



Spanish queen

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The elegant *architectural details* throughout this 1920s Spanish Mission-style home and the *epicurean delights* of that very era informed its *sophisticated* renovation.



This page The formal living room's moulded features are painted in Dulux 'Natural White'. Made by Storey 'Salon' engineered timber flooring and a custom Halcyon Lake rug add layers of tactility. Atop the Timothy Oulton 'Propeller' coffee table from Coco Republic and the fireplace are ceramics from Modern Times and Pépite. On the wall is a Heidi Yardley artwork from Nicholas Thompson Gallery; overhead hangs an Apparatus 'Cloud' pendant light from Criteria. Opposite page During the renovation, the old roof tiles were replaced with a matching product and any missing leadlights were reinstalled. The once lilac-hued facade now boasts a scheme befitting the traditional architecture.

This page Kathryn Robson and Chris Rak of Robson Rak custom designed the leather banquette which hugs the room's curves. Chris also designed the stool; the table is from Nicholas & Alistair. The circular patterns etched in the ceiling cascade towards the floor in the form of another Apparatus 'Cloud' pendant light. Opposite page, from left Archways and columns serve plenty of drama in the dining room, so Kathryn and Chris chose a spidery Matter Made 'Arca' pendant light from Criteria that wouldn't compete. The Timothy Oulton dining table and 'Saxon' chairs are from Coco Republic; the ceramics on top are from Modern Times and Pépite. The John Olsen artwork is from Metro Gallery. Kathryn and Chris refurbished the mirror and designed the marble fireplace in recurring geometric lines that create a visual dialogue reminiscent of the 1920s.



As far as first impressions go, you could say the entrance to this home in Melbourne's Bayside area leaves a textural, full-bodied taste in your mouth. As you walk beneath its columned arches and drink in the celestial moulded ceilings, a travertine bar greets you; a glass of wine awaits. This is how Kathryn Robson describes those irresistible first moments inside the Spanish Mission-style residence she and Chris Rak, both of architecture and interior design firm Robson Rak, reinvigorated for a dynamic family of six.

When Kathryn and Chris initially met with the owners, a couple who at the time had two very young children, they immediately clicked. "The house's Spanish Mission style appealed to our clients – they're not afraid to think outside the box – but they bought the house with the intention of renovating," Kathryn says. "They were committed to creating something with longevity and passionate about having something unique. They didn't want the same old Melbourne style." This boundary-pushing approach and appreciation for originality guided the brief, but it was the 1920s architecture that Kathryn and Chris found themselves returning to. That, and the owners' plans to grow their family, she adds. "We get to know our clients' intentions for the future and make sure the home's functionality meets their needs."

While the property was ripe with opportunity, a previous renovation hadn't realised its full potential and the owners were

only using a third of the house due to a lack of communication between spaces. Even the formal sitting room's function had been lost in translation – Kathryn recalls it being full of clothes draped over indoor drying racks. "Details that could have been done better" had to be reinstalled or replaced, right down to the door hinges, while on a much larger scale the south-facing property's limited natural light was exacerbated at the rear of the house by a cluster of small spaces that felt cut off from the backyard.

The solution was a stroke of sheer genius. Gone are the bastilled back rooms and in their place is an atrium-esque glass corner roof which generously bathes the open kitchen and living area in sunlight. When the glass facade's Aplo steel bi-fold doors are flung open, the threshold between the indoors and outdoors evaporates and a fluid route from the Balhoul travertine kitchen island to the swimming pool appears. Given that there isn't a great deal of sun exposure but plenty of privacy, Kathryn says there was no need for blinds. This conservatory of sorts also serves as a frame for a denHolm sculpture. Displayed between two bagged brick blades like a deity, this limestone composition was commissioned especially for the living space. The effect is breathtaking – Chris says "a crystal palace" comes to mind.

