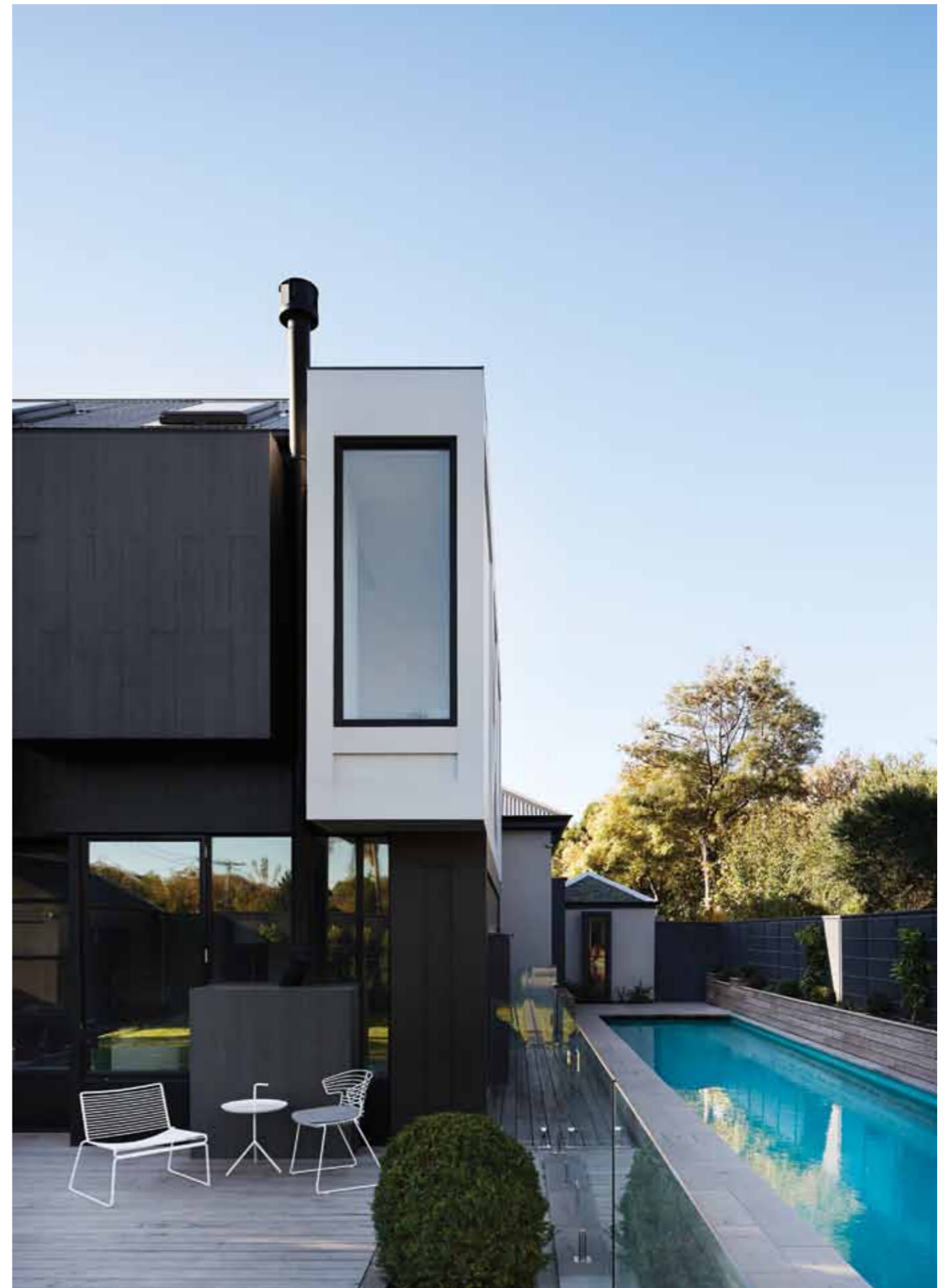


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NOW YOU SEE IT

Don't be fooled by its pristine first impression
– this is a home built for a boisterous family
and lauded for its clever use of colour.

WORDS **Philippa Prentice**
PHOTOGRAPHY **Sharyn Cairns**



ENTERTAINING The formal dining room, with an Atticus table by Lowe Furniture and Kuskoa chairs by Alki, is lit by the Yokohama light by Georg Baldele. On the table are design objects by Cassina. The installation is *Bee Replicas* by Richard Stringer. The artist himself placed each insect sculpture individually.



THE HONEYBEES SHOULD TIP YOU OFF – a swarm of them, alabaster, dancing across a blank wall. For as refined and grown-up as it is at a glance, this is a home that speaks a language even the littlest members of its owners' family can understand. Look closer and you'll find it in the itty-bitty footstools in the bathrooms, the hard-wearing felt and cotton upholstery, the kid-sized storage solutions – and much more besides. In fact, these generous spaces in seaside Brighton, Melbourne, are tailor-made for a young family of six.

Principal designer Steven Whiting headed the Whiting Architects team tasked with the two-year renovation that rose above and behind an existing single-level Victorian-style dwelling. The brief was for a forever home that would evolve with the family. The architects' response? A series of intriguing box forms, with a surprise around every corner. Slide a panel to reveal a hidden TV nook; open another and the butler's pantry becomes a laundry.

"There aren't really corridors, doors and walls as you'd get in a traditional sense," >

OPEN-PLAN LIVING

Here, a Twiggy floor lamp by Foscarini is joined by a Grafo sofa by MDF Italia. Of the flooring, creative director and interior designer Carole Whiting says, "With four small children in the house, we needed to keep the materials robust but beautiful, and timber is an elegant solution." Throughout the home, window seats upholstered in velvet and linen in the formal zones are mirrored by others in felt and cotton in the children's areas.

PREVIOUS PAGE Although creating something distinctly contemporary, sensitivity to the home's heritage was paramount for the architects, whose attention to scale and proportion and inclusion of abstracted period elements such as the pitched roof, lining board texture and steel framing provide visual links between old and new.



FAMILY DINING

Thought-out lines of vision maintain communication throughout the home.

Artwork by Melbourne artist enlivens the cypress pine wall in the dining area, and above the Atticus table by Lowe Furniture, with pots by Anchor Ceramics, are bamboo and cotton pendant lamps by Paris au Mois d'Août. Tucked beneath the breakfast bar are Georg stools by Skagerak.





Slide a panel to reveal a hidden TV nook; open another and the butler's pantry becomes a laundry.



KITCHEN The signature lightness of touch is displayed in the kitchen. It's equipped with everything necessary to prepare a meal, but the main appliances and work areas are handily hidden in an adjoining butler's pantry/laundry. Colour is ushered in in the form of a watermelon-hued panel (in Dulux K Road) leading to the children's playroom and a textured splashback crafted from handmade Tunisian tiles.

says Steven. "We treated it like a little urban planning project where we slid in these boxes. So a wall became a box that has wardrobe storage or a bath or kitchen elements in it. And within those panels, sections open up and it's how you get into a bathroom, or they'll slide to the side. So you can have them open all the time, or you can flick a door around or slide something across and it's all closed up. It's quite a nice way of feeling connected to these other rooms, but it's still private."

The boxes also create views and elongated vistas, and see the home drenched in light. "A box will go up to a certain height, and then we might put glass above it so it doesn't actually hit the ceiling," says Steven. "When you walk through the upstairs hall, for example, you can see over the top of the box and out the skylights."

'Restraint' isn't a word you'd usually associate with pushing the boundaries like this, but behind this grand design and its equally spectacular interior is some very smart thinking. The aforementioned bees were among the solutions found: less expensive than a ▷





The Dulux Colour Awards judges announced the scheme the winner and pronounced it “perfectly crafted”.

traditional artwork of this scale, the 70 little bees by local artist Richard Stringer avoid a small painting on a large wall, and make a striking statement while being relatable for children. Plus, the white on white means it's compelling, yet not scene-stealing.

Indeed, 'less is more' was also the order of the day when it came to colour – to winning effect. The team's creative director and interior designer, Carole Whiting (now of Carole Whiting Interiors) says, “I aimed to infuse some lightness into the project as the family is young, so I wanted it to be sophisticated but not alienating.”

Pairing a few expertly timed hits of colour with a purposefully unassuming backdrop makes the scheme all the more impactful. The Dulux Colour Awards judges thought so too, announcing it the winner of this year's Single Residential Interior category and pronouncing it “perfectly crafted”.

