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KNEAD THE DOUGH Baking breads and bagels
GARAGE BAND A photographer's stylish workshop conversion





EXTERIOR The roofline of the first-floor extension echoes the shape of the workshop, now a separate but connected apartment. Screens by Rock Martin. **LIVING** Owner Shannon McGrath with her daughters Sybil (left) and Jos. Gebrüder Thonet Vienna 'Targa' lounge chair, Space. Palais stool/table (pink), Great Dane. White side table, District. Artwork by Valerie Sparks. Wall painted Haymes Paint White Marble. Rug, Halcyon Lake.

Family TIES

Converting a mechanic's workshop into an inter-generational home was a labour of love for Melbourne photographer Shannon McGrath.

STORY *Karen McCartney* | STYLING *Swee Lim*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Shannon McGrath*



SHANNON'S LIVING/DINING Banks lantern, The Society Inc. Gebrüder Thonet Vienna 'Targa' lounge chair, Space. Palais coffee table and stool, Johanson dining table and Vilda 3 dining chairs, all Great Dane. Puffalo sofa, Ross Didier. Roly Poly outdoor chair, Hub Furniture. Wall-mounted hydronic heating, Nissl Eichert Hydronic Heating. James Dunlop 'Kyoto' curtains made by Lovelight. Rug, Halcyon Lake. Artwork by Valerie Sparks. Pink ceramics by Bettina Willner-Browne. All ceramics from Modern Times. Walls painted Haymes Paint White Marble.

How does a photographer who has captured some of Australia's most compelling interiors fare when it comes to renovating her own home? "It wasn't easy," says Shannon McGrath. "I have a new level of respect for architects and interior designers. The homes I photograph seem so effortlessly put together, but I now know the finished product is the result of immense skill and really hard work."

This home is one of a pair of airy apartments carved out of the carcass of Shannon's father's old workshop. "Dad was a mechanic and the workshop was part of the fabric of my childhood," she says. When he retired to his farm in 1993, Shannon and her mother Wynne decided to convert the workshop into their home. They engaged Tim Jackson from Jackson Clements

Burrows Architects and interior designer Hamish Guthrie (Shannon's then-husband) of Hecker Guthrie to help.

The plan was for an inter-generational setup: two apartments that were separate but connected by external walkways. "Having Mum and her partner Danny Rae (who was also the project builder) in an adjacent space would enable my daughters - Sybil, seven, and 11-year-old Jos - to enjoy the company of family when I couldn't be there," says Shannon.

The plan was approved by council but soon stalled as life and lack of funds intervened. Shannon and her mother hung onto their dream, however, and the project finally got underway in 2017.

"It was always important to hold onto the heritage of the building, with its memories and its characterful brick. ▶





LIVING Lantern, The Society Inc. Targa lounge chair, Space. Palais coffee tables and Vilda 3 dining chairs, all Great Dane. Puffalo sofa, Ross Didier. Rug, Halcyon Lake.
KITCHEN *This image and right* Pietra Lavica lavastone benchtops and splashback, Vicstone. Wire sculpture, Beatrix Rowe Interior Design. Oven and rangehood, Fisher & Paykel. Tapware, E&S. DC09 stool, Great Dane. Joinery by Guy Phelan. Colchester European oak flooring, Woodcut (throughout). **STAIRWELL** Walls painted Haymes Paint White Marble. Earth wall light, Anchor Ceramics. Balustrade designed by Jackson Clements Burrows Architects and made by Rock Martin.



We created what I describe as a two-storey extrusion, which echoes the garage's original pitched roof," says Shannon.

Natural light was a key driver in the design of both apartments. "For me, the best homes are those that still feel bright on the greyest day," says Shannon. Her apartment, on the top floor, enjoys abundant light thanks to the glass wall and offers beautiful city vistas over the treetops. On the ground floor, Mum's apartment, there is a lovely connection with the outdoors via views of the park opposite.

Building complete, Hamish and his business partner Paul Hecker set to work on the interiors. The nature-inspired palette includes blond-timber furniture, soft linen curtains and upholstery and a tactile moss-green rug. This scheme boosts the natural light without creating glare. "I was so well supported during the selection process by Paul and Hamish," says Shannon. "The design of the interior reflects their wonderful aesthetic that combines craft and considered detailing."

Prior to taking up photography as a profession, Shannon studied Fine Arts with a focus on ceramics. There is something of that raw, tactile sensibility in the choice of materials. In the kitchen, for ▶

SHANNON'S STUDY *This page and opposite bottom right* Trinidad chair and Cache table lamp, both Great Dane. Joinery by cabinetmaker Guy Phelan. Artwork by Julia Powles. Curtain in James Dunlop 'Satori Celadon' by Lovelight. W Collection 'Zeus' carpet, Whitecliffe Imports. **SHANNON'S BEDROOM** Clara bedhead, Dio side table and Model 375 table lamp, all Great Dane. Bedlinen, Hale Mercantile Co. Artwork by Ron Thackeray. **SHANNON'S ENSUITE** *Opposite, top right and bottom left* Inax 'Sugi' wall tiles, Artedomus. Basin, Collective. Tapware, E&S. Lavastone benchtop, Vicstone. Keyside side table, District. Vase by Cassie Hansen, sculpture by Ben Umemoto. Bowl, Modern Times. Heated towel ladder, Nissl Eichert Hydronic Heating. Towel, Hale Mercantile Co. Floor tiles, Urban Edge Ceramics. ▶

"FOR ME, THE BEST HOMES ARE THOSE THAT STILL FEEL BRIGHT ON THE GREYEST DAY."
SHANNON MCGRATH, OWNER



“THE INTERIOR REFLECTS THE WONDERFUL HECKER GUTHRIE AESTHETIC THAT COMBINES CRAFT AND CONSIDERED DETAILING.” SHANNON

example, the island bench and splashback are made from Italian lavastone, which Shannon says she admires for its robustness and modesty. The lavastone also features in the bathrooms for continuity. The furniture comes from a range of favourite local stores including Great Dane and designer/makers such as fellow Melbourne creative Ross Didier.

