

EXTERIOR A Spanish oak tree adds country charm to this Edwardian weatherboard home. Cladding painted Dulux Grey Daze. Trims painted Dulux Monument. Windows painted Dulux Snowy Mountains Half.

PICTURE *perfect*

A century-old weatherboard in Melbourne's north-east is given a storybook finish for a young family yearning for their forever home.

STORY *Hanna Marton* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Tess Kelly*



FORMAL LIVING Walls painted Dulux Classic Calm. Coonara fireplace, Nick Daniels Heating BBQ & Outdoor Mega Centre. 'Dale' rug, Hali. 'Juno Orb' armchair in Cashew Tweed, and 'Elle' coffee table, both GlobeWest. 'Lilly' floor lamp, Zure. 'Flynn' mirror, Life Interiors. **EXTERIOR** Cladding painted Dulux Grey

“We wanted a flow between old and new.” NICK, OWNER



A photographer is usually the last to set foot in a renovated house. The paint is dry, the furniture is in, and the freshly minted home is ready for a close-up. But in this story, snapper Tess Kelly was one of the first to cross the threshold.

Owners Nick and Kasia won the Edwardian weatherboard in Melbourne's north-east at auction in 2019. Being Nick's sister, Tess soon got a preview of the "renovator's delight". Then, it was Tess who recommended builder Simon Cerra of Blueprint Constructions since she had captured many of his previous projects. Simon in turn recommended architect Barbara Weimar to redesign the hodgepodge floor plan. And just like that, first-time renovators Nick and Kasia had assembled their all-star team – in reverse order.

"I've never thought about it before, but it all happened backwards!" laughs Simon.

Set on a generous block, the charming 1906 house was the only property the couple looked at.

They fell in love with its character and original features, such as leadlight windows and a fairytale oak tree in the front garden. For Nick, it evoked memories of growing up in the Macedon Ranges. "I felt that we could have the best of both worlds," he explains. "To live in the city but it feels rural in many ways. The river and the Darebin Parklands are close by, as well." With two young daughters, the family had been rapidly outgrowing their then home, which was a two-bedroom apartment.

The original part of the house comprised four bedrooms, a formal lounge and an L-shaped hallway. Tacked onto the back was a kitchen, bathroom, study and laundry, with no indoor-outdoor connection. "The house had some dodgy additions, possibly done by a home handyman," explains Simon. In the second storey was a living space, bathroom and storage, but the layout didn't work for an active young family.

While architect Barbara, "hates to destroy anything if I can reuse it," ultimately, she directed Simon to demolish all but the original rooms. ▶

MAIN BEDROOM 'Felix Slope' bed and 'Artie' bedside table, both GlobeWest. 'Astrid' bench and 'Gabriel' lamp, both Trit House. 'Toledo' pendant light, About Space Lighting. Bed linen, Adairs. European pillow covers, I Love Linen. **LIVING** Opposite top 'Ziggy' armchairs, Jardan. 'In The Flesh' side table, Trit House. **BATHROOM** Below, right Zellige gloss tiles in Salvia, Elegance Tiles. Brodware 'Manhattan' tapware, E&S. 'Clare' knobs, Kethy Australia. **STUDY** Below, left Mini lounger in Sage, Henlee. Pendant lights, About Space Lighting.



“We definitely wanted to take advantage of the northerly aspect.” NICK

KITCHEN Joinery in Laminex Sublime Teak Chalk (above bench) and 2-pac polyurethane painted Dulux Natural White (below bench), Kitchen Domain. Benchtops in ‘Fresh Concrete’, Caesarstone. Zellige splashback tiles in Cielo, Elegance Tiles. Appliances, E&S. ‘Spensley’ stool, Barnaby Lane. ‘Xola’ linear pendant light, About Space Lighting. Bowl on shelf, Cibi. Green and blue vases, Marmoset. The teak fruit bowl on bench was a gift from Kasia’s mum.

One downstairs bedroom was converted into a bathroom and the hallway now unveils a wide north-facing living, kitchen and dining space that opens onto a deck and beautifully landscaped backyard. Off the kitchen is a laundry and mud room with separate access from the garden, so the girls, now aged nine and six, can leave their schoolbags and make a beeline for the fridge.

At the top of Nick and Kasia’s wish list was an upstairs parents’ retreat, replete with a main bedroom, lavish ensuite and a walk-in robe. There’s also a playroom/study on the landing, which the kids relish. Featuring a double shower, freestanding bath and glossy green Zellige tiles, the ensuite is an understated showstopper. “I don’t do grey and white bathrooms,” says Barbara. “This one has a lovely warmth, and the colours are soothing. I like a bathroom in which you feel like you can lie in the bathtub, relax and gaze out the window.”

