

Restoring CHARACTER

Nestled down a long driveway in the heart of Fendalton is an elegant character home that has been lovingly brought back to life

The kitchen is now an open, modern space featuring beautiful stone benchtops by Trethewey Artisan Stone, and soft-close hardware from Blum. Manufactured and installed by Mackay Kitchens, the kitchen cabinetry features timber-recessed doors with a spray lacquer finish.



For Jacqui Delhaye and her husband it was love at first sight when they first encountered their Christchurch property. With Jacqui's husband the head of one of the United Nation Agencies and stationed in Namibia, they viewed the house while on holiday, before bidding on it at auction with the intention of one day retiring in New Zealand. "I was bidding at the auction, via the phone at 1:30am Namibian time, in a nightie, clutching a hot water bottle!" shares Jacqui.

Since August 2001 however, their plans have changed and instead the couple have completed an elegant character renovation for others to enjoy. Having been used as a rental property for the last eleven or so years, the property hadn't been maintained to the standard the Delhaye's would have liked, so the decision was made to "restore the house to a required graciousness," prior to putting it on the market.

"I wanted a chic but neutral palette, with a wow factor onto which the new owners could then stamp their own individuality," shares Jacqui. "From an early age I was taught to appreciate architectural styles and to develop a sympathetic approach to enhancing them," she continues. Undertaking such a