The attention to texture, shape and shadow observed in this artistic alcove resonates throughout the home, from the Garonne stone French-pattern floors to the tarnished silver light fixtures >

This page "It gives purpose and a sense of formality to the entrance space," Kathryn says of the bar made from Balthioul travertine from Signorino. The Vintec fridge under the stairs stores a curated selection of wines by Stocked Cellar. The vintage console is from Nicholas & Alistair and the artwork is by Adam Pyett from Sophie Gannon Gallery. Opposite page, from top In the kitchen, pinstriped custom joinery handsomely conceals the butler's pantry. Above the Balthioul travertine island hangs an Apparatus 'Twig' pendant light custom made in a tarnished silver finish. Given its versatility and durability, Garonne limestone from Eco Outdoor was a wise choice for the flooring. Billiani 'Puccio' stools from Hub echo the colour of the timber veneer joinery in Dulux 'Mt Eden'. This bench extends beyond the sliding window into an alfresco kitchen and dining area. The outdoor chairs and 'Eileen' table by Tom Fereday are from Space.



« and the Thassos marble fireplace, which Kathryn and Chris also designed. Its stepped silhouette is repeated in the mirror above and even the shape of the doorknobs. "There was so much detail in the existing columns and stained glass that we were not loud with colour but said yes to texture," Kathryn says. "We wanted to create a warm, rich vibe with depth, so the materials we chose aren't glossy."

And what could be more fitting for a home of this architectural ilk than a luxurious, textural scheme? "It references a 1920s speakeasy with a sense of risqué," Chris says, citing the pinstripes of the kitchen joinery and the diamond pattern in the Halcyon Lake carpet upstairs. These eclectic art deco elements speak to the couple's sophisticated-but-oh-so-fun style and their love of entertaining. You can imagine guests gathering around the curved Verona leather banquette or lolling on the Pierre Augustin Rose sofas upholstered in lush Kvadrat fabric with a cocktail from the bar in hand. The existing architecture also informed the vintage pieces hand-picked for the project. Notably, the table beside the banquette and the chandelier in the master bedroom are both from Nicholas & Alistair, a Melbourne gallery well-known for sourcing rare 20th century designs.

Old world elegance aside, this is a family home with a functional sense of flow. "Within the grand spaces are family considerations," says Kathryn. Take the butler's pantry, which is located next to the kitchen, dining room and carport door. When the children come home from school, they run through the door and drop their bags in one of the designated pantry cupboards. More robust surfaces and materials feature in the kids' bathroom and open living area, "but nowhere is off-limits – they use every room", she adds. "The owners have told us their home is now easy to live in." robsonrak.com.au



SPEED READ

» Principal architect Kathryn Robson and principal interior architect Chris Rak of Robson Rak first met with the owners of this Melbourne home in May 2016. » The renovation, which was completed in December 2018, involved updating the interior and exterior while respecting the 1920s Spanish Mission-style architecture and ensuring every space could be utilised by a growing family. » Kathryn and Chris worked with Warwick Constructions and Mud-Office landscape architects to achieve the end result. » Small rooms at the back of the house were replaced with an open kitchen and living space beneath a glass corner roof. The new facade takes advantage of the southern sun exposure and backyard. » Inspired by the architecture, luxurious textures with old-world sophistication were incorporated into the scheme.



This page Luxuriant textiles and shades of grey reign in the master bedroom. On the B&B Italia 'Tufty' bed from Space is a Southwood quilt, a chandelier from Nicholas & Alistair descends like a stalactite. The carpet is Halcyon Lake and the Mokum linen curtains are by In Vague Blinds. On the wall are Apparatus 'Tassel' sconces and a Genevieve Felix Reynolds artwork from Nicholas Thompson Gallery. Opposite page, clockwise from top This denHolm sculpture was designed specifically for the living area. The Moroso 'Gentry' sofa from Hub is upholstered in robust leather. On the Instyle linen daybed are Southwood cushions. On the Linteloo 'Obi' coffee table from ECC Lighting + Furniture are ceramics from Modern Times and Pépité, and a 'Dyad' sconce by Apparatus is on the wall. A Faye Toogood 'Roly Poly' chair occupies the front porch which is paved in Garonne stone. "The owners love marble but they didn't want tiles, so we went with slabs," Chris says of the master ensuite. Inspired by the stained-glass windows, they opted for marble with tones of bluish purple from Signorino and designed the mirrors. Brodware 'Yokato' tapware and a Workstead 'Signal' sconce from Luke Furniture complete the scheme.