Colour and warmth are carried through the downstairs, where timber – such as the teak-look kitchen joinery – and light abound. A splash of Dulux Classic Calm on a wall in the formal lounge makes chats by the fire even cosier. But the hero of the story is unquestionably the sundrenched extension that overlooks the garden, as well as a pool that wasn’t in the original brief.

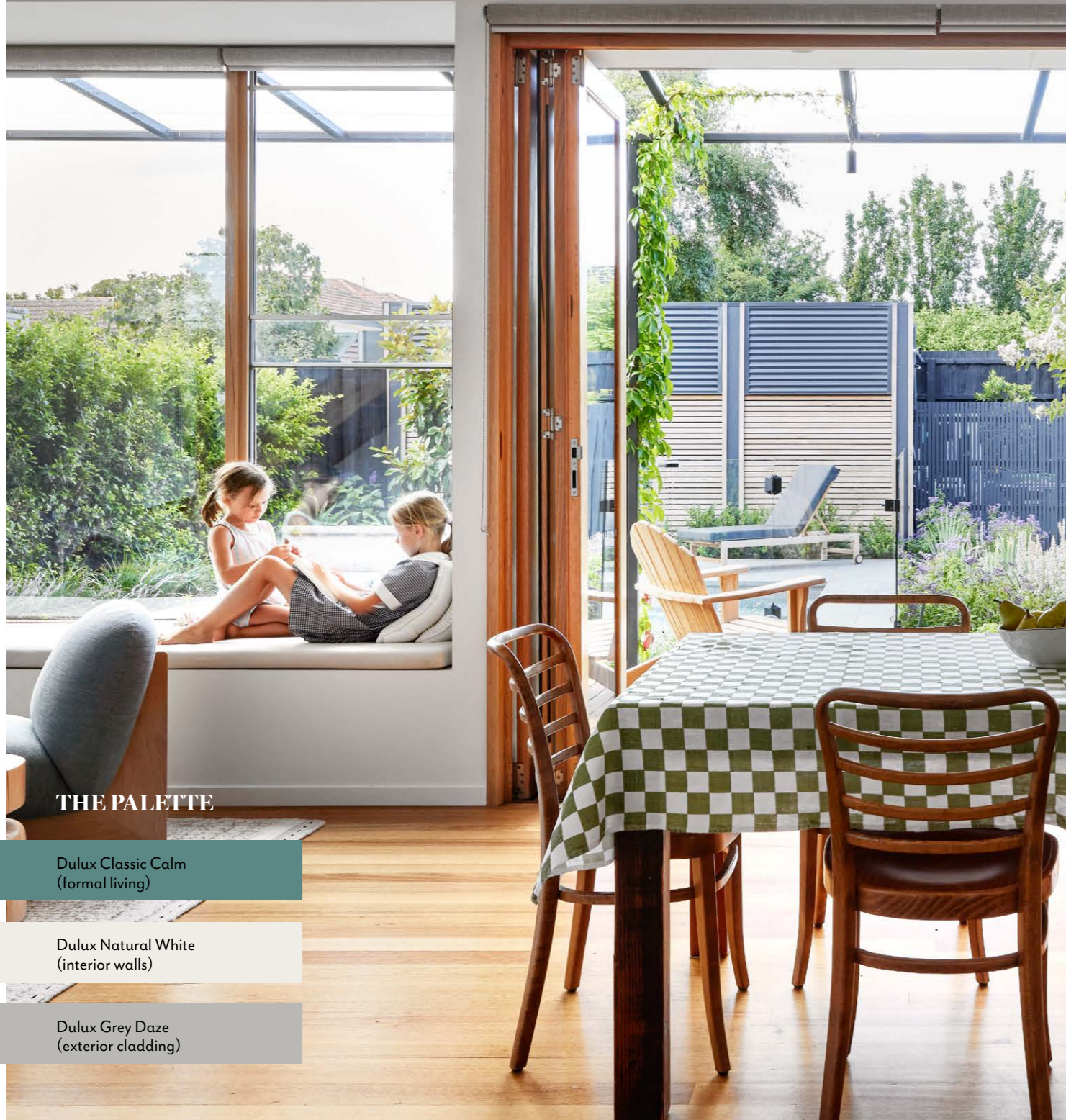
“We weren’t going to do the pool initially, but we were fortunate that our business grew through the Covid period,” explains Nick. “The job almost doubled due to the variations. I’m sure we caused Simon a lot of headaches!”

Because the project started in September 2020, Simon also grappled with austere pandemic restrictions. At one point, only five people could be on-site simultaneously. “It’s best to have as many people on-site to get the project done as quickly as possible,” laments Simon. “Managing all of that was quite difficult.”

