

GARDEN GREATS WINNING IDEAS FROM AUSTRALIA'S TOP LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS

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guiding light

Carolyn Burns-McCrave, mentor to the *House Rules* contestants, shares her design philosophy and decorating nous

WORDS ANNA McCOOE PHOTOGRAPHY ARMELLE HABIB

IT'S A HOT MESS! The *House Rules* contestants have been thrown into the renovating deep end, with some barely having picked up a hammer before. Disaster seems inevitable until resident interior designer Carolyn Burns-McCrave enters the scene to steer contestants in the right direction. But there's no telling what will happen next...

Cut to the ordered splendour of Carolyn's design studio, located in Melbourne's east. Here, Carolyn and her husband, building designer Leonard McCrave, mastermind both large-scale renovations and new builds down to the smallest detail. The designer is dressed in black instead of her 'television brights', and her hair is a little edgier than we will see on screen, but her design convictions are just as decisive. As she says, "Life is too short to live ugly."

She makes no apologies for her aesthete ways. "It's okay to like pretty things," she affirms. "It's important to feel comfortable and positive in your own home. First, your space should make your heart happy and if by chance it looks fabulous, then that's just a bonus."

Carolyn's goal as an interior designer is to give her clients the best version of their own style. It's not a responsibility she takes lightly. "Designing a home is a humbling experience," she says. "Clients entrust their most valuable possession to you."

Her method aims to get to the core of her clients' wants and needs. She asks hundreds of questions to devise her meticulous floorplans and gathers folders full of visual references to tailor just the right mix of finishes and fixtures to suit the project. >



"First, your space should make your heart **happy** and if by chance it looks **fabulous**, then that's a bonus" - Carolyn

Top: Carolyn in her glamorous studio. **Above:** A temple jar, ceramic parrots and Manuel Canovas 'Trellis' wallpaper, all from Carolyn and her husband's design firm Burns McCrave Design, sit with a David Frazer linoprint, *Lest We Forget*. The lampshades were made from silk fabric bought in India. **Left:** Fabric and colour swatches are Carolyn's tools of the trade.



Carolyn's studio, an inspiring workspace, is layered with favourite materials, among them Romo fabric and Manuel Canovas wallpaper. "I'm evangelical about wallpaper," she says. "Every house needs some pattern. Right now I'm loving graphic trellis prints teamed with modern florals."



Carolyn's top 5 design tips

- 1 "Invest in a design professional to help make the most of your space. Finishes can be upgraded down the track but you don't want to rebuild rooms that don't function."
- 2 "Have a clear design vision. Imagine how you want the space to look and work back from there. Buy the feature piece you love and use it to build your scheme. Don't start with a paint colour – there's thousands of those."
- 3 "Consider what you want to see when you walk into a room – how you want the eye to travel. Pick out 'moments' for the eye to rest on."
- 4 "Design it better, not bigger. Often, you don't have to extend, you just have to improve the floorplan within the existing footprint."
- 5 "Plan for everyday life. Don't have a dedicated guest room if it's only in use four days a year. Make the room do double duty."

"I love doing bathrooms because there's so much you can do with tiles" ~ Carolyn

< Hailing from a family of bricklayers and carpenters, Carolyn says pursuing interior design was a natural progression. She admits to spending much of her childhood in the 1980s rearranging the furniture and sponging walls in her parents' house. "I was always an aesthete – it's just who I am," she explains.

Straight out of college, the designer cut her teeth at internationally renowned design firm SJB, working under acclaimed designer Andrew Parr on notable commercial projects, including The Establishment Hotel in Sydney and Jacques Reymond restaurant in Melbourne. In 2006, she and Leonard set up their own practice, Retail Therapy ID, and shifted their focus to the domestic space (they rebranded the business as Burns McCrave Design in December 2012).

Carolyn's signature use of bespoke joinery, pattern, texture and classic detail has won her a dedicated fan base but she says the real expertise is below the surface. "Structure, order, balance and flow are the absolute core of my design philosophy. If a layout doesn't work, no amount of 'pretty' will save it," she explains. "I will spend days and days refining a floorplan and layering finishes, colours, and textures in my head as I'm drawing – it's my happy place."

