

Decorate

The brief

To take a nondescript small terrace and create a low maintenance residence that is a pleasure to come home to



DESIGNER

Stewart Horton hortonandco.com.au

THE SOURCE

Custom made rugs Designerrugs.com.au
No18 dining chairs in yellow Thonet, thonet.com.au
Sofas Jardin, jardan.com.au
Wrongwoods sideboard Established & Sons from Living Edge, livingedge.com.au



A tale of two sitting rooms

A small inner city terrace makes a bold move into the future with colour and pattern, writes **Robyn Willis**



By the time interior designer Stewart Horton was asked to redesign this terrace house, most of the work had already been done.

A new black and white bathroom had been installed and the kitchen needed nothing more than a tidy up.

Apart from the staircase balustrade and the odd fireplace, the original features had all but disappeared from the two-bedroom 19th century residence leaving empty spaces painted what Stewart describes as "renters' butter yellow".

The bones such as high ceilings and well-proportioned rooms were there but the home lacked personality and warmth.

Welcome home

While the owner, a bachelor, did not spend a lot of time at home, he still wanted it to be a high functioning and comfortable place to be on weekends.

To create a sense of unity, Stewart opted for a simple palette of white walls and dark polished floors for the ground floor.

"It was more a decorating job, cleaning up the ceilings and repolishing the floors a glossy black which added a bit of contrast and made it feel a little bigger," he says.

"The ceilings are so high you can get away with doing things like painting the floor black because the volume of the space works with the dark floor."

"But we deliberately chose light rugs for floorcoverings to offset that."

To ensure they were the right size, colour and pattern, Stewart had the rugs custom made at Designer Rugs.

"The black really makes the rugs pop off the floor," he says.

Choosing the right sized furniture can be

difficult Stewart says when you're working with small spaces.

"The owner had a lot of furniture that filled the living spaces and made them feel so little," he says.

"Often clients love the look of something in the showroom but then they get it home and it's completely the wrong scale."

Stewart decided to furnish the house almost from scratch, choosing streamlined dining chairs from Thonet and lightweight metal-framed tables to avoid the spaces looking too heavy.

Most of the furniture has visible legs, so that pieces appear to float in the space.

"I've chosen smaller pieces and even the sofas are quite compact which makes the space feel big."

Lighting has also been kept simple, with downlights in the hallway and living areas and a stylish floor lamp in the library for directed task lighting.

Form follows function

To make the most of the rooms, Stewart gave them separate but significant functions to perform.

Given the front room had an existing fireplace and built-in bookshelves, Stewart added a ladder and some comfortable seating and turned it into a library.

Inspiration for the palette came from an artwork that belonged to the owner.

"The owner already had the artwork so we decided to work with that," he says.

"The copper and camel tones work well together and I've added a little pink and blue to tie it into the artwork."

Stewart continued the pastel palette upstairs teaming a pink doona cover and ottoman with an upholstered bedhead in



charcoal grey and white buttons.

While the front room is dominated by a restful palette of pastels, the middle room has pops of lively colour.

Stewart says making this space multi-functional is the key to its ongoing success.

"In terrace houses, the middle room can become a weird ante room that nobody wants to use very much," he says.

"Rather than putting the dining table in the middle where you would have to walk around it, we pushed it to one side and raised the sofa to dining table height."

Stewart opted to put the TV in this space as well to ensure that it would be used as often as possible.

"If we had put the TV in the front room then it would have been a depressing TV room," he says.

"Dining rooms don't get used nearly as much as they should and we wanted to change that in this house."

While the house looks like it is full of colour to the casual observer, the stripped back palette is mostly black and white, allowing the owner to update in a few years' time if the mood takes him.

And although the lack of original features could have left the house feeling cold and unloved, care has been taken to soften the edges, most obviously through the use of organic shapes and curves.

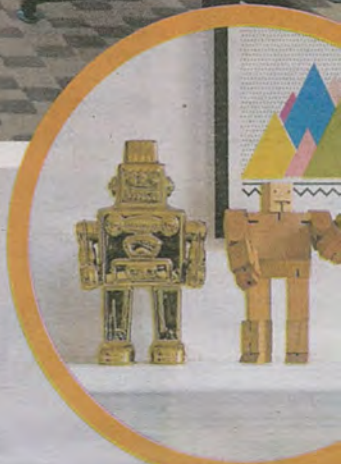
Reflective surfaces such as metallics and mirrors bounce around the available natural light while quirky homewares and ceramics create a sense of fun.

The eight-week design process has delivered just what the owner ordered — a welcoming place to come home to that is as easy to maintain as it is to entertain in, whether just for drinks or a formal dinner with friends.

For Stewart, the inner city project was a rare opportunity to work in Sydney since relocating his business to Lambton in Newcastle where he grew up.

"We're all about bringing good creative design on any budget," he says.

robyn.willis@news.com.au
Pictures Jason Busch



On display

While big decisions about furniture and decor can be costly, it's the small things that make a home. The room in the library is a great spot to display items that reveal the owner's personality.

SATURDAY

The Daily Telegraph

home

March 14, 2015

Small room big style

How to work wonders
with a limited footprint **12**



Display Clarendon's Madison 37 **20** **At home** Lola Berry **23**

