

**DREAM IT. DESIGN IT. DO IT.**

# THE GREAT *escape*

A calming palette and clever fit-out deliver a relaxed coastal holiday home where walk-in, walk-out living is a priority

WORDS & STYLING **JULIA GREEN** PHOTOGRAPHY **ARMELLE HABIB**

STYLING ASSISTANCE: BELINDA GRINTER & GEORGIE FITZGERALD. 'WAVERLEY' 1989 'BASE' DINING TABLE, AMY QUINN FOR JAMES RICHARDSON FURNITURE. ETHNICRAFT 'NORDIC' 2 DRAWER CONSOLE. GLOBEWEST. OBJECT ON CONSOLE: 'LPG VESSEL'. INDUSTRIA X. ARTWORK ABOVE CONSOLE: 'STILL LIFE III' BY KIMMY HOGAN. GREENHOUSE INTERIORS

**Who lives here:** Joe Bartolo, managing director of construction company Civilex; his wife Olivia, a human resources manager; their children Kayden, 11, and Mila, 8; and Chester, a two-and-a-half year old Hungarian Vizsla.

**Style of home:** A newly built townhouse in the Victorian coastal town of Torquay, tweaked to offer the family a low-maintenance getaway.

 The year-long planning process was followed by a nine-month build.



## *kitchen and dining*

V-groove cabinetry conceals small appliances for a clean, tidy look, while pale timber barstools from Design By Them fit seamlessly with the neutral palette and simple dining table, designed by Amy Quinn for James Richardson Furniture. A brushed steel pendant with leather strap from Lights Lights Lights highlights the dining space.

“We focused on a calming palette, layered textures and graphic artworks as a nod to the family’s relaxed but sophisticated style.”

JESSICA BETTENAY, INTERIOR DESIGNER



### living area

A combination of natural textures and tones - from the grey handwoven rug from Armadillo & Co and Globe West sofa to the unique handpainted stool from Pop and Scott and cushions from Pony Rider and Bonnie and Neil - adds warmth and contributes to the light and airy feel.

(STUDY, TOP RIGHT) UT DRINKS TROLLEY, INDUSTRIA X, POPPY ARMCHAIR, GLOBEWEST, CASHMERE THROW, LINEN AND MOORE. ROUND CONCRETE POT, THE MINIMALIST, ARTWORK BY ALI MCNABNEY STEVENS.



INSIDE renovation

### the moodboard



Strap pendant, \$900, Lights Lights Lights, lightslightslights.com.au.

'Maison' PurePlank engineered timber flooring, \$86/sqm, Havwoods, havwoods.com.au.

Athena benchtop, \$590/lineal metre (installed), Smartstone, smartstone.com.au.

**O**wning a seaside holiday house is a dream of many, particularly city dwellers keen for a more relaxed pace of life. Victorians Joe and Olivia Bartolo, one such couple, were looking for a weekend where family outings to the beach were only a short walk away, delivering a break from their hectic city lifestyle. Not for them, though, the traditional 1950s-era fibro shack. Instead, the pair had a modern, low-maintenance abode in mind, and found just that when construction company Civilex, of which Joe and Olivia are directors, began building a block of units in the seaside town of Torquay. Joe had fond childhood memories of visiting the scenic surfing town, and its proximity to Melbourne was a further drawcard.

### DREAM IT.

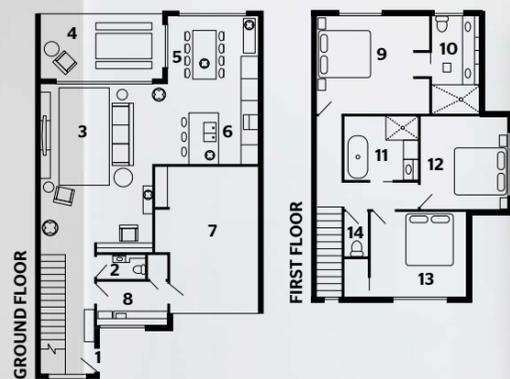
Centrally positioned close to beaches and shops, the project met Joe and Olivia's main requirement of a key location, and they snapped up one of the three-bedroom townhouses. However, they soon discovered the floorplan needed tweaking to cater to their lifestyle. Joe engaged design firm Resident Avenue to tackle the changes and gave them carte blanche to decorate the home from the ground up.

“The family wanted a beach house they could walk into after a busy week and have everything they needed, and somewhere they could leave after a weekend with everything in its place,” explains Resident Avenue’s senior designer Jessica Bettenay, who worked with Joe and Olivia on the project. “Low maintenance was key.”

There was also a desire for premium finishes that used natural textures and tones to deliver a light, airy and relaxed coastal vibe and connection to the outdoors, all the while offering a sleek and modern take on the traditional beach house.

### Joe and Olivia’s wishlist

- + **“An easily maintained weekend getaway** with enough storage so we can put everything away and keep it ordered and low fuss.
- + **“Maximised kitchen space** to allow for lots of cooking and give us an appliance cupboard to hide everything away.”
- + **“Interesting and beautiful finishes** without over capitalising on the property. Timber floorboards with a soft grey undertone to create a light, beachy feel, and decorative light fittings that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing.”



