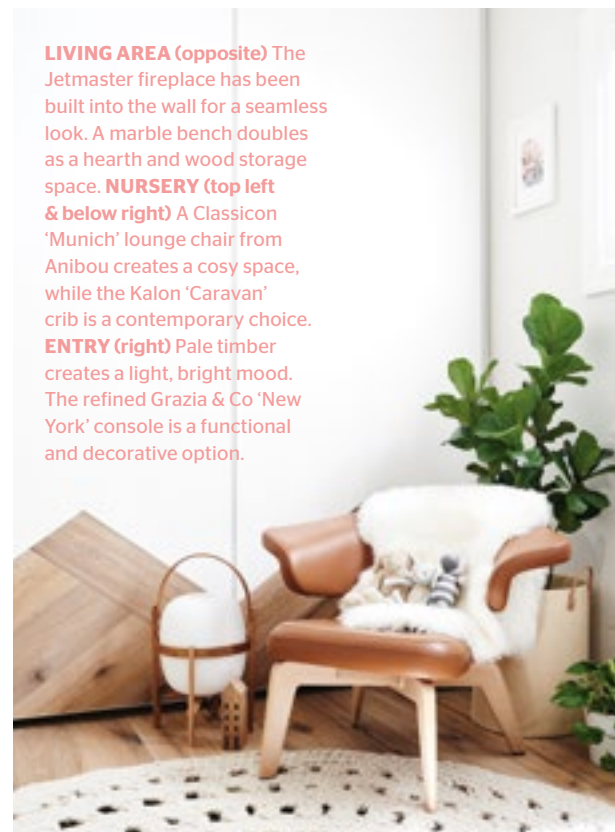


3 STEPS TO A SMALLER BUT SMARTER RENNO

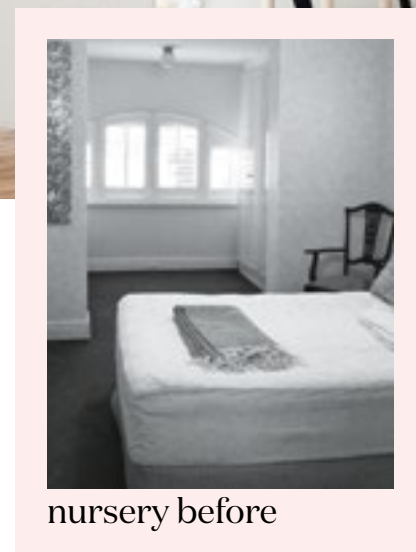
Bigger isn't always better! This project shows how smart planning can save time and money

WORDS VICTORIA BAKER
PHOTOGRAPHY EVE WILSON

ARTWORK: PAINTING, PAT HILLCOAT; FRAMED PRINT, MC ESCHER; LIVING AREA: WILFRED; SOFA, JARDAN, JARDAN.COM.AU; COFFEE TABLE, HOUSE OF ORANGE; HOUSE OF ORANGE.COM.AU; RUG, LOOM RUGS, LOOMRUGS.COM.AU; COWHIDE, NSW LEATHER CO.; LEATHER CO., LEATHER.COM.AU; WALL-HANGINGS, PORCELAIN BEAR, PORCELAINBEAR.COM; 'ROCA' ARMCHAIR, A JAR, AJAR.COM.AU; ENTRY: ARTEK UMBRELLA STAND BY ALVARO ALTO, ANIBOU, ANIBOU.COM.AU



LIVING AREA (opposite) The Jetmaster fireplace has been built into the wall for a seamless look. A marble bench doubles as a hearth and wood storage space. **NURSERY (top left & below right)** A Classicon 'Munich' lounge chair from Anibou creates a cosy space, while the Kalon 'Caravan' crib is a contemporary choice. **ENTRY (right)** Pale timber creates a light, bright mood. The refined Grazia & Co 'New York' console is a functional and decorative option.



nursery before



Renovators are all chasing a dream, and often that dream is big. Big dreams have a habit of coming with big price tags and big time frames; everything you specify, from an extra bathroom to a butler's pantry, adds a factor of time and money to your project, so it's really important to be clever at the planning stage. A Melbourne family and their architect, Sally Holbrook of Northbourne Architecture + Design, prove that it's possible to get what you want and what you need, without extending your floorplan and your finances. We narrow down the keys to success.

Ispend more time at the briefing stage "Over the years, we've realised that people often don't know what they want or need, and we end up working through multiple redesigns," says Sally. She has distilled her own briefing process with clients to include multiple factors. These include understanding the client's lifestyle needs and wants but also looking at the site and the existing building and relevant regulations to be clear on what's physically possible and, most importantly, taking a long, hard look at the budget. All this should happen before the design stage begins. "We find people often have unrealistic expectations on budget, so it's important to talk this through in detail. There is no point spending money on having something designed, only to realise you can't afford to build it," says Sally. **Get real:** Set a budget, including 15 to 20 per cent for contingencies, and communicate it to your architect, designer or builder at the beginning of the process so it can inform your design.

