

DESIGN DNA

INTERIOR DESIGNER, **CAROLYN BURNS-MCCRAVE**,
SHARES HER PASSION FOR CREATING INSPIRED SPACES.





As a self-professed, 'unapologetic aesthete', it's no surprise Carolyn Burns-McCrave found her calling in interior design.

For over 16 years now she's successfully created inspirational spaces that are as dynamic as they are functional. With her design DNA in tow: colour, pattern, texture and scale, she brings to life homes that cater to the unique needs and desires of her clients. And it's this same ethos that makes her role as design expert on Channel 7's television show, *House Rules*, a perfect fit. We chat inspired projects and handy design tips with the Australian interior designer.

Tell us about your background.

I come from a family of bricklayers and carpenters and have always been aware of the built environment. I enjoy working closely with people and have always had a knack of understanding people's needs, wants and desires, even if they can't quite articulate it themselves. Interior design is a great blend of my passions and skill set.

How would you describe your design aesthetic?

My own style is constantly evolving and is often influenced by the projects I'm working on, and so ultimately, by the clients I'm working for. In many cases it's the other way around and people seek me out for my use of colour, pattern, texture and scale, but I try to stay open to

'The number one design mistake I see is building it bigger instead of designing it better.'



new ideas and possibilities that truly reflect my client's style, not just my own.

Personally, I'm mostly influenced by the East Coast American design aesthetic: that classic Hamptons style. I'd love to say something cerebral about being inspired by the true beauty of nature, but in the end I just love producing meticulously resolved floor plans layered with pretty fabrics, wallpaper and detailed joinery!

What's been one of your most memorable projects?

That is like asking me which of my children I love more! Every project is memorable no matter how big or small, if it's not, I didn't do my job. The most special projects are the ones where the client trusts you entirely, that's a very humbling experience and the thing I love most about my career as a designer.

What's the number one interior design mistake you notice in residential homes?

The number one design mistake I see is building it bigger instead of designing it better. Getting your layout and floor plan right so that you make the most of every square centimetre of your real estate is absolutely vital. I can't service my car or do my tax, so designing your own renovation is something for a

professional. Employing a designer that specialises in spacial planning, that will listen to, and interpret the way you use your home, is the best money you will spend.

What are your favourite interior design resources?

I love design magazines and blogs, but you can't beat going to the source. Being in a space that inspires you and resonates with you as a designer can't be beaten. That's my excuse for holidays in the Hamptons, and I'm sticking to it!

As the design expert on Channel 7's TV show, *House Rules*, what piece of advice will you be sharing with contestants?

My main advice to *House Rules* contestants is to have a strong vision of what you're trying to achieve and work backwards from there. You need to be clear about the end goal and back yourself all the way. Really going for it isn't always successful when you are a novice in design, but when it works, the risk is worth it.

Tell us about your own home.

My home is a 50s weatherboard that we have extended and renovated. It's layered, casual and comfortable, with a side of 'pretty'. Nothing is precious or off limits, even with two young sons. I've used a crisp white base and walnut coloured



'I'm not scared of mirrors, colour or wallpaper - anything that can be changed in a weekend is always worth a crack!'

floors with accents of black to tie all the spaces together and balance the pops of colour and pattern.

I've used a real mixture of old and new. Vintage furniture pieces with great patina and sentimental value are teamed with designer splurges and custom upholstered chairs, sofas and a changing assortment of cushions. I'm not scared of mirrors, colour or wallpaper - anything that can be changed in a weekend is always worth a crack! I love IKEA and eBay and have upcycled a number of pieces to produce a curated and individual look - I couldn't bare for my home to look like a showroom! We will be selling soon and moving on to a new home, which excites me no end as I'm ready to do it all again! 

See more of Carolyn Burns-McCrave's work at burnsmccrave.com.au

HOUSE RULES IS CURRENTLY AIRING ON CHANNEL 7 ON SUNDAY AT 6.30PM, AND MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND WEDNESDAY AT 7.30PM.

‘GETTING YOUR LAYOUT AND FLOOR PLAN RIGHT SO THAT YOU MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY SQUARE CENTIMETRE OF YOUR REAL ESTATE IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL.’