The furnishings - made from leather, rattan, linen and more - are highly tactile and neatly accented by Shannon's collection

of handmade ceramics. “Among my favourites are pieces by David Ray and Bettina Willner-Browne,” she says. Many ceramics and artworks are by artists local to the Kyneton area (in Victoria's Macedon Ranges), where Shannon has a farmhouse retreat. “A sense of connection is important to me and I like to support people I know,” she says. Pieces by Kyneton artists Mark Howson, Karen Hayman, Peter Cole and Cassie Hansen are earmarked as future additions to her ever-growing art collection.

You might have thought photographing her own home would be easy, but Shannon says she found this shoot particularly challenging. “I am used to appreciating another person's taste and style and communicating that in images, but trying to capture my own space made me question everything.” Shannon's good friend, designer Swee Lim, brought an impartial eye to the spaces and helped her focus on what is so successful about the apartments both individually and as a unit. ▶

WYNNE'S KITCHEN/DINING/LIVING Klassik sofa, Cache floor lamp, Palais side table (grey), DC09 kitchen stool and Vilda dining chairs, all Great Dane. Cushions and throw, Hale Mercantile Co. Side table, District. Pendant light, Hub Furniture. Rug, Halcyon Lake. Kitchen joinery painted Haymes Paint Chimney Ash. Rangehood, Fisher & Paykel. Lavastone island bench, Vicstone. Artwork (on wall) by Shannon McGrath. Ceramics (on island) by Cassie Hansen.

WYNNE'S DINING/LIVING This image, below left and opposite Shannon's mother Wynne. Pendant light, Hub Furniture. Paola Paronetti vessel (on dining table) from Fanuli. Dining table, dining chairs, Cache floor lamp, Pon side table and Frederica armchair, all Great Dane. Curtains by Lovelight. Artwork by David Band. Vase from Modern Times. **WYNNE'S BATHROOM** Wall tiles, Artdomus. Towel ladder, Nissl Ejchert Hydronic Heating. Basin, Collective. Lavastone benchtop. Side table, District. Wall light, Euroluce. *For Where to Buy, see page 176.*



AT HOME WITH **H&G**

Many of Shannon's decisions were intuitive, driven by the desire to maximise light through the high ceiling pitch. Not only does that roof shape echo the form of the original garage, it also references her beautiful country farmhouse, bringing country and city together and serving to keep memories alive. ▶
*Hecker Guthrie; www.heckerguthrie.com.
 Jackson Clements Burrows Architects; jcba.com.au.*



"IT WAS IMPORTANT TO ME TO HOLD ON TO THE HERITAGE OF THE BUILDING." SHANNON



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LIFE & STYLE

Shannon shares some first and favourite things.

FIRST ADULT HOME? An apartment in a 1960s block. It had a wonderful northerly aspect and a lovely community feel in the block.

BUCKET-LIST DESTINATION? I would love to walk along the Great Wall of China (2) and visit Egypt (8) to see the pyramids.

FAVOURITE MEAL? Pasta with bolognese. It's a staple in our household.

DREAM CAR? A Range Rover (6). Any model, old or new.

I'D CROSS THE WORLD TO SEE... My extended family in South Africa.

I LOVE A VASEFUL OF... Dried hydrangeas. I adore the way they keep their form after drying but soften to a more subtle shade of their original colour.

FAVOURITE ARTIST? US artist Donald Judd (3). No one beats his minimalist ways.

FAVOURITE FASHION LABELS? I generally prefer bespoke pieces and up-and-coming fashion designers to big brands.

FAVOURITE MOVIE? It's wonderful to indulge my inner child by watching the *Harry Potter* series or *The Chronicles of Narnia* with my daughters. My all-time favourite movie, however, would have to be *High Society* (1), featuring the serenely beautiful Grace Kelly.

FAVOURITE SCENT? Fresh flowers of any kind (9).

WHICH INTERIOR DESIGNERS INSPIRE YOU? Top of the list has to be Hecker Guthrie (4, 5). The craftsmanship in all of the firm's projects is understated and simply stunning.

A DESIGNER PRODUCT I ADORE IS... My wonderful Inabi bath and sinks from Collective (7). The lines are so classic that they will forever feel contemporary.

I AM PLANNING TO PURCHASE... A shed for my farm so I can have a place for my motor mower, tractor and storage for all my stuff! **H&G**

Shannon McGrath; shannonmcgrath.com



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DONALD JUDD IS MY HERO. NO ONE BEATS HIS MINIMALIST WAYS.



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I GENERALLY PREFER BESPOKE PIECES AND UP-AND-COMING DESIGNERS TO BIG BRANDS.



7

6



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Photography from Getty Images (1, 2, 3), Range Rover (6), Shannon McGrath (4, 5, 7, 9) & bauersyndication.com.au (9).