

Which supermodel said she wouldn't get out of bed for less than \$10,000 per day?

WHICH OF MICHAEL JACKSON'S BROTHERS IS THE FATHER OF R&B TRIO 3T?

Who played agent 99 & the Chief in the TV series *Get Smart*?

WHERE IS *NEIGHBOURS* SET?

Why did Werner Herzog eat his shoe?



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YOU'RE ON LYGON STREET. IS THERE A STARBUCKS?

Is gruyere made from cow's or goat's milk?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

CITY, STYLE, FOOD, FILM, MUSIC, TV: SIX QUIZZES TO KICKSTART YOUR BRAIN

What number tram would you catch from the city to France Soir restaurant?



What do Rip Torn, Frank Langella, Anthony Hopkins, Dan Hedaya, Philip Baker Hall and Beau Bridges have in common?





They do it with mirrors

Add space and light, double your views and transform drab into dazzling. Design professionals tell **Andrea Jones** how to make the most of reflective surfaces.



"It looks like it is floating," says designer Matt Gibson, above, of the use of mirrors in his kitchen island bench design, left.

PICTURES: JOHN WHEATLEY

There are a few things most people want more of in their homes: space, light and appealing views. What if you could have all three without moving?

In many designers' secret toolbox, the mirror is one of the smartest tricks, with its fantastic ability to enlarge and lighten any space and even elevate the mood and feel of a home.

"I like to use it where it optimises the volume of the space," says Craig Spencer of Craig Spencer Design in Sydney. Recently, he used wall-to-wall mirrored glass in an inner-city penthouse with panoramic water views. "Everywhere you walked in the apartment, you saw a view," he says.

But he warns against doing this sort of trick impulsively. "A lot of people get carried away and use it everywhere without thinking it through — and then one day, 'I didn't realise it would show up that.'"

And sadly that's often the case: a tranquil garden aspect sabotaged by a neighbour's washing line or a city skyline marred by a billboard. But Spencer has a nice "cheat" for these instances: black glass. "After all, a mirror is just glass with a tint painted onto it. And I find that sometimes black glass or charcoal works better than silver. With dark glass, the reflection is still there but it is slightly less detailed. So you get distinct silhouettes," he says. He used this to great effect on the floor-to-ceiling kitchen doors of a narrow galley kitchen to make it appear wider.

Designer Matt Gibson of A + D in Melbourne was a finalist in last year's Interior Design Awards with a project in which mirrors were used on the underside of the kitchen island bench. "It looks like it is floating," he says.

If you're thinking of using mirrors to enlarge a room, use them from floor

January 18, 2009



More to love: Craig Spencer's, above, extensive use of mirrors in a kitchen doubles the touch of glitz and glamour, top; Geoff Clark, of Country Trader in NSW, says mirrors should be used as a complete wall or within a frame; floor-to-ceiling mirrors makes a small bedroom designed by Beverley Gibson feel spacious, below; Fanuli Furniture's mirror is used to dramatic impact, below right.



to ceiling or benchtop to rooftop for the most seamless and stunning results. Good places to use mirrors like this are the empty side walls of an open-plan kitchen or in walk-in wardrobes and in small entrance halls. "It's bad feng shui but it makes the corridor look bigger," Spencer says.

Mirrors can also enhance a room's mood. Spencer often installs mirror panels behind a standard lamp so that at

night it amplifies the lamp's glow.

But the one thing Spencer never does with a mirror is hang it in a frame: "I get put off by people using mirrors in hideous frames. They think it's artwork and it's illogical."

Fancy frames are something of a hangover from the 15th century, when the technique of silvering glass was a highly prized secret among Venetian glass makers. (It then took an artisan

a month to make a single looking-glass). As a result, mirrors were as costly and valuable as precious jewels, and were elaborately framed to reflect their exalted status.

Geoff Clark, owner of the Country Trader antique store in Sydney's Waterloo, works with many spectacular antique mirrors. He warns that one of the biggest mistakes people can make is to resilver an old mirror.

"An antique, by definition, expresses its age. That (deterioration) has got a certain charm for a lot of people. It has matured, it's got a bit of life, a great worldliness about it. If you take away what's old, you no longer have an antique," he says.

"If we get a mirror and 60 per cent of the mirror surface is gone, then we place another mirror behind it so you can see into it, and you also keep the integrity of the mirror."

He, too, believes mirrors are an undervalued decorating tool. "Mirrors are spatially excellent. Their reflective quality means you can double the space or, if you have two mirrors facing each other, you create infinity."

But there are important rules, he adds. "There are two ways to use a mirror: it should be the complete wall or it should be within a frame. There is nothing worse than seeing a (frameless) mirror glued to the wall — it's like building a house and not bothering to paint it."