But the dream team prevailed and Nick and Kasia moved into the storybook Edwardian in December 2021. Harboured a natural eye for design, Kasia completed the interiors with soft furnishings, decor and furniture. “I would live in this house myself,” says Simon. “But I’m most proud of the relationship between us and the client, which was maintained throughout a tough build,” he adds. “The client was great, the builder was great, and the site was fantastic,” concurs Barbara. “It was a great job to work on.” A very happy ending indeed. ▶

Blueprint Construction Company: Thornbury, Victoria; blueprintconstructions.com.au. **Barbara Weimar Architect:** barbara@weimar.com.au. **BWLA:** Hawthorn, Victoria; bethanywilliamson.com.au.

LIVING/DINING Custom table, ND Recycled Furniture. 'Leiter' chairs, Thonet. 'Callie' rug, Hali. Tablecloth, Bonnie and Neil. Outdoor chair and sun lounger, both Jati Furniture. **BATHROOM** *Opposite, top* Aqua Plus bath, E&S. Zellige gloss tiles in Salvia, and 'Lusso' wall tiles in Naturale, both Elegance Tiles. Brodware 'Manhattan' tapware, E&S. Towel, Adairs. **BACKYARD** *Opposite, bottom* Pool, Southern Cross Swimming Pools. Decking in silver top ash, Radial Timber.

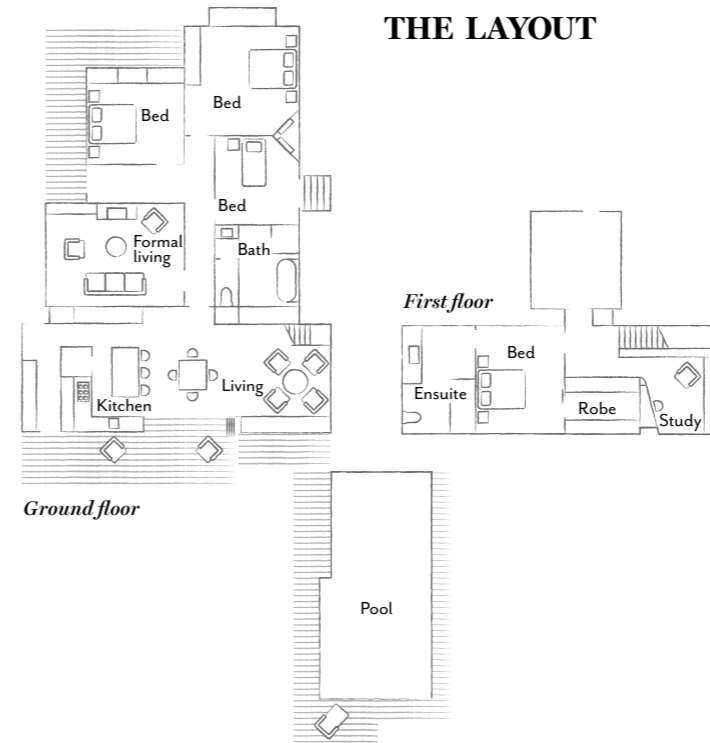


THE PALETTE

Dulux Classic Calm
(formal living)

Dulux Natural White
(interior walls)

Dulux Grey Daze
(exterior cladding)



THIS IS THE LIFE

The north-facing extension is a game changer for owner Nick. "It gets such beautiful natural light; on a sunny day when it's actually cold outside, you get the sun coming through." The garden design, by landscape architect Bethany Williamson, has inspired Nick to flex his green thumb. "I wasn't much of a gardener, but now I'm becoming one, like my dad."



BACKYARD The garden is thriving with a lush combination of Virginia creeper, native violet, large lamb's ear and a crepe myrtle tree. Decking in silver top ash, Radial Timber.



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THE SOURCE

Bring a sense of fun to family interiors with interesting patterns and shapes, and splash of peaches and green.



Produced by Andrea Healy.

1 'Orbit' pendant light, \$895, Beacon Lighting. 2 Baina 'Bethell' bath towel in Sage/Chalk, \$90, Incu. 3 Hay 'Crate' lounge chair, \$655, Cult. 4 'Regis' vase, \$69.95/small, Country Road. 5 'Lana Forest' bedside table, \$269.99, Adairs. 6 'Atlas' twin nest coffee table in White Marble/Black Metal, \$4100, GlobeWest. 7 'Pinto' occasional chair, \$2865, GlobeWest. 8 'Gia' reversible linen cushion in Mocha, \$86, L&M Home. 9 Urban Road 'Lucia' ottoman in Natural, \$199, Freedom. 10 Round mirror in Matte Black, \$389.90, ABI Interiors. H&G