



# Goodwill Hunting

AN HISTORIC HOME REFLECTS THE PHILOSOPHY AND PANACHE OF ITS OWNER, WHO HAS ARTFULLY CURATED A CONSIDERED YET UNEXPECTED MIX OF DECOR

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**THIS PAGE:** THE KEYSTONE BEARS THE CONSTRUCTION DATE AND NAME OF THIS HISTORIC HOME, HUNTINGTOWER, BESTOWED BY THE ORIGINAL OWNER.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** INSPIRED BY THE NAME AND FAMILY HOLIDAYS SPENT ON SAFARI IN NAMIBIA AND BOTSWANA, OWNER/DESIGNER CAECILIA POTTER COMMISSIONED A FRESCO (BY ART & INTERIORS) IN THE POWDER ROOM OF SUNSET STRIPES, WITH CAST PORCELAIN TROPHY HEADS FROM MEÏZAI. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.



A formal dining room with a tall, dark bookshelf on the left, filled with books. The wall is white and features two framed artworks. A window on the right is covered with patterned curtains, and a chandelier hangs from the ceiling. A dining table with white chairs is visible in the foreground.

THE FRONT-OF-HOUSE FORMAL DINING ROOM IS THE SCENE OF MANY A LONG DINNER PARTY. THE WALLS, PAINTED IN QUARTER-STRENGTH 'ASH' BY RESENE, ARE HUNG WITH ARTWORKS BY MCLEAN EDWARDS AND JAN SENBERG. TWO PTOLOMEO BOOK TOWERS BY BRUNO RAINALDI FOR MOCO FRAME THE OPENING BETWEEN THE DINING ROOM AND THE BILLIARD ROOM. THE CHIVASSO 'BLACKBIRD' SHEER CURTAINS ADMIT A FILTERED LIGHT.







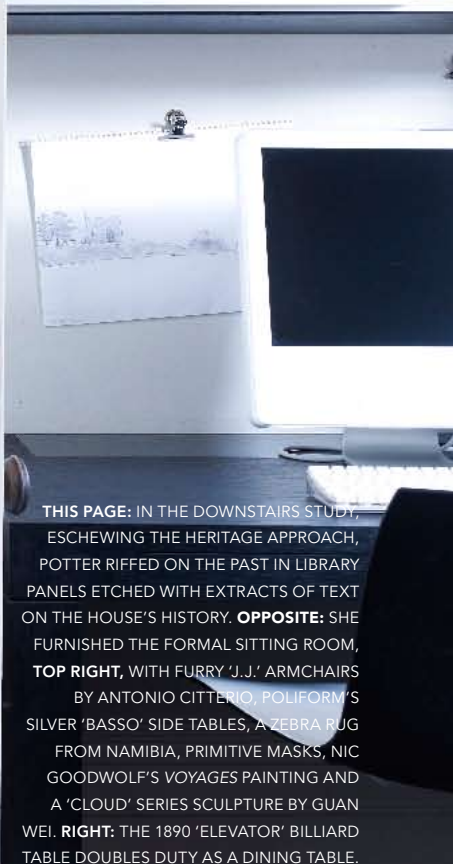
probably designed by  
the distinguished  
Victorian era architect  
John Beswicke  
(Raheen, Talana,  
Hawthorn Town Hall)."

"It is an early and  
influential use of the then  
avant-garde material  
red brick."



"Diana, goddess  
of the hunt, still  
presides in  
original cast  
iron panels and  
mouldings on the  
front facade."

*"He who has a garden  
and a library wants for  
nothing" ~ Cicero oOBC*



**THIS PAGE:** IN THE DOWNSTAIRS STUDY, ESCHEWING THE HERITAGE APPROACH, POTTER RIFFED ON THE PAST IN LIBRARY PANELS ETCHED WITH EXTRACTS OF TEXT ON THE HOUSE'S HISTORY. **OPPOSITE:** SHE FURNISHED THE FORMAL SITTING ROOM, **TOP RIGHT**, WITH FURRY 'J.J.' ARMCHAIRS BY ANTONIO CITTERIO, POLIFORM'S SILVER 'BASSO' SIDE TABLES, A ZEBRA RUG FROM NAMIBIA, PRIMITIVE MASKS, NIC GOODWOLF'S VOYAGES PAINTING AND A 'CLOUD' SERIES SCULPTURE BY GUAN WEI. **RIGHT:** THE 1890 'ELEVATOR' BILLIARD TABLE DOUBLES DUTY AS A DINING TABLE.



