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Breathing space

Expertly opened up and expanded, this Melbourne home now fits its new family to a tee.

STORY *Sarah Pickett* | STYLING *Swee Lim* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Derek Swatwell*

REAR EXTERIOR The bluestone cladding that defines this house is from Bamstone. Green-tinted high-performance glass doors by Viridian. **GARAGE** An existing liquidambar tree was worked into the garage design, which features Sculptform Click-on aluminium battens.



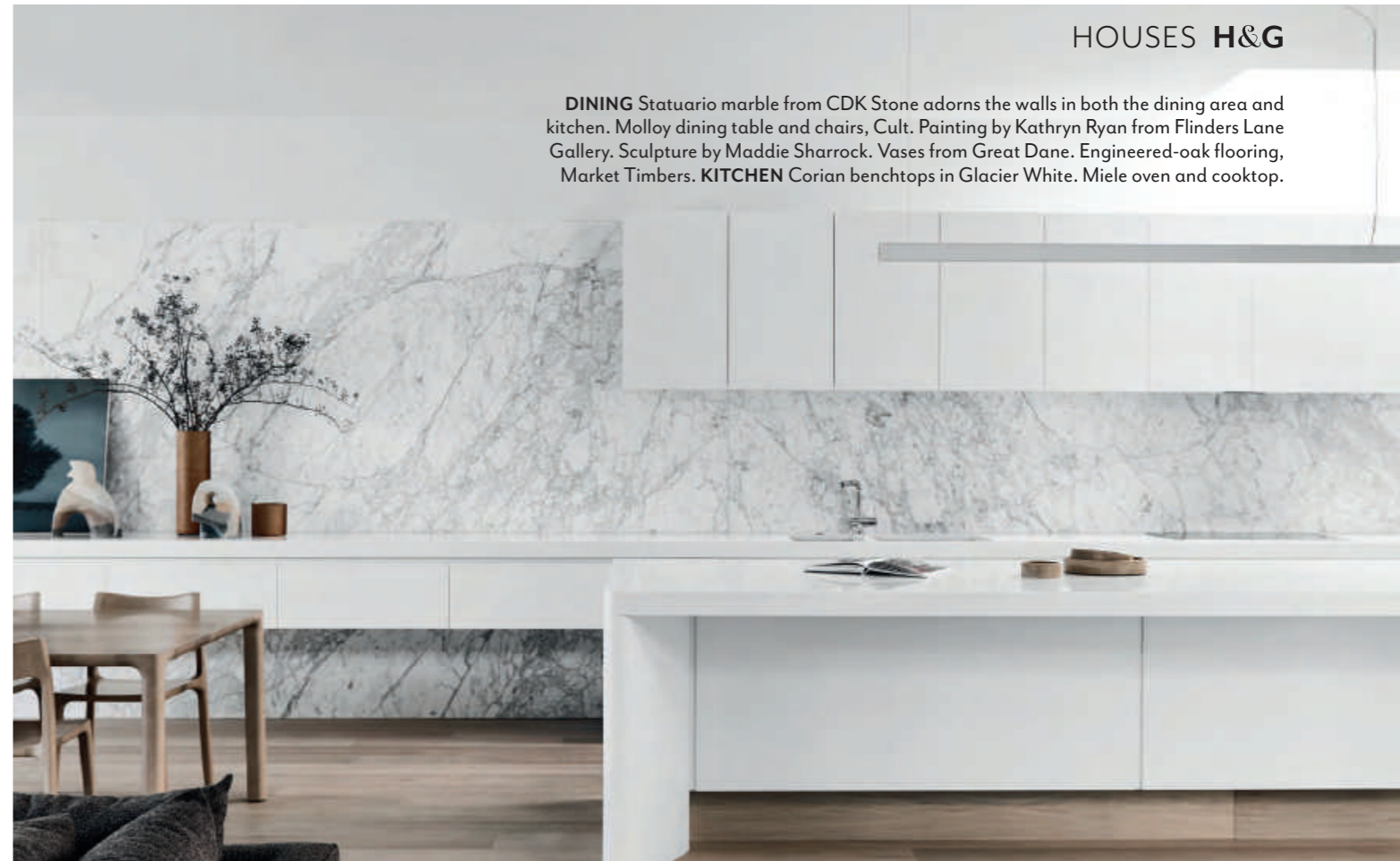
Materials are to the architect as paint is to the artist, and that is why this home can truly be described as a masterpiece. Expanses of meticulously book-matched marble, gently curving Corian joinery and era-appropriate bluestone cladding all work together to make it so.

The owners of this home in Melbourne's south had admired the work of architect John Matyas when he completed a project for their friends. They had also spotted his signs on heritage renovations around their suburb. "It was pretty clear to us that John was the right architect for our project," says the homeowner.