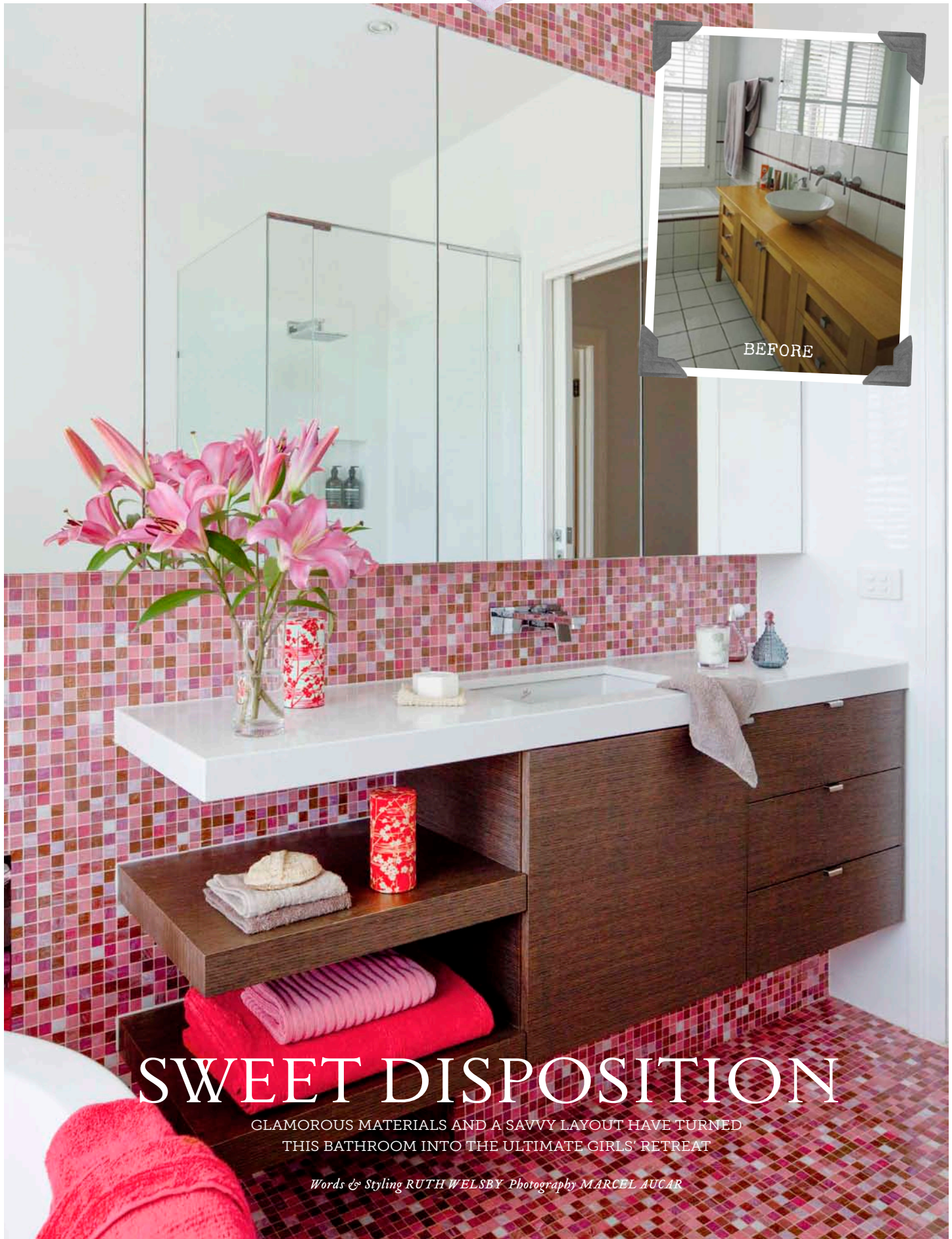
To the *House Rules* contestants, and all other would-be home renovators for that matter, Carolyn offers these final words of wisdom: "Pick your moment, pick it well and invest in that," she says. "If you're going to make a statement, take it to 11 and have quiet spaces around it. It's go hard – or go home!"

Visit burnsmccrave.com.au or call (03) 9894 0586. Look out for Carolyn in action on Channel 7's new show, *House Rules*.



Carolyn's work, as seen in *Home Beautiful*: **Top left:** Striking tiles and a mirrored vanity deliver a glamorous ensuite. **Top right:** Pattern and colour mixed and matched elegantly in her own bedroom. **Above:** A chic kitchen, with a blend of gloss and matt surfaces in a delicious, monochrome palette.

PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP LEFT) MARCEL AUCAR, (TOP & BOTTOM RIGHT) RHIANON JUSTICE



SWEET DISPOSITION

GLAMOROUS MATERIALS AND A SAVVY LAYOUT HAVE TURNED
THIS BATHROOM INTO THE ULTIMATE GIRLS' RETREAT

Words & Styling RUTH WELSBY Photography MARCEL AUCAR



pretty in pink

Striking pink Bisazza 'Oleandro Mix 8' mosaics from De Fazio Tiles play a starring role in this revamped bathroom. To temper the feminine colour, interior designer Carolyn Burns-McCrave designed a cantilevered vanity in 'Allure Oak' veneer from Laminex topped with Caesarstone in Organic White. Chosen for its matt finish, the benchtop contrasts perfectly with the sparkling pink splashback. >

WHEN A LEAKY shower drain resulted in the necessary removal of the floor, fixtures and fittings in the master bathroom of Joanne and Mick's home in the outskirts of Melbourne, they seized the opportunity to create the bathroom of their two daughters' dreams. Although the compact, six-year-old bathroom was hardly ripe for renovation, the unexpected waterproofing issue had left them with an irresistible blank slate.