WHEN DESIGNER CAECILIA Potter flings open the door to her historic inner-Melbourne home, you know the inside schemes won't hang on heritage. Her dress – an artful mismatching of drop-hemmed skirt, cropped leather jacket, red Le Corbusier specs, and paper-boy cap – reveals that prescriptive style just isn't her schtick. But should you miss the fashion message that here lives a woman not bound by the formal rules of engagement, then the Jolly Roger flag flapping high above the hilltop house and the *porte-cochère's* pig – a beast of a black table designed by the all-female Swedish collective Front – make it implicit. "Meet Big Jim," says Potter, explaining that her two teenage sons named the plastic porker after their father – a businessman whose familial connections to Africa later show in fantastic interior displays of tribal carving and big-game trophies. "Jasper and Cyrus do like to joke."

But she is quick to correct any perception that Jim's bulk and behaviours warrant name-sharing with a pig, saying her boys hang it on Dad because he "mucks around" in the grounded mire of economics and not their ephemeral world of colour and shape. "Cy, 12, thinks he'll become an architect and Jasper, 16, knows he will be an artist – he has ever since he was six."

Potter leads into a north-facing studio to show Jasper's mature style of earthy figuration, then heads upstairs to a surrealist bathroom in which Cy has stuck vintage travel stickers on suitcases that double as decoration and storage. They lend the right amount of incongruity to a Magritte-inspired scheme lit by bowler hats hovering over a claw-foot bath. "I love them because they are fun and whimsical," says Potter of the pendant light parodies of British imperialism by UK designer Jake Phipps. "You hit the landing, catch a glimpse of their floating forms and get the sense you have just seen a ghost."

According to Potter, the history of Huntingtower – the name festooned with ribbons and beasts over an arched entry keystone bearing the carved construction date 1890 – is the boom-to-bust story of economic Melbourne.









A LOVER OF VENICE, POTTER TURNED THE MASTER SUITE INTO A DREAMY EVOCATION OF THE CITY. SHE DESIGNED THE FOUR-POSTER BED, CURTAINED WITH DROPS OF LIGHT-DIFFUSING LINEN AND BACKED WITH COLE & SON 'VENICE' WALLPAPER. THE TOLOMEO LAMPS BY ARTEMIDE ARE FIXED TO THE WALL.









The three-storey tower tells of the original owner's prosperity and his intention to spot game from its structure. Depression supposedly made his desire short-lived and the house sold in 1897.

Playing with the building's name and paying homage to the conservation work done by her brother-in-law, David, in Botswana, Potter frescoed the upstairs powder room in the pink and orange bands of a savannah sunset and mounted big-game trophy heads (cast in politically correct white porcelain) against the stripes. "The space reminds us of being on safari in Namibia and Botswana," she says.

For Potter, meaning is steeped in name, artefacts of time and place and the history of human endeavour. Indeed, Atticus & Milo, the design company she founded in 1998, was so called after two inner-circle supporters of Marcus Tullius Cicero, the BC Roman philosopher and statesman who made the definitive statement about home design: "He who has a garden and a library wants for nothing".

Potter, who studied law, chemical engineering, history, philosophy and Japanese before forging a career in stockbroking, bemoans a world without books and spring bulbs. She opens the door to a kitchen garden burgeoning with plants and declares a love of nature and mind nurture. Her need to know is evidenced everywhere by Babel-like towers of books. Potter also admits to mining meaning from a past steeped in Roman Catholicism. "I'm lapsed, but the incense, the colour, the ritual – it's so subliminally ingrained." She points to a sunray mirror glowing with halo-like effect behind a Mary McKillop cross found at the Camberwell market. "I love how serendipitous, incongruous juxtapositions can offer up new meanings."

New meaning has been made of 'formality' with cross-purpose tables furnishing two front rooms. Potter has prioritised "pool and parties" in her planning. "We tend to have long dinners and, yes, we like our fun," she says of the contrast of an 1890s billiard table with a clean-lined 1990s dining table in rooms once designed around the division of class – a dining room feeding to sealed-off butler's pantry and cook's kitchen. "I do like mixing it up in here."

She driven to do it, she explains of a compulsion to curate, edit and self-educate. "Wherever I go I'm always on, always observing, taking shots and notes and filing them away for future reference. It's all a bit random but seems to fit into some bigger scheme." Her words later reverberate when research reveals Atticus had a daughter named Caecilia. Yes, it's a bit random but fits with some universal plan. **VZ**



**ABOVE:** THE KITCHEN WAS RELOCATED TO THE CONSERVATORY AND AN AGA STOVE INSTALLED, **BELOW.** A DISEMBODIED BOWLER HAT LIGHT HANGS IN THE BOYS' BATHROOM, **ABOVE LEFT.** THE BOYS' SITTING ROOM, **OPPOSITE,** IS ANIMATED BY INGO MAURER'S 'BANG BOOM' ZETTEL'Z CARTOON LIGHT AND JOHN BAIRD'S *THE ARCH*.

