

Modern HISTORY

Designer Caecilia Potter has worked new elements into her Melbourne boom-era home, enriching its character and history.

STORY & STYLING JUDY OSTERGAARD ♦ PHOTOGRAPHY ARMELLE HABIB

OUTDOOR LIVING A rickety pergola was upgraded with spotted gum and fitted with angled slats that allow sun in winter while providing shade in summer. Heating and a sound system ensure the area is used year-round.

GARDEN "I like a garden that is soft and rambling," says Caecilia. "It's filled with vegetables, fruits and herbs. I love lots of foliage, scented flowers and berries for cutting." Designer buy: Tribu Versus dining table, \$10,800, and chairs, \$870/each, Cosh Living. For Where to Buy, see page 268.

H&G HOUSES



Built during Melbourne's 1890s boom period and designed by much-feted architect John Beswicke, Huntingtower, with its ornate mouldings and tall viewing tower, was avant-garde compared to its Melbourne neighbours.

It was once the residence of Herbert Booth, son of the founder of the Salvation Army, and was the location for Australia's first feature film, *Soldiers of the Cross*, which Herbert wrote and directed. After World War II, the house was divided into apartments, only to be converted back into a family home in the 1980s.

Then in 2009 interior designer Caecilia Potter of Atticus & Milo, her husband James, and their sons, Jasper, 18, and Cyrus, 14, fell in love with its history, style and space. "Interestingly, we had just seen *Blessed* at the Melbourne International Film Festival and loved it," says Caecilia. "Then, in doing some research into the background of Huntingtower, we discovered it was one of the main locations used in *Blessed*. Later when we learned it had also been used by Herbert Booth for his early Australian film we thought this was an exciting coincidence as we are all film buffs."

The house had been renovated in the '80s and decorated with intricate paintwork and heavy wallpapers. Prior to the Potters' arrival it had housed a business and the floors had been ripped up so three-phase power could be installed. The heavy-duty power supply was appealing but there was a lot of damage to repair. While the original fireplaces and most of the skirting boards, cornices, architraves and light fittings were intact, much of the plasterwork was cracked.

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KITCHEN An extension is in the pipeline for the kitchen and laundry, which were renovated by the previous owners. The bay window was built to reflect that of the nearby conservatory. Floors are Baltic pine.

Smart buy: Faktum/Abstrakt island bench with Numerär oak top, \$2940, Ikea. **For Where to Buy, see page 268.**



DINING A dark-hued dining table and a Farahan Collection rug from Loom Rugs tie in with the ceiling's dramatic detailing and original chandelier. Artworks by Jan Senbergs (large, left), McLean Edwards (small, left of window), Anne Klein (right).

LIVING Layering objects of different heights creates visual interest. Paola Navone Basso footstools from Poliform, with custom-made leather pads from Atticus & Milo. Artworks by (from left) M Trufilo, Michael Peck (top), Alex Chachi (bottom).

Designer buy: B&B Italia J.J armchairs, from \$4995/each, Space. **For Where to Buy, see page 268.**

'I GET THE FEELING THERE IS A CONVIVIAL CROWD OF GHOSTS ABOUT.' CAECILIA



'I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN TELLS OUR STORY.' CAECILIA

BILLIARD ROOM Jasper puts the 1890s Alcocks 'elevator table' to good use. It's a billiard table that can be wound down, and a solid cedar top inserted when required for dining. Matthew Collins from Art & Interiors covered the Danish sideboard with Cole & Son Circus wallpaper.

Designer buy: Opinion Ciatti Ptolomeo bookstands, from \$1390/each, Space.

HALLWAY The original tessellated tiles set up a grand entrance. Mirrored pedestal from Atticus & Milo. The family bought the carving, from Mali, in Africa.

DEN The Ingo Maurer Bang Boom Zettel'z pendant light from Space adds a fun flourish. Artwork by John Baird (above mantel) and Michael Schlitz (right). Customised Jade storage unit by Zuster.

ENSUITE A curtain in sheer Glow fabric in Steel from Royston House Fabrics with Grandeur Rusca velvet in Tundra from Warwick Fabrics ups the glamour. Catellani & Smith Sweet Light Parete wall lamp from Hub Furniture Lighting Living.

Designer buy: SM 77 mosaic tiles, \$264/m², Bisazza.

For Where to Buy, see page 268.