- 1. Entryway
- 2. Powder room
- 3. Living area
- 4. Courtyard
- 5. Dining area
- 6. Kitchen
- 7. Garage
- 8. Laundry
- 9. Master bedroom
- 10. Ensuite
- 11. Bathroom
- 12. Bedroom
- 13. Bedroom
- 14. Powder room



**entry hallway**  
 The sleek, Nordic-inspired Bloomingville bench with unique leather strap detail creates a chic sitting spot in the entrance hallway. A graphic print by Caroline Walls completes the picture.

HALLWAY: THIS PAGE: BLOOMINGVILLE BENCH, CLICKON FURNITURE. PRINT: THE WOMEN IV BY CAROLINE WALLS. AND SAGE + CLARE RUG. GREENHOUSE INTERIORS. MUJOTO 'THE DOTS'. TOP 3 BY DESIGN (BEDROOM OPPOSITE PAGE) PIPER BEDHEAD, HEATHERLY DESIGN. UNIVERSO POSITIVO BEDSIDE TABLE, GLOBE WEST MOROCCO PRINT, NATHAN + JAC



**bedroom**

Pretty prints and pastels mix with rustic features such as the statement leather Heatherly Design bedhead, natural greenery, and chunky, comfy throws.

**the best bits**

- + **the soft colour palette** "We usually go for darker moodier schemes so it's a surprise how much we enjoy the tranquil softer colours. Subtle textures and material combinations give smaller spaces plenty of personality."
- + **tailored styling and design** "We love that everything was chosen especially for us by Resident Avenue, from the lighting and furniture down to the crockery and towels!"

**DESIGN IT.**

It was a deliberate response, Jessica says, to present a home where the family could unwind, via both low-maintenance living and an easy ambience. "Given that this was a holiday home, we needed to find finishes that were superior in quality but sensible in price," she says. "Clever design doesn't always mean top-of-the-range product. There are some amazing products in the Australian market place that deliver exceptional quality with a sensible price tag."

Jessica rearranged the footprint of the kitchen to create more storage, introducing cupboards to conceal things such as the toaster and kettle. "We also made the bathroom bigger upstairs and added a separate toilet by removing a cupboard, as ample storage had been injected elsewhere," she says.

The floorboards and carpet were selected for their user-friendly soft grey undertones, delivering a light, beachy feel, with the palette extended to the muted quartz benchtops in Smartstone Athena. "It provides a fantastic, durable option, again with a warm grey throughout," adds Jessica.

Neutral materials such as leather accents, wall panelling and feature tiles add interest while maintaining a timeless look. "It was about clean, simple materials, elements which added new layers and texture," explains Jessica.



**bathroom**

The light, bright feel extends to the bathroom, where sleek cupboards provide ample storage and hard-wearing yet luxurious surfaces contribute to the minimalist vibe.



**kids' bedroom**

A bunk bed with stowaway trundle from House of Orange maximises space while fun, colourful furnishings create a comfy retreat for the kids.



**DO IT.**

The process from design to decorating was reasonably seamless thanks largely to the committed working relationship between the designer and her clients. "The key to a successful building collaboration is engaging the right designer," says Joe. "It's their expertise that can save you on money and mistakes. Jessica has been our go-to for three years, and intimately understands our lifestyle."

Entrusted with everything from helping to customise the floorplan and selecting materials, finishes and fixtures, through to choosing complementary décor pieces - everything from towels to art and furniture - the result is a cohesive and sophisticated holiday home.

"Adding colour and interest from the decorating elements allows the home to feel warm," says Jessica. "It would have been easy to come in and say, 'Let's do white'. But it was about going that extra mile with texture and subtle pattern, which makes for a really fresh and detailed look - and something that's a bit more personable."

The functionality of the space also means there is more time for the family to enjoy their time by the sea. Kayden and Mila divide their time between the beach and the skate park, while Chester enjoys making the most of Torquay's extensive coastline. "We love our walk-in, walk-out beach house," says Joe. **10**

KIDS' BEDROOM: ASSORTED BEDLINEN, KIP & CO. BATHROOM: STOOL, RIGBY'S HOMEWARES, 'O VESSEL', REDUXR. (OPPOSITE) MAIN BEDROOM: RUPERT BEDHEAD, HEATHERLY DESIGN. SPIRAL PENDANT, MARMOSSET FOUND. LINEN, KIP & CO. SIDE TABLE, GLOBE WEST. PRINT: GIVE ME WINGS BY ADELAIDE MOURD, PENNY FARTHING DESIGN HOUSE

**lessons learnt**

"Reliable trades are essential on a new build as any small delay costs money. We have learned to team up with a trustworthy group and fortunately, we find mistakes are few and far between."

JOE BARTOLO, OWNER



**main bedroom**

Layered textures, patterns and colours combine with a statement bedhead in asphalt linen from Heatherly Design for sophisticated effect. A textural pendant light fitting adds a stylish focal point.