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# BLUE MOOD

STYLE WITH AN OCEAN VIEW

\$8.95 (INCL. GST) PP255003/00004 acp





THIS PAGE Skylights in the kitchen/dining area enable direct sunlight to infiltrate the heart of the home. OPPOSITE PAGE The deceptively spacious living room and outdoor terrace are reflected in the mirrored wall at the end of the garden. A 'runway' of recycled floorboards extends up the wall to form an unusual dado.



# URBANE RENEWAL

Light and space are the enviable results of the clever makeover of this inner-city Melbourne terrace. The boundaries between inside and out, and old and new, are blurred, creating a pleasing harmony.

PHOTOGRAPHS SHANNON MCGRATH AND JOHN WHEATLEY WORDS JACINTA LE PLASTRIER ABOUKHATER



Matt Gibson, Melbourne architect, presents rather like his award-winning projects: quiet, an urbane good-looker, with an unpredictable acuity. In his designs, finishes are elegant, the mood serene. Consider the renovation of his own home, a terrace in South Yarra.

So many ideas are caught and pinned in this 4.3-metre-wide home's reinvention – one of an initially dullish terrace, with dark and damp interiors that had basically gone to the dogs. "You start off with a whole number of ideas and then you have to boil them down to produce a more simplified, final product – in my case, a clean minimalist palette. Like cooking a sauce, it's a reductive process."

Instead of tearing down the rear (tempting) and building anew, Matt decided to "remodel and re-create the space instead, maintaining the structural bones and boundary lines, including all the ambiguities of the renovations made by other owners over the years". A major decision was to optimise the tight budget by maximising sustainability. Matt's low-cost choices deliver an environmentally friendly outcome, but one with panache. This meant using recycled wood when possible, including messmate floorboards from a Richmond factory that also wrap up into a waist-high dado and continue outside. Locally made limestone tiles floor the rest of the living area, kitchen and terrace. A concrete banquette extends from outside into the kitchen bench and features a fireplace topped with rough-cut limestone.

At the back of the property, a mirrored wall reflecting the garden and the house was made from 1980s built-in-wardrobe mirrors from the master bedroom. Matt says the choice was made at the last minute, saving the mirror from landfill. It also contributes to another overarching principle he brought to the design – "a sense of continuity, of materials, of spaces merging". Another mirror at the end of the kitchen bench increases the sense of space and adds extra light.

At the front the rooms have been adapted cost-effectively to give each "a connection to a courtyard". The guest bedroom overlooks a small garden, the master bedroom accesses a side courtyard with a pebbled outdoor shower which leads in turn to the house's only bathroom. The openness of this area, and others, has produced passive cross-ventilation, following "healthy building principles", says Matt. The original poky gloom has become a generous, light-filled space. 15



**FACT FILE** DESIGN: Matt Gibson A+D.  
BUILDER: Marten Vogel (O'Neill & Vogel).  
ENGINEER: Don Moore & Associates.  
JOINERY: Designcraft. FLOORING: Messmate salvaged boards finished with Feast Watson China Wood Oil; European Tortoiseshell Sisal from International Floor Coverings; black limestone tiles from The City Tiler. KITCHEN BENCHTOP: Rutso Concrete. SPLASHBACK: Carrara marble from Baltic Stonemasons. LIGHTING: Masson designer fittings; Famco strip lighting. For stockists see Address Book.



THIS PAGE The living areas seamlessly flow outdoors. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT The bathroom opens onto a pebbled garden, which can also be accessed from the master bedroom (below right). BELOW LEFT Dulux paint in Namadji was used to great effect on the facade, the front door is painted Hot Lips.