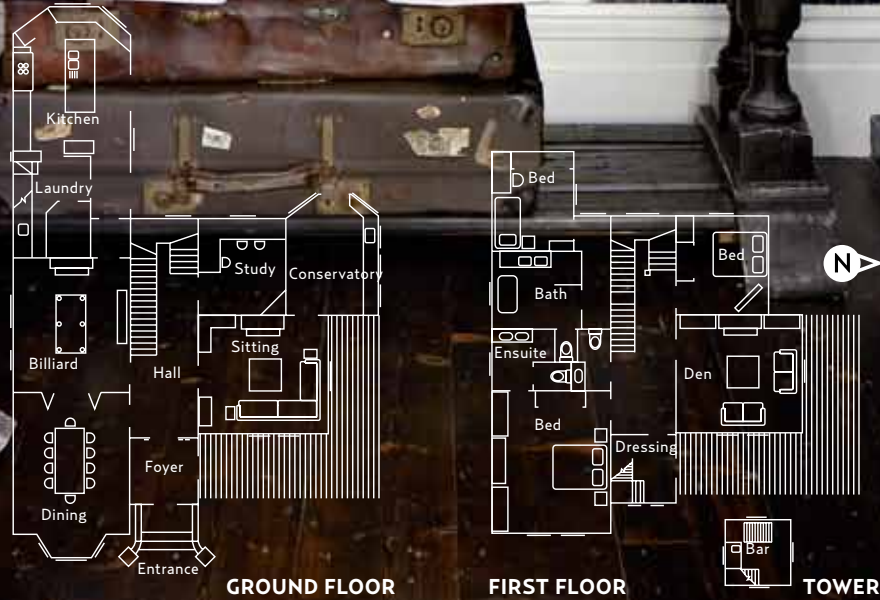


Paint colours have been reproduced as accurately as printing processes will allow.



- Dulux Vivid White (interior ceilings and trims)
- Resene Ash (interior walls)
- ADD A DASH OF
- Porter's Paints Gelati
- Dulux Regalia

Go for strong pops of colour for a bold statement.





< Caecilia was determined to respect the history and architecture of the house. The hallway still had its beautiful tessellated tile flooring and Matthew Collins from Art & Interiors spent many hours cleaning then restoring the staircase to reveal its true colour and timber grain.

At the front of the home a sitting room that leads off the hall and the dining room opposite had damaged plaster caused by the removal of old wallpaper. The Potters had the plaster ceilings and walls lined with a bonded lining paper and painted. The opening between the dining room and adjoining billiard room was widened and the ceiling raised. Across the hall is the study, which was once a small bedroom, and the conservatory.

“The large kitchen [at the rear of the home] was added by the previous owners and is flooded with light,” says Caecilia. “Because we intend to extend we haven’t changed much except to add an island bench and some shelving. The window seat, where you can sit and read in the sun, and Aga stove were already there. The whole family has grown to love this room so we’re not in a rush to renovate.”

Upstairs is the main bedroom and ensuite, a den, the boys’ bedrooms and the main bathroom. At the end of the hallway is the tower, which includes a dressing room and, above that, a bar with sweeping views. “The house has a warm character. I get the feeling there is a convivial crowd of ghosts about, radiating a sense of warmth and happiness,” says Caecilia.

Atticus & Milo, Hawthorn, Victoria; (03) 9882 0088 or www.atticusmilo.com.au.



‘THE POOL WAS DESIGNED TO PRESERVE THE 120-YEAR-OLD PEPPERCORN TREE THAT IT WRAPS AROUND.’ CAECILIA



DINING ROOM BEFORE

Timely renovation tips

- Caecilia’s guide to renovating pre-Federation homes:
- ❖ When renovating and restoring older buildings, I follow the Burra Charter, which sets out the principles and procedures to be used when conserving a heritage building. Above all, respect the existing fabric, using traditional techniques to retain the aged patina and craftsmanship.
 - ❖ Any additions should complement the old without being reproduction in style so that it is readily distinguishable as a contemporary addition.
 - ❖ Re-use and rearrange old fittings in a contemporary context. A blend of old and new creates a rich interior and is respectful of our planet’s finite resources. For example, at Huntingtower I re-used existing light fittings, placing them in new locations to suit the new interior. Also, beautifully made timber doors that once linked the dining and billiard rooms were re-used as wardrobe doors in Cyrus’ room. **H&G**

OUTDOOR AREA No chemicals are used in the natural pool, which is cleaned by a succession of ponds and rocks. Leaves are scooped up and composted for use in the adjacent kitchen garden.

MAIN BEDROOM Caecilia designed the bed, using Fornasetti Venice wallpaper on backing boards to create the bedhead. Wallpaper from Cole & Son. Ottoman upholstered in Luxembourg linen from Westbury Textiles. **For Where to Buy, see page 268.**