Inspired by a glittering mosaic bathroom she had seen in an issue of *Home Beautiful*, Joanne called its interior designer, Carolyn Burns-McCrave, to create the same magic in her own home. "The old bathroom was very plain but the family love colour, so I knew they'd embrace my shimmering pink scheme," says Carolyn, who also appears in Channel 7's new show *House Rules*. "My aim was to turn the space into a pamper zone with plenty of storage. Luckily we were able to keep the same layout and plumbing points, which helped with the budget and meant we could splurge on the mosaics."

in perfect order (right)

Storage was a top priority for this bathroom, which is shared by Joanne and Mick's two daughters. Carolyn's contemporary vanity design uses wall-mounted Phoenix 'Kubus' tapware and an Ideal Standard 'Acacia' under-mounted basin, both from Reece, to free up valuable counter space. Above, bespoke cupboards are discreetly hidden behind a wall of mirrors.

bathtime bliss (below)

The freestanding Kado 'Lure' oval bath from Reece is framed by the room's expansive picture window and chic white plantation shutters. Positioned to take in the room's breathtaking country views, the luxurious tub is paired with a sculptural Phoenix 'Kubus' floor-mounted bath mixer. >



"I replaced the built-in bath with a freestanding version... being able to *see the corners* of the room actually makes the space *feel bigger*"
- Carolyn, interior designer

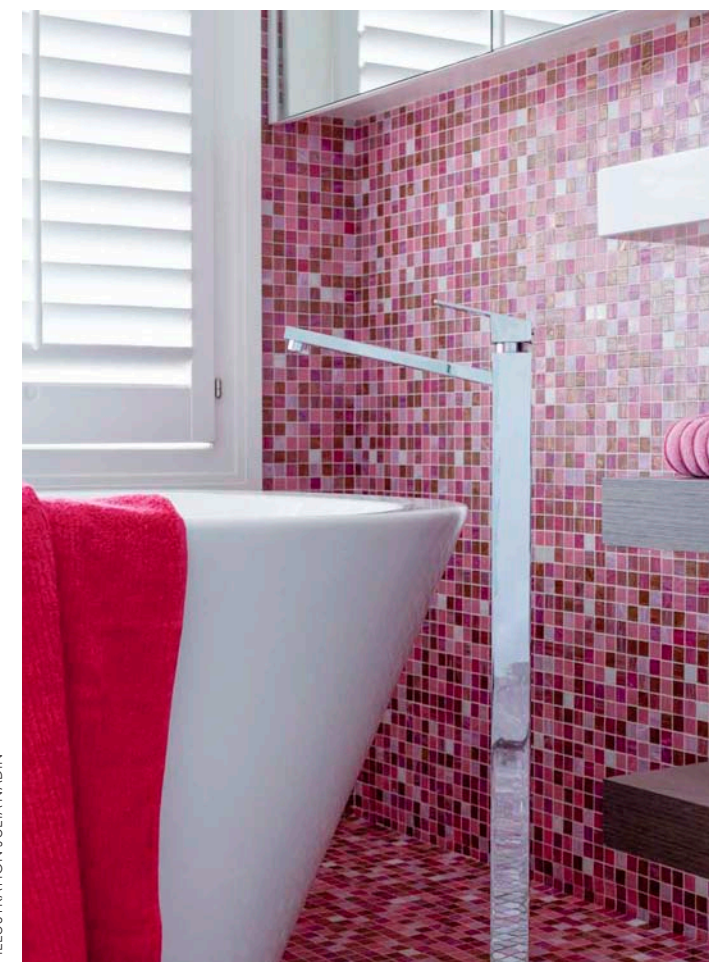
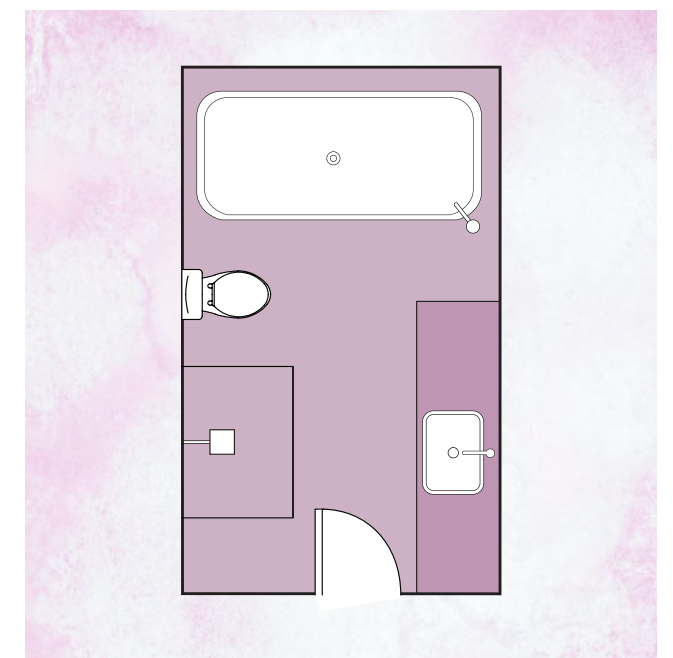


