



# Quick fix

Rebecca Judd and other style movers and shakers on the small touches that can transform a space.

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## THE DESIGNERS



### MIM DESIGN



Mim Design has been operating for 15 years and employs 16 staff members, including two directors and two associates. "I don't think we have a look, but people tell us we do," director Miriam Fanning says. "We spend a lot of time on custom design and fine detail."

#### CHALLENGING TIME

"Last year, we had to design and project-manage a build within two months. Instead of briefing the team as we normally would, we had an in-house brainstorming session, followed by a workshop with the client and builder. This enabled us to make decisions on the spot."

#### DESIGN TOUCHES THAT TRANSFORM A SPACE

- 1 Making the most of the aspect. Enticing sightlines don't just embrace the view - they also give a sense of space to a project.
- 2 Placement of furniture to optimise a space. "We always do a floor plan of the scaled furniture within the space, to ensure it all works and fits appropriately," Fanning says.
- 3 "Using texture to create a subtle layer of fine detail" - for example, a textured wallpaper in a basket weave or a special painted finish.
- 4 Combining contrasting finishes such as smooth sheen with 3D texture to create layering and "a sense of depth and interest".
- 5 Quality furniture and artwork, even if it's only one statement piece. Fanning recently used the Parachilna Aballs lamp and the Diesel by Moroso Longwave chair as design heroes.



### DIANE BERGERON



US-born designer Diane Bergeron has been practising in Melbourne for nine years. Founder of the Mercer School of Interior Design, she shares a staff of 12 between that and her eponymous studio. "My look is often described as a fresh take on American classic," she says.

#### CHALLENGING TIME

Entrways are busy places: "They have to be welcoming, give a sense of what to expect and be the silent butler - a place for keys, mail and umbrellas," Bergeron says. "They need purpose and to tease you." So they can be tricky to design. Her hall must-haves include a table lamp, a seat, somewhere to stow items and a mirror.

#### DESIGN TOUCHES THAT TRANSFORM A SPACE

- 1 Animal print, such as leopard, "in small doses in cushions or on one piece of furniture. It lends a touch of timeless glamour."
- 2 Bold wallpaper in a small space like a powder room or an entryway. "It gives a jewel box feel," Bergeron says.
- 3 A pair of ottomans, stowed neatly under a console, gets her tick for versatility: "They can work as a coffee table, you can rest your feet on them, or bring them out for extra seating."
- 4 A drinks trolley or a bar tray, complete with linen and ice bucket. "It's glamorous. I put one in just about every job."
- 5 A tablescape contained in a tray, including books, magazines, a pot or sculpture. "Cluster your accessories to create vignettes," she says.



### ATTICUS & MILO



Established in 2001, Atticus & Milo now has a team of six. "We don't really have a look, except that we love light, colour, natural materials and great art," principal Caecilia Potter says.

#### CHALLENGING TIME

A Toorak townhouse had a non-compliant steel spiral staircase, with widely spaced balusters that posed a danger to children. Wanting to replace its chipboard treads with oak, Potter had to make it compliant. "So we designed tapered balusters inserted asynchronously to add rhythm to the stairs," she says.

#### DESIGN TOUCHES THAT TRANSFORM A SPACE

- 1 Personal items such as travel memorabilia, collectibles, books and artworks by family or friends. "Look for themes to make sense of groupings, such as colour, texture, genre, but don't be afraid to be iconoclastic - rules are made to be broken!" Potter says.
- 2 Literally adding life to decor with flowers, foliage and easy-care plants, such as palms and succulents. Go seasonal, with maple branches in autumn and figs on the branch in late summer.
- 3 Candles to create atmosphere. "A large candle with multiple wicks has impact and clusters of different sizes work, too."
- 4 Throws in moss-stitch cotton for summer and chunky merino cable for winter.
- 5 Small sculptures. "I love Guan Wei's white cloud sculptures, as they are eye-catching, whimsical and the perfect scale for a coffee table," Potter says.

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