

HARD ACT TO *follow*

Interior designers reveal their all-time favourite rooms and what exactly makes their creations stand out.

BY MADELIN TOMELTY





Contemporary Cottage

The bones of this inner-city cottage along with its location were all the inspiration interior designer, Michael Bechara of Michael Bechara Design needed to sink his teeth into the project.

The project brief of this Sydney cottage involved doing a complete renovation, while honouring the existing footprint and the original façade. With the original building completely intact, Michael considered every internal surface in the design preparation of the sitting room in order to come up with the perfect interior scheme.

Staying true to the house's history as well as the room's existing atmosphere, features, colour and detailing led to Michael creating an aesthetic that appears effortless and unlaboured. "Although we did a complete transformation from the original home, there is no obvious distinction between the new and old which was imperative to my design process," he says.

Deep, moody tones are at the core of the room's design, with a relatively simple space transformed by contrasting textures, materials and the very occasional pop of colour. The minimal furniture was chosen both for its style and scale, which Michael stresses is especially important in small spaces.

Natural tones in the brickwork and metal add contrast and highlights, and are mirrored throughout the room with furniture and timeless artworks, seamlessly creating a unified design narrative in what is a completely functional space. "I like to use materials that will add another level of detail to the room," he says.

The space is at once casual, sophisticated and elegant with a cozy and slightly masculine feel – a little slice of inner-city living that would make any guest feel in the mood for a whisky.

For more information on Michael Bechara Design, visit www.michaelbechara.com







Central Coast Class

When interior designer Kerry Phelan from KPDO was asked to create a formal lounge that the clients would actually use, it was the beginning of a project where the journey would be just as important as the destination.

The words 'formal lounge' brings up images of stuffy, rigid and dust-collecting spaces that need to be 'aired out' in the lead up to special occasions. But with Kerry's clients making it clear that they wanted their room to be a usable space in their Central Coast house, she looked to the world's finest hotels for inspiration and began a design journey that was an exploration of ideas, rather than a standard brief-driven process. "We envisioned a really bleached out, but plush hotel lobby," she says. "We liked the idea of faded glory, a hint of a romantic past... a beautiful, soft Parisian salon... somewhere our clients could read, or entertain, or enjoy a champagne in the afternoon with friends."

Although Kerry admits the room design is a departure from her usual work, you would never know it with the stunning palette and complete attention to detail that bring the space to a new level of luxury.

The room is elegant and refined, and yet undeniably warm and comfortable – a room you can imagine the homeowner relaxing in with friends and just talking. Kerry's favourite feature of the room is a beautiful antique silk rug from Behruz Rugs, which serves as the foundation for the decadent palette of ethereal greys and calming, olive greens. "It's a collection of silk and velvet and shiny brass with a restful, soft and silvery energy. It's a bit of a folly, a small piece of luxury. After all, we all deserve some luxury in our lives!"

For more information on KPDO, call (03) 9936 9899, or visit www.kpdo.com.au







Layered Luxury

Interior Designer Miriam Fanning's favourite room is the perfect example of the commonly used design expression, 'think big in a small space'. For this inner-city townhouse in Melbourne, Miriam used a tonal palette accented and balanced by contrasting textures to make the compact space feel larger.

Approached by the client to design a luxurious and sophisticated abode with clean lines and plenty of personality, Miriam and her team at Mim Design applied a predominantly monochromatic palette. They also utilised layered and textured materials such as handmade grey glazed bricks, natural stone and custom-stained timber paneling.

The aim was to create an inspiring, private environment that would enhance the lives of the homeowner and their family, and thankfully this was achieved through a heavy focus on natural materials and natural light. "I love the way the light filters down from the skylights to create a beautiful play in shadows on the materials we used," says Miriam.

The balance of light and dark creates a sophisticated yet soft and gentle mood in the space, with its natural and neutral elements beautifully highlighted by feature furniture and modern artwork. "It's about finding that balance between the classic and the contemporary that creates a certain design synergy," explains Miriam. The open-plan dwelling is an ideal entertaining or relaxing space, and a stand-out project that utterly encapsulates Mim Design's style ethos.

For more information on Mim Design, call (03) 98261266, or visit www.mimdesign.com.au