2 look at the bigger picture

Part of narrowing down what you want and need is looking at your own and your family's life stage, and your planned time frame in the house. In this Toorak home, Sally's clients, a couple keen to start a family, briefed her to design a second-storey extension to house a master bedroom, walk-in robe and ensuite. Then they told her they were planning to move house within five years, which gave her pause for thought. "Those two pieces of information together took me in a different direction," says Sally. "I didn't think it would be worthwhile going through an extensive and time-consuming design and planning process for that time frame, so I looked at the existing floorplan and we ended up working within it, which also meant we didn't need planning permission for the vast majority of the work."

Get real: It's always worth renovating for your own needs rather than the next owner's, but at the same time, weigh your investment and the time your project will take against your family's personal timeline.

3 make your space work harder

The three existing bedrooms were large, but underutilised. Sally's clients were using the smallest and darkest bedroom as the master bedroom because it included a fairly basic wardrobe, while one was given over to junk. Working within the floorplan, Sally created a master suite in the prettiest bedroom with its own bay window. She stole space for a walk-in wardrobe from an adjoining bedroom and created an ensuite in the space formerly taken up by the wardrobe of the other bedroom. Voilà - the space and luxury of a master suite, without a second-storey extension, and without

WALK-IN ROBE (top right) Royal Oak Floors 'The Architect Collection' flooring in Aged, Smoked & Limed sets a calm and modern tone throughout the home. **MASTER BEDROOM (below left & opposite)** Plenty of built-in storage ensures clutter is hidden away, while prized items can be on display. Porcelain Bear sculptures adorn the wall, while House Of Orange linen adds texture and softness.



master bedroom before



DISTINCTIVE DESIGN

The joinery, featuring inlaid Royal Oak Floors boards to match the flooring, was designed by Sally and built by Contour Cabinets. "The clients had a number of pieces of art that were highly patterned, including some Florence Broadhurst prints," she says. "One of these was the inspiration for the diagonal design (pictured above). I wanted to keep the material palette simple, neutral and cohesive across the project but create the texture and pattern that the client loves in a timeless way." The same timber was used for the vanity in the main bathroom and the bookshelf in the master bedroom.



PAINTING: PAT HILLCOAT; BEDROOM: ALIYA BEDSIDE TABLES; GRAZIA & CO. GRAZIAANDCO.COM.AU; GEORGE NELSON PENDANT LIGHT: HERMANNILLER.COM; ORA LAMP: ROSS GARDAM, ROSSGARDAM.COM.AU; CERAMICS (ON SHELVING): TRENT GRIFFITHS CERAMICS; TRENTGRIFFITHSCERAMICS.COM; WALK-IN ROBE: CHAIR, HOUSE OF ORANGE; HOUSEOFORANGE.COM.AU

"The bedrooms are nicer, the spaces have more light, and everything is used properly"

SALLY HOLBROOK, ARCHITECT



ensuite before



compromising the amenity of the other bedrooms. "Generally, I don't think bedrooms need to be large," says Sally. "People often think they need to be impressive spaces, but you don't really use them for anything other than sleeping. I would rather design slightly smaller bedrooms and allocate space to something that's going to enhance your lifestyle, like storage or a second living space."

An existing bathroom and laundry were combined into one room, with some clever tricks used to create storage and make it feel spacious. "We like to create storage that's completely concealed so it looks like part of the architecture, rather than a cupboard," says Sally. While the floating timber vanity looks minimal, the mirrored section is made up of recessed cabinets and the bulkhead above is also cabinetry. "We've used joinery almost like an architectural element," says Sally. The laundry is concealed behind doors but it is fully functional, with a washer and dryer, hamper storage, hanging rail, drawers and sink. A steel-framed glass door opens to the outside, with the ceiling painted a dark colour so that it recedes, appearing almost limitless.

Get real: Build storage into every room to allow even small rooms to maintain a sense of space. Maximise natural light and deceive the eye into seeing even larger spaces with clever paint tricks. [10](#)
See more of Sally's work at northbourne.co. Go to contourcabinets.com.au for more about the cabinet-makers.

ENSUITE: TAPWARE, REECE.COM.AU. BATHROOM: BLACKFRAMED WINDOW, WINDOWS ON THE WORLD, WINDOWSONTHEWORLD.COM.AU. AGAPE BASIN AND BATHTUB, ARTEDOMUS, ARTEDOMUS.COM. 'EGGCLIP' TIMBER STOOL, MARK TUCKEY, MARKTUCKEY.COM.AU. CEILING PAINTED IN LUCK, DULUX.COM.AU. PAINT COLOUR MAY VARY ON APPLICATION



ENSUITE (opposite & top row) Japanese star-pattern tiles from Academy Tiles are a bold choice beside pristine white walls in Dulux Fair Bianca Half paint. A pair of Omvivo 'Mono' basins with pedestals complement the freestanding 'Bliss' spa from Aqva. **BATHROOM/LAUNDRY (opposite, below & this page)** Diamond marble mosaics from Academy Tiles give this hardworking space a refined feel. The laundry is hidden behind folding doors, while a sliding glass door opens up to the garden outside.

"We wanted the laundry to have a luxe feel, so we used the marble mosaics that were such a feature in the bathroom"

SALLY HOLBROOK, ARCHITECT