to the rooms at the front. And because the proportions of the rooms are massive, I felt like they could take more dramatic colour,” says Suzanne.

In the formal sitting room, a painting (of a melancholic young boy) that used to belong to Julia’s late father inspired the colour palette. The walls are a deep grey (Dulux Juvenile), providing the perfect backdrop for the chartreuse velvet Joy armchairs from Jordan. “Julia and Dan liked the idea of that room being a separate retreat that felt a bit more grown-up,” says Suzanne, “so we introduced different textures, like the velvet and the glass coffee table with the metallic base, which I wouldn’t have used in a more informal everyday living space.” In both the formal sitting room and the main bedroom, statement pendant lights by Petite Friture and Flos add a contemporary twist to the period features.

Decorative makeover complete, Julia couldn’t be happier with her new, improved home, although with two young children – two-year-old daughter Sloan has joined big sister Remy, now five – she doesn’t get to spend as much time relaxing in her grown-up sitting room as she would like.

And while Dane initially had his doubts about embracing the dark side, he’s emerged from the renovation a big fan of the moodier palette in the original part of the house. “It definitely took some convincing to get him on board with the darker shades,” says Julia, “but now he loves it.” 10

One Girl Interiors: onegirlinteriors.com.au or @onegirlinteriors





REMY'S ROOM Julia wanted this to be a space that would be just as appealing to her daughter in five years. "I'm not a 'pink person', but my daughter is obsessed with it so we included some dustier pink elements and mixed them with blues, greens and mustards," says Julia. Dresser, a Gumtree find painted Dulux Saladin. Leather handles, Etsy. Prints by Anna Walker, and Blancucha and Kate Pugsley through Etsy. **MAIN BEDROOM** (opposite) Walls in Dulux Hildegard continue the moodier palette in here. "It feels so cosy and relaxing," says Julia, adding that the striking Flos 'IC' pendant is "definitely an investment piece that we'll have forever". The armchair is a reupholstered eBay find.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Webbing **coffee table**, \$799, House of Orange. Ella Bendrups 'Faceted Lipped' **vessel** in Black Scarva, \$180, and 'Ikebana Sentinel' **vase** in White Clay, \$250, Modern Times. Christoph two-seater **sofa** in Stone Grey, \$699, Brosa. Flannel Flower linen **cushion** in Green Mint (50cm x 50cm), \$150, Louise Jones. Butterscotch velvet **European pillowcase**, \$59, Castle. Joan's Floral **pillowcase**, \$109 for set of two, Society of Wanderers. Navy American oak **dining table**, \$4558, Jardan. Amelie Luna terrazzo **side table**, \$380, GlobeWest. Sphere + Stem **table lamp**, \$229, West Elm. Petite Friture 'Vertigo' **pendant lamp**, \$1260, Finnish Design Shop. Muuto 'Grain' **pendant lamp**, \$275, Living Edge. Wash&Wear acrylic **paint** in (from top) Tranquil Retreat, Juvenile and Saladin, \$49.90 per 1L, Dulux.



GREAT FINDS

LESSONS LEARNT

“BE BRAVE!”
JULIA CAUCHI, HOMEOWNER

“I’ve always loved a moodier palette, but was a little nervous about making the leap to paint our main bedroom and formal living room a darker colour. But I honestly could not be more thrilled with the result. The dark walls create a lovely contrast to the fresher palette in the kitchen and living areas, and provide a tranquil, relaxing feel. They also highlight the period features in each room and make the furniture pop.”



ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON