

*Repurposed pieces from a century's high-design periods
create an ebullient clash of pattern and period in this
stately Melbourne bungalow hybrid.*

By ANNEMARIE KIELY Photographed by LISA COHEN

In a corner of the salon in this Malvern home designed by Richard Hall & Son, 1960s Italian glass-faced commode from Capocchi; THE LACQUER COMPANY drinks tray from Brownlow Design; vintage Dutch brass-and-hammer-tone-metal table lamp from GEOFFREY HATTY APPLIED ARTS; and (on table) BITOSSA CERAMICHE black-and-white striped Calice vase by Ettore Sottsass from Wallpaper Store; ANNA VARENDORFF Most of a Circle vase from Mr Kitty. Details, last pages.

PAST
PERFECT





In the words of the late, great Ada Louise Huxtable, long-time architecture critic for *The New York Times*, “If you wait long enough, what is admired will be relegated to history’s dustbin, and if you wait even longer, it will be rescued and restored.” It’s a truism that keeps the auction houses full and the furnishing industry ticking away, but in this moment of ever-changing value and environment, can we in all conscience keep feeding our voracious appetite for the new?

Designers Belinda Hall and Fiona Richardson of Richard Hall & Son aren’t your typical environmental activists; indeed they’d laugh at the tag. But in their own quiet way they are radicalising the ideals of rampant Modernism with idiosyncratic schemes that rescue past styles from redundancy. In short, they design sustainably.

Take this four-bedroom bungalow hybrid that was built in 1916 on a quarter-acre block in Melbourne’s leafy south-east Malvern. Recently altered and extended by Damien Lui of Honto Architecture, it unashamedly revels in the original plan (centring on an entrance hallway) and the detail of the period’s paralleling Arts and Crafts movement. Hall and Richardson were brought into the project early to draft a document for the direction of the interior fit-out and furnishings. In concept and specified collections, they drew on the detail of the original architecture and the design adventure of Kit Kemp’s London hotels — loved by the client for their cross-cultural chaos, colour and clash of periods. Richardson and Hall’s first order of business was to emulate the wide-plank floors in Soho’s Ham Yard Hotel with scraped-back American oak and to replicate its front-of-house welcome with Haymes Paint’s Minimalist 1 — a chalky white that, like Ham Yard, concedes to colour in outlying rooms. They redefined the formal dining room as a salon, inserting the dining room into a sequence of open living spaces at the house’s rear.

“The salon was really our starting point for the whole house and it was a luxurious opportunity,” says Hall, laughing that such fantastic prospect put their collective heads in the clouds “in the form of Fornasetti’s cumulus covered Nuvolette wallpaper”. It was laid in an encircling band above the room’s white panelling, creating a stylised stratosphere that instantly dictated accents of solar yellow and sky blue — the colour of velvet used by Alexander J Cook to reupholster a sorry 1940s Italian sofa into sumptuous diamond quilt decadence. According to Hall, the client — “a long-time friend and lover of

vintage design” — dived into their inspiration document, actively searching for the old pieces that would make the salon’s sunny atmosphere palpable. She found her ‘solar flashes’ at Capocchi in a dour set of Louis XVI-style chairs, which Hall and Richardson summarily painted white and reworked in leather the colour of a setting sun. They now radiate from a Saarinen Tulip table, their classicism seemingly at ease in a room that engages with all eras — a 1950s rosewood sideboard by Ico Parisi sidles up against a 1960s Italian glass-faced console; while an Ettore Sottsass Memphis ceramic makes conversation with

Marcello Fantoni’s Mid-century vases. All sit on a contemporary Nepalese rug from Loom that reiterates the Arts and Crafts geometries of the architecture’s ornament. This happy clash of pattern and period flow into the property’s rear rooms, where an open plan of living, dining and kitchen feature similar auction finds refashioned into fabulous. The all-white dining table with the fetching turned legs was found languishing in Leonard Joel’s auctions rooms as a piece of unloved brown Victoriana. “White paint and a massive piece of Calacatta marble later and you’ve got one-of-a-kind gorgeous,” says Richardson. “It was all about those shapely legs.” Its monumentality is matched by Ocha’s contemporary take on the baronial chandelier and its mess of modern material and master craft repeats in a triptych of silver-etched mirrors made by Peter Nyary. “You need to find the things you love,” says Richardson, proffering advice on the realisation of personally resonant rooms. “It’s a cliché, but it’s true.” VL

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THIS PAGE: in another corner of the salon, '50s Ico Parisi rosewood sideboard from GEOFFREY HATTY APPLIED ARTS; vintage marble grapes from LUNATIQUES; brown glass vase from MOMU; MICHAEL ANASTASSIADES Tip of the Tongue table lamp from Hub Furniture. OPPOSITE PAGE: in the hallway off the entry foyer, beirloom bust (artist unknown) and a vintage French loveseat from SCOUT HOUSE. Walls are painted in Haymes Paint’s Ash Grey with feature woodwork in Minimalist 1.

In the formal front salon, KNOLL Saarinen round dining table from Dedece; 1920s French Louis XVI-style armchairs from CAPOCCHI; curved 1940s Italian sofa from Geoffrey Hatty Applied Arts, reupholstered by ALEXANDER J COOK; GUBI TS small and medium side tables by GamFratesi from Cult; FORNASETTI Nuvole wallpaper by Cole & Son from Radford; HERMAN MILLER Saucer Bubble pendant lights by George Nelson from Luke Furniture; CC TAPIS custom Primitive Weave 4 rug by Cbiara Andreatti, from Loom Rugs.



IN BRIEF

Melbourne-based interior stylists Belinda Hall and Fiona Richardson, founders of Richard Hall & Son, were inspired by the London hotels designed by Kit Kemp for their fit-out of this Melbourne home, while also drawing on the detail of its original Edwardian architecture.



THIS PAGE: in the kitchen, GREG STIRLING FURNITURE Comb Back settee; Caesarstone benchtop in London Grey; GRAZIA & CO leather-topped Dita stools and large brass pot from Miguel Meirelles Antiques; 1920s Konya kilim from LOOM RUGS; Small Geometric Abstraction #5 (left) and Small Geometric Abstraction #6 artworks by CELIA GULLETT. OPPOSITE PAGE: in a dining area, antique table from Leonard Joel reimagined in white, topped with a slab of Calacatta marble from SIGNORINO; THONET No 31 Fureau chairs; OCHRE Arctic Pear chandelier; PORRO The Loop mirror by Front from Space Furniture.





THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *in the main bathroom, Amiata bath from VICTORIA + ALBERT, ARTICOLO Fizi ball sconce lights by Nicci Green; marble tiles from SIGNORINO. In the laundry, Winslow tapware from BRODWARE; Beauford sandstone tiles from ECO OUTDOOR. On the rear verandah, LIGNE ROSET Grillage armchairs and settees by François Azambourg from Domo; Crown outdoor pendant lights from DUNLIN. In the main bedroom, RICHARD HALL & SON custom velvet bedhead; '40s Italian Maplewood trolley (used as bedside table) from GEOFFREY HATTY APPLIED ARTS. OPPOSITE PAGE: in the study, vintage KNOLL desk chair by Bruce Hannab found at Leonard Joel and reupholstered by ALEXANDER J COOK; Böwer Gateleg table by ERIC DEGENHARDT and vintage Pantibella table lamp by VERNER PANTON from DK Living; FRITZ HANSEN Egg chair by Arne Jacobsen (partially seen) from Cult. Details, last pages.*

