

Flower power

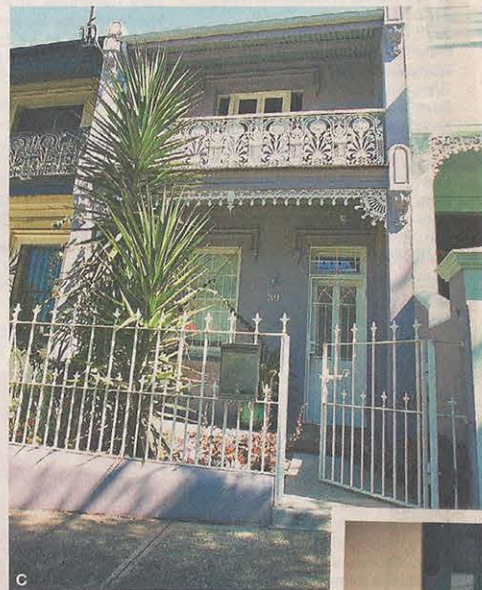


Home renovation these days is so often about showing off to your nearest and dearest, often at the expense of functionality and practicality. So it is a relief to come across Stu White and Jodie McGregor's terrace in the suburb of Enmore, where the demands of family life and a thriving business top the list of priorities.

Well known among inner-west flower lovers for their Annandale florist shop, Jodie McGregor Flowers, the couple was looking to update their tired terrace in one of the areas best streets to make it stylish and practical.

They needed something that made the most of the compact site while accommodating for their business, which often sees at least one

Having survived major renovations, things are finally coming up roses for these inner-west florists, writes **Robyn Willis**. Photos **Katrina Tepper**.



A Stu and Jodie with daughters Pirra (left) and Remi **B** Instead of a balcony, the main bedroom has a wide window with storage underneath **C** The rejuvenated facade **D** The old facade **E** New stairs are tucked in behind the downstairs bathroom and laundry **F** The old house was a series of dark, poky rooms **G** The old courtyard was more urban disaster than urban jungle **H** Bi-fold doors make the transition between indoors and out **I** An all-white colour scheme is spiced up with floral arrangements



member of the family rising before dawn to head off to the flower markets.

"We wanted a contemporary home that was functional but had very clean lines," says Stu. "It was all very simple, classic and versatile – quite modern and stylish but not going out of style."

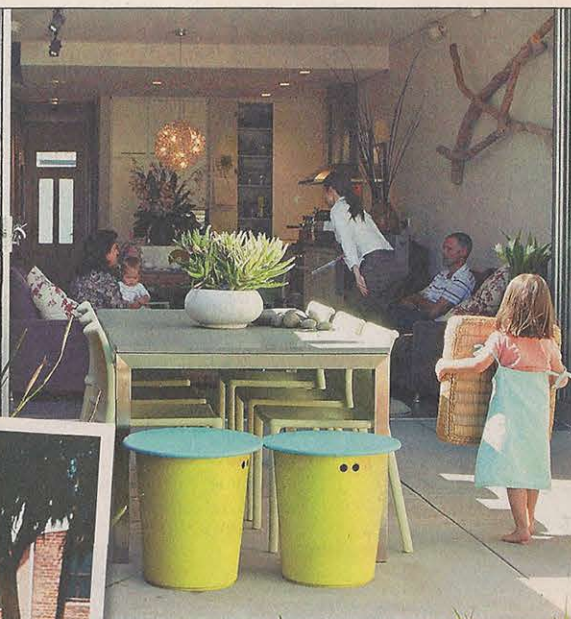
Before making way for the builders three years ago, the ground floor was a series of small rooms broken up by a central staircase.

There was limited access to the backyard, and the kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor were in desperate need of updating.

"We could see potential here," says Stu. "It was liveable but we could also see there was a whole lot to do. You would never be happy with it as it was and you would still spend a lot to tweak it."

"We wanted something that would be easy to maintain but very simple."

Jodie agreed it needed some work. "It had a nice feel about it, it was just really old," she says. "You could not do one thing with it without doing



“We wanted a contemporary home that was functional but had very clean lines”

the next – it was a domino effect. If we wanted to do something with the bathroom then we'd have to address the rising damp.

“Stu is an all-or-nothing person. I got a builder in to look at the kitchen and bathroom and he got an architect.”

Making a compromise

As it happened, the architect they called in was Vanessa Wegner, an old friend of the couple, looking to spread her wings after opening her own practice.

