

August 16, 2014

The new romantics

An eclectic living room is
reinvented for a modern age **12**

Gardening Small spaces **20** **Display** Clarendon's Sheridan **22**





Decorate

Moving out of neutral

Colour is in full bloom in this cleverly eclectic living space, writes **Robyn Willis**

There was a time when this room was less like a jewel and more of a jumble. The owner of the beautiful open-plan space had a decent collection of furniture, textiles and other objects but was having trouble pulling the whole look together.

"The client had started her renovation and was trying to make it all green and clean but her collection was quite eclectic," says interior designer Brett Mickan.

"She didn't know how to mix it together so it was all looking a bit of a jumble."

Looking for clues

Brett's first inkling that the owner was prepared to be adventurous with colour was the new lime green splashback she had installed in her kitchen.

The colour matched a set of lime green upholstered dining chairs in the dining room while a vintage lamp indicated the owner's fondness for older decorative pieces.

"I knew she was brave enough to experiment with colour," says Brett.

"She had an onyx and metal pendant light so I knew she liked older pieces too.

"We just needed to clean up the space and make it all light and open."

Brett has built his reputation on successfully mixing vintage pieces with very modern pops of colour and pattern. But it takes skill to create quirky and personal spaces rather than weird and wacky rooms.

First on the agenda was deciding where to use colour to create focus and where to tone down the hues to create a calm and welcoming environment.

Scene stealer

Brett opted for two large but simple rugs to create a neutral backdrop for the stronger colours in the room.

"This space is a lesson in how to calm a space in order to make it work," says Brett.

Ornate cornices, architraves and skirting boards were painted off white, along with the rest of the walls to allow the maximum absorption of natural light.

The quiet backdrop provided the canvas for a loose colour scheme of lime green, peacock blue, gold and splashes of antique pink.

A pair of 1980s office chairs were reupholstered in peach and white striped fabric to soften their harder lines while carver dining chairs were covered in a floral blue fabric by Sanderson to tone down the almost ultraviolet of the lime green chairs.

"To make those lime green dining chairs work, we had to bring in the floral blue fabric which is contemporary in style

with a hint of the traditional," says Brett.

"In the family room, you look out on to the garden which is where the bits of green and the floral patterns came in to bring the outside in."

Colour coded

Although there is a lot going on in the rooms, somehow it still works.

Brett says the key is not to play any of the colour notes too loudly.

Timber veneer in the kitchen island bench is repeated in the timber coffee table from Globe West while the velvet peacock lounge colour is echoed in the Moroccan-style side table.

"You don't want to match the exact colours so the tones in the blues are all a bit different but they all work," he says.

The owner now has rooms that are not only bursting with colour but feel very personal.

"The owner is a real lady and very sophisticated but she still wanted it to be fun with a pump of colour."

robyn.willis@news.com.au

Pictures Thomas Dalhoff

More Brett Mickan Interior Design, bmid.com.au





✦ The Plaza rug by La Grolla creates a neutral starting point for this inviting space. The green candelabra by Muuto from Space adds a sense of fun while potted cymbidium orchids complete the room.



✦ The end dining chairs have been covered in Etchings & Roses by Sanderson.



✦ The owner's own paintings provide focus in the eclectic living space. Gold accents hint at vintage glamour.



✦ Stripes work with florals in this unlikely room tied together by hints of blue and green. A large peach-coloured rug finishes it off.



✦ This gently feminine room is the perfect retreat thanks to the abundant natural light and an inviting wingback chair.