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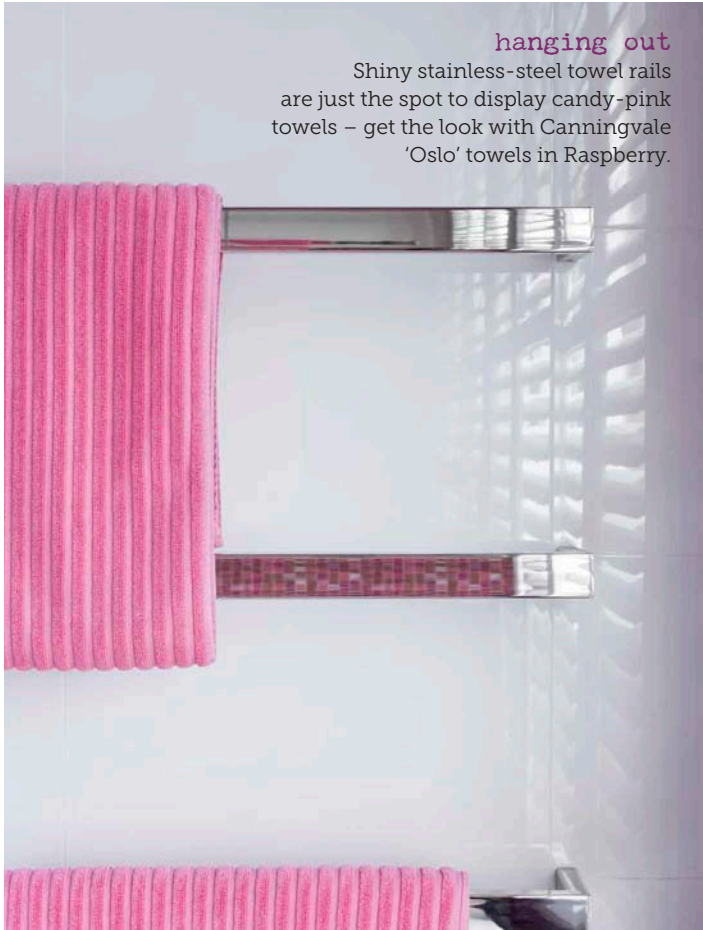


all clear

Large-format white gloss tiles from Signorino Tile Gallery form a simple backdrop, and expertly balance the room's sparkling pink mosaics. A shallow recess keeps toiletries at hand, and a Phoenix 'Kubus' square overhead shower completes the elegantly understated zone.

hanging out

Shiny stainless-steel towel rails are just the spot to display candy-pink towels – get the look with Canningvale 'Oslo' towels in Raspberry.



budget breakdown

Basin Ideal Standard 'Acacia', Reece	\$249
Basin tapware Phoenix 'Kubus', Reece	\$600
Bath Kado 'Lure', Reece	\$1650
Bath tapware Phoenix 'Kubus', Reece	\$1600
Shower Phoenix 'Kubus', Reece	\$359
Shower screen Custom-made shower cubicle (including installation), Hawthorn Shower Screens	\$2445
Tiles Bisazza 'Oleandro Mix 8' mosaic tiles, De Fazio Tiles	\$203/sqm
'Tgsmarc' white gloss 480mm x 300mm tiles, Signorino Tile Gallery	\$30.80/sqm
Toilet Ideal Standard 'Tonic', Reece	\$643
Towel rails Kado 'Quad', Reece	\$960
Vanity Custom-made vanity in 'Allure Oak' sandblasted timber veneer panel, Laminex	\$132/sqm
'JP11' joinery pulls, Industrial Expression	\$60
'Classico' benchtop in Organic White (including installation), Caesarstone	\$500/sqm
Total (including labour)	\$25,000*

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* SOME COSTS ARE BASED ON OWNERS' ESTIMATES AND WILL VARY.