Clark says: "One of the great tricks of decorating with mirrors is to have a wall of mirrors and then put onto it what you find on a normal wall: a picture, a painting, a framed mirror. It immediately enhances the space."

Another place where mirrors work well is in small courtyards and outdoor spaces. Joanna Rogers, of the Urban Balcony in Sydney, says that, as with mirrors indoors, "make sure that the view you are reflecting is a good one".

Then it's a matter of making it sit comfortably within the garden setting so it becomes less of a feature and more an optical illusion. "Use topiary buxus either side of it or a grouping of yuccas underneath to create a display that's not just mirror," she says. "Trellised vines growing across the front of a mirror work really well in traditional or cottage-style gardens," she says. Or you can drape any kind of vine to creep around a mirror's edges.

Last year the metal company Axolotl launched a range of outdoor wall "art" called Link, which has a reflective backing with a carved metal pattern on the front. "People have been using it for shower screens, front doors and feature walls," Axolotl's John Clapin says.

Unlike 15th century Italy, mirrors no longer cost a king's ransom. Any good glazier can cut mirror to order and Spencer says it's not something any decorator should be afraid of: "Mirror can even be less expensive than prepping and painting a wall." **M**

HOW TO WORK WITH MIRRORS

DO

- Use a floor-to-ceiling mirror to make a dark space brighter.
- Use large mirrors to make small spaces appear larger.
- Use mirrors to capture a great view and reflect it onto an otherwise plain wall.
- Use mirrors to enhance night-time lighting such as a standing lamp or a candle-lit table.
- Place something attractive in front of a mirror — it will double its beauty and impact.
- Place candles on a mirrored tray on a sideboard or dining table to double the impact of their warm glow.

DON'T

- Use floor-length mirrors in bathrooms with a view of the toilet.
- Resurface a valuable antique mirror.
- Hang it without trialling it first to ensure people are not headless, that the view is worth capturing and that there is no harsh glare from the sun.



A clever extension brings out the best of pavilion living, says **Ann Pilmer**.

Bridging the gap

Zone 1: The banquette



Zone 2: The living area



Zone 3: The kitchen

Project Albert Park residence
Design Matt Gibson A+D 9419 6677
mattgibson.com.au

Brief To extend a single-fronted, weatherboard, terrace house for contemporary family living and make the most of a long, skinny site, five metres by 43 metres, with an under-used backyard. The back faces south so the extension also had to capture north sun and light. The property has a heritage overlay so a second storey had to be stepped back to be invisible from the street. Another design challenge was that a tall palm tree, deemed "significant" by the council, was right where Gibson planned the new back living area.

Solution Gibson designed a separate extension so the house became two pavilions, linked by a "bridge" and punctuated by two courtyards. The three front rooms, with their original cornices and mouldings, have been retained for bedrooms and a bathroom. The double-storey extension includes the kitchen, sitting and dining areas, with the main bedroom and ensuite upstairs, along with a study and deck. Timber decking in a courtyard between the old and new continues into the passage, which has a lower ceiling and is the linking "bridge".

Zone 1: The banquette

To blur the lines between inside and out, Gibson continued the limestone floor tiles out to the back courtyard and ran a banquette storage seat between both areas. The seat has a weatherproof compressed fibre-cement sheet on top and two pack polyurethane doors in Dulux Sunshine Surprise. The paint was also sprayed around the doors to ensure they were sealed. (The front door is also yellow).

"The courtyard strategy is integral to the concept because it breaks up the language of the two areas," Gibson says. "There are white-painted period features in front, including mouldings, skirtings and architraves. The extension is contemporary with shadow lines, square-set cornices and contemporary detail."

The palm tree was moved five metres into the courtyard against the wall of the existing garage — this required a crane, the closing of the street behind the house and cost \$12,000.

Zone 2: The living area

Full-height, bi-fold doors run across the back of the house. There are several feature panels of cedar slats in the courtyard and the other walls are rendered fibre-cement sheet. A mantel over the raised Jetmaster wood fireplace in the living area deflects heat away from the TV on the wall above.

Zone 3: The kitchen

The kitchen cupboards are bronze Symonite, a metallic material with a resin core, and the benches are Carrara marble.

A darker paint colour on the back wall of the old part of the house, with feature up/down lights, further differentiates old and new.

The decking on the internal floor adjoining the front courtyard accentuates the feeling of stepping from one pavilion to another.

Matt Gibson A+D was the Residential Interior winner in the Dulux Colour Awards and won an award for Colour in Residential Interiors and a commendation in this year's Interior Design Awards.

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