The children's presence is felt once again in the choice of hues, Carole personalising their upper-storey bedrooms with their favourite shades. “I deliberately chose traditional gender colourways for their bathrooms,” she says, “but >

ABOVE The playroom downstairs is exemplary in its practicality. Custom storage keeps the happy clutter out of sight, and power sockets are concealed within the joinery for safety. It's furnished with a chalkboard table by Mark Tuckey and Weylandts timber boxes and, as in the kitchen, the floor is concrete screed for ease of cleaning. **KIDS' BATHROOMS** Set against pale Dulux Lexicon Quarter and dark Dulux Domino, pink Dulux Marshmallow Magic Quarter, watermelon Dulux K Road and blue Dulux Deluxe Days provide vibrant accents in the upstairs bathrooms. The tiles in these spaces are from Bespoke Tile & Stone, with tapware from Astra Walker.





Natural materials including stone, linen, felt, velvet and timber aren't incidental here, but a well-considered part of the scheme.



ABOVE & OPPOSITE Used strategically, as in the master suite, neutrals become colours in their own right. "It doesn't have to be a primary thing," says Steven. "Within the whites and shades of grey there's a subtlety of colour. Whites are rarely just white. Ceiling white is where you start, but it's about selecting that white or that French grey or those tones that really set it off." Beside the couple's bed is an Angel des Montagnes floor lamp and their ensuite features Carrara Penny Road tiles and freestanding basins and a black towel rail by Agape. The benchtop and shower wall are gioia marble from Artedomus.

LEFT Upstairs, the children's bedrooms are defined by hints of their favourite colours; this pink pendant lamp is by Paris au Mois d'Août.

there's grey in both to keep the more permanent elements neutral. I've used the brighter colours predominately for the joinery items as it's much easier to alter these if tastes evolve."

As in the vivacious watermelon-hued doors in the playroom, colour is also used to accentuate form. "We've got a couple of accents and the rest is all pretty neutral," says Steven, "so when you do a pop of colour, it really jumps out."

Natural materials including stone, linen, felt, velvet and oak and cypress pine timber aren't incidental here, but a well-considered part of the pared-back scheme. And completing the pretty yet practical picture are soft furnishings in matching shades, included throughout the home by Carole to give a cohesive feel. They can be updated as trends dictate, just as the matching footstools in the children's bathrooms can be repurposed when no longer needed.

A home that's equal parts child-friendly and chic? Mission accomplished. And however it evolves, one thing's for sure: in artfully catering to everyone's needs, this is a house in which they'll *all* live happily ever after. ♣ whitingarchitects.com; carolewhiting.com





EXTERIOR Colour, form and texture add interest to the home's facade, white meeting charcoal in a play on light and dark that changes by the hour and with the weather. In concert with the shadow lines created by the cladding and box forms, it creates a dynamic contrast.

AT A GLANCE

The project: A renovation of a Victorian home in Melbourne for a young family of six.

Steven, what's the secret to the successful use of colour? Restraint is always the key. Don't go overboard and get carried away. It's easy to walk in and you get a big sort of wow and it's like, "There's the punchline", but then when you have to live with it long term, it's pretty easy to tire of it. And then if you try to introduce artwork and all those other things, you're stuck. Start with the things that are a priority and that you're going to live with forever - like artwork - then work backwards. We do splashes of colour with the things such as joinery that are fairly easy to shift and change later. You get that little lick of colour and that's all you need; it's just enough. It's actually far stronger in that little pop than if you painted the whole wall.

What advice would you give someone wanting to choose a brighter palette for their home? It's just a matter of trying it. Get yourself a one metre by one metre piece of plywood, paint it and have a look at it in the place you're going to use it. A colour can be quite different in relation to light, and the texture of the material you're painting is important as well. What can be a lovely colour here might not work where it's a little darker or a different texture.



4 DESIGN DETAILS

This sophisticated renovation teams elegant neutrals and textural elements with carefully curated doses of colour.



FROM TOP LEFT *Bee Replicas* sculptures by Richard Stringer, \$73 each, franque.com.au. Kyris Drop 60 light shade, \$375; Kyoto Drop 80 light shade, \$595, madderandrouge.co.nz. Outline sofa by Simon James, \$7947 (fabric additional), simonjamesdesign.com. Paulistano armchair by Paulo Mendes da Rocha for Objekto, \$4125, cavitco.com. Armadillo & Co Sierra Weave rug, \$1270, theivyhouse.co.nz. Radial Round coffee table, \$990, cittadesign.com. Anchor Ceramics planters, from \$125 each, garden-objects.com. Wall in Dulux K Road (watermelon), dulux.co.nz.