Stu says they have never regretted hiring someone close to them to do their plans.

“She put everything into it,” he says. “She is a fantastic architect and a fantastic person. She really got it exactly the way we wanted it. She was really passionate, even about getting the right fittings.”

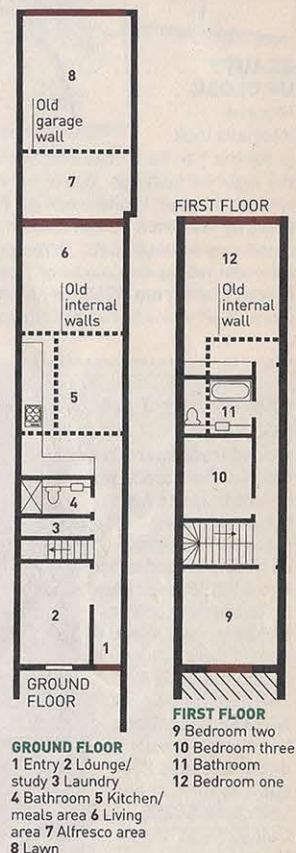
Lodging the development application with Marrickville Council was largely a surprisingly straightforward process, though they did require at least one change.

“In the main upstairs bedroom we wanted to have a small veranda on the back but they knocked that back,” says Jodie. “It was disappointing because all our neighbours have one but this was a new policy.”

However, council approved Vanessa's solution to opt instead for a window running the width of the room, which not only provides excellent cross ventilation in summer but has its own casual seating and valuable storage space underneath.

“We were really lucky because it worked out quite well,” says Jodie.

Apart from the guest bedroom, which faces on to the street, the entire house was gutted. →26



GET THE LOOK

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BEAUTY UP CLOSE

Modern interiors look great but can be a little cold without the right furnishings. Warm up your home with an original limited-edition **Floranova print by Warwick Orme**. Known for his close-ups of botanicals, Orme prints his ethereal works on canvas or fine-art paper. **Prices start from \$250** for an unframed work. Visit www.floranova.com.au

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J The original guest bedroom remains untouched **K** Sunlight filters through to the lower level thanks to a carefully and cleverly placed skylight

TIPS

- ☒ Keep an eye on the building process and don't be afraid to ask questions about the job
- ☒ If council knocks back your application, think outside the square for a creative solution

Jodie and Stu decided to rent a townhouse in Lilyfield while the builders moved in so they could keep an eye on the job and maintain the business.

Light show

The overall effect is a house that exudes openness and light – an achievement given terraces are renowned for being pokey and dark.

Upstairs, this has been done with the careful placement of skylights, including one in the hallway that allows light into the bedrooms of daughters Pirra, 3, and Remi, 9 months, as well as into the kitchen below.

The house has been painted white for continuity with the floors warmed upstairs with Blackbutt timber flooring.

The neutral palette also makes the perfect backdrop for Jodie's relaxed flower arrangements and prints by another friend, photographer Warwick Orme.

Only the guest bedroom, with its original fireplace and traditional balcony facing on to the street, remained untouched.

Downstairs, the original mess of floorboards, carpet and other floor coverings have been replaced with polished concrete and subfloor heating. A room to the left of the front door makes an ideal playroom for Pirra, with the option of hiding toys behind a large curtain.

Bathrooms on both levels have been fitted out with white mosaic tiles and make a lot of sense for this busy family. "If the girls are sleeping and I'm going to the markets I will

MORE INFORMATION

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have a shower downstairs so I don't wake anyone up," says Stu. "The laundry is concealed behind the bathroom door

and we have a wine cellar

under the stairs behind the laundry." Best of all, the newly renovated home functions remarkably well for entertaining, with the galley kitchen leading directly into the living room and outdoor dining space.

"We had a party here a few weeks ago and the caterer said it was the best kitchen to work in because they had so much room," says Jodie. "It is really compact but there is enough room to feel like you are not on top of each other."

Stu agrees the flow between indoors and out is one of his favourite things about his renovated home, especially when they have guests.

"Having people over is a good way to catch up with friends because we're pretty busy with the business," he says. "If you have a house where you can do that, it is so much easier."

For Jodie, the best feature is the successful marriage of new and old. "Initially I thought it had to be all modern, but I like that it's quite modern but there are still some soft traditional parts of it too. And it's so easy to clean." ■

Have you renovated a home? Tell us about it at home@dailytelegraph.com.au