

# Herald Sun home



## RENOVATE

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# A new LEAF

**BURBANK'S BAILEY DISHES UP SOME FRESH IDEAS**

**athome**  
 WINTER  
 Cuddle up on the couch in comfort

**Game OF THROWS**  
 This season's winning looks will see your home come out on top

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# Just add COLOUR


Q. What makes a house feel like a home?

A. When its interior reflects your true passions

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**C**arolyn Burns-McCrave freely admits it wasn't love at first sight when she and husband Leonard first set eyes on their unrenovated 1950s weatherboard home, in Melbourne's east.

"We definitely didn't buy it because we loved the house," Carolyn admits. "But it was on a beautiful, big block of land in a lovely, leafy neighbourhood. And we wanted the challenge of extending it and reimagining all the spaces to suit how we live." 



In lieu of windows, Carolyn placed a large mirror in a corner of the living area

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Artwork: Call of Waterfall by Jennifer Burns



Of course, it helped that Carolyn, an interior designer, and Leonard, a building designer, who now run a business together called Burns McCrave Design, knew what they were doing.

And, after many hours spent drawing up potential floor plans (Carolyn says refining floor plans is her "happy place"), they came up with a design that worked for them.

"A house's layout is king. I always say to my clients, no amount of pretty is going to fix a bad floor plan. So with this one, we went over it and over it - until we got it right," explains Carolyn, who is the resident designer on Channel 7's *House Rules*.

The three-bedroom house was pretty much doubled in size by incorporating the existing garage into the renovation, as well as through extending the home's front and side.

The original house was also extensively reworked, with some rooms taking on new identities, such as a former bedroom that's now a comfortable ensuite and walk-in robe.

"I think there was only one wall in the whole house we didn't move or change in some way," Carolyn says.

The resulting house now has four bedrooms; a leisure room the couple's young sons, Fintan and Lorcan, are especially enjoying; a glamorous central kitchen with walk-in pantry; and a huge open-plan living-and-meals area, which is flooded with northern light.

"I'm obsessed," Carolyn says with a smile. "Once you've had northern light, you'll never go back."

Once the renovation was done, Carolyn naturally turned her attention to the home's interior. At first, despite being known for her use of colour, she tried an all-white palette.



Artwork (on side table): Lorcan by Leonard McCrave



Top Carolyn's 'good front room' mixes sunny colours with soothing neutrals  
Above left The kitchen has a butler's pantry with plenty of shelving  
Left Dramatic black wallpaper in the main bedroom  
Above A mix of eBay finds and upcycled items in the entrance



Above Stylish and practical: the boys' bathroom  
 Far right The bright meals area, with views of the courtyard (artworks beside the glass door by Leonard McCrave)  
 Right Nautical is nice: Carolyn customised these two Ikea cabinets with stick-on overlays and a lick of paint  
 Below, far right Carolyn found this (now beautified) chair on the side of the road  
 Below Fintan (left) and Lorcan in their cheery shared bedroom



This wasn't a huge hit. "I didn't like it at all. It was like living in an art gallery," she says. "So I started layering things up and adding colour. I couldn't help myself."

One way Carolyn added more colour and interest was through wallpaper, which she says she is "evangelical" about, explaining: "It gives you so much bang for your buck. It's often cheaper than large-scale artwork and adds pattern, texture and energy."

So, now the home's entrance hall features bold gold wallpaper. As Carolyn explains, "You can go nuts in a hallway because you're only in it for a minute or so". The main bedroom has dramatic black wallpaper and the main sitting area has walls papered in a gorgeous floral design.

The couple has filled the home with travel mementos, plus a mixture of treasured family pieces, such as the 1920s armoire that belonged to Carolyn's sister.

Designer items are evident ("Our Herman Miller Noguchi coffee table cost more than my first car," Carolyn says), along with a respectable amount of Ikea items, including some customised to fit the home's style.

"It's perfectly fine to have \$50 pieces alongside \$2000 items; it's what I call 'high-low'," Carolyn says. "Save up for a couple of key pieces you really love and then economise on other items."



Ultimately, Carolyn, whose motto is "Life is too short to live ugly", is proud to have created a welcoming family home with just the right hint of glamour.

"I always aim for personal, warm and evocative spaces, with layers of pattern, texture and colour speaking of the people who live there - not the fashion of the day.

"I think I've definitely achieved that in my own home. We really love it." 🏠



● Burns McCrave Design  
[www.burnsmccrave.com.au](http://www.burnsmccrave.com.au)



**Postscript**  
with Carolyn  
Burns-McCrave

(pictured below left with  
husband Leonard and sons  
Lorcan (seated) and Fintan)

**Your favourite spot to unwind?**

I love sitting in what I call my 'GFR' (good front room), surrounded by my changing collection of cushions with a magazine or my iPad. The kids know not to disturb me when I'm there. It's my absolute favourite spot.

**Best time of the day in your house?**

Because it's north facing, the light in the dining area on a winter's afternoon is absolutely beautiful.

**Most extravagant buy?**

My original Eames dining chairs. They are the most comfortable, easy-to-clean chairs.

**Best bargain?**

We love our pressed-metal splashback. It cost us about \$180 and looks great, not to mention being really easy to keep clean. You can splash bolognese sauce all over it and you can't see it!

**How do you like to entertain?**

We tend to do it on a fairly large scale. Most of our friends have two or three kids, so it's not unusual for us to have 20 people here. We used to cook a lot but now our entertaining often consists of a barbecue or a heap of pizzas from a great place around the corner.

**What do you like most about where you live?**

It's just so leafy here and we love how close we are to the Yarra Valley and Mt Dandenong. We love getting in the car with the boys and going for a drive.

Left Splashes of colour bring this house to life  
Above Another view of the boys' bathroom; its look is inspired by the style of the Hamptons in the US  
Top right The pressed-metal splashback has proved a brilliant-looking bargain