What John and his design team took on was a complex and comprehensive renovation of the Victorian-era double-fronted home, which was rather rundown after having been used as a share house for years. "It had lean-tos tacked on the back, it was dark and claustrophobic inside, and almost all of the period features were long gone," says John. With little apart from a heritage ▶



DINING Statuario marble from CDK Stone adorns the walls in both the dining area and kitchen. Molloy dining table and chairs, Cult. Painting by Kathryn Ryan from Flinders Lane Gallery. Sculpture by Maddie Sharrock. Vases from Great Dane. Engineered-oak flooring, Market Timbers. **KITCHEN** Corian benchtops in Glacier White. Miele oven and cooktop.



LIVING An Australian-made Frankie deep modular sofa from Fanuli takes pride of place in the living area. Black vases and artwork by Kathryn Dolby (on display shelf) and glassware by Amanda Dzedzic (on coffee table), all Modern Times. Ligne Roset terracotta pot, Domo. Escea fireplace with custom-stained American-oak surround. Metrica leather armchairs from Space.



facade to redeem it, the structure was gutted and reimagined as a home that would better suit its new family who, at that time, had one toddler and a baby on the way.

“The owners’ brief really captured what just about everyone wants from their home today: practicality and family friendliness, plenty of natural light and a minimum of maintenance,” says John. The two front rooms of the house are now a study and guestroom with a central hallway leading past a family room and internal courtyard into the open-plan extension. “The light well in the middle of the house demarcates old from new. It features a Japanese maple that becomes a striking feature in its own right when it’s lit at night as it casts shadows on the surrounding rendered walls.”

Site constraints and setback rules may have presented quite a challenge but John has created a generous open-plan living zone where long stretches of Statuario marble adorn the walls like exquisite works of art. “We spent a long time setting out the marble, using 3D software to work out how to best join the slabs so they looked continuous. The process was a bit like dressmaking.” Using the marble on the walls gets the most value from it, he says. “You see much more of its character when it’s run vertically rather than just used on benches.” ▶



“THE MARBLE ON THE WALLS IS BREATHTAKING BUT IT’S STILL A RELAXED FAMILY HOME.” *Owner*

Corian was the material of choice for the kitchen’s benchtops. “It’s a surface that doesn’t mark easily and it allowed us to introduce some more fluid, rounded edges,” says John. A wall of mirror by the walk-in pantry helps to bounce light around the room and creates the illusion that the kitchen’s heavenly marble splashback stretches on and on.

The living area has been cleverly designed to borrow both space and light from the stairwell. “There’s glass at either end of the stairs: morning light floods in from the bottom while afternoon sun pours in from the top,” says John. “The glass wall by the stairs is frameless to enclose them without reducing the width of the living zone. A long built-in bench/display shelf under the stairs also works to visually increase the size of the room.” Upstairs, there’s a main bedroom with a glorious Carrara marble-clad ensuite, bedrooms for each of the children and the main bathroom.

High-performance glass doors lead out from the open-plan living area to a rear courtyard, their green tint reflecting the beauty of the garden, which is the work of landscape designer Le Page Design. The backyard is a wonderful asset to the house, says the owner: “We love the bluestone cladding John has used, and the fact that the kids have enough space to play in.” A lot of attention was paid to an established tree in rear courtyard. “The garage is built around the root zone of the tree to protect it,” says John. Stacking doors on the garage allow it to open right up and transform into another play area for the children.

“We had so much trust in John and I think this is evident in the home we have today,” says the owner. “Yes, the marble on the walls is breathtaking, but this is still a relaxed, casual home that suits our family perfectly.”

▶ *Matyas Architects, Middle Park, Victoria; (03) 9690 4662 or matyasarchitects.com.au*



ENSUITE Carrara marble wall and floor tiles The City Tiler. Shower by Astra Walker.
STUDY *Opposite, left and right* Tulip side table, Dedece. Rug, Armadillo&Co. Artworks by Conchita Carambano through Manyung Gallery (left image, left), Saxon Quinn from Modern Times (above fireplace), and Margaret Voterakis (right image, above desk). Glassware by Amanda Dziedzic from Modern Times. Vedel birds and Streck table light, all Great Dane. Blind by Inside Edge.

The palette

Taubmans
Whisper White
Half (kitchen)

Porter's Paints
Aquitaine

Porter's Paints
Biscotti



THIS IS THE LIFE

"What we have now is a family-friendly, safe, practical and beautiful home that does everything we could wish it to," says the homeowner. "We had never undertaken a project like this before but the fantastic relationship we developed with John meant we were assured of an excellent outcome." The family has plenty of living space now and love their locale. "We're close to the city and to a great park for the kids. It really is a perfect spot for us."

TERRACE Blackbutt cladding. Leather butterfly chair, In Good Company. **MAIN BEDROOM** Opposite An artwork by Agneta Elkholtz from Flinders Lane Gallery hangs over the custom-stained American-oak bedhead. Custom panels slide to conceal or reveal the television. Himalayas wool carpet in Yala, Prestige Carpets. *For Where to Buy, see page 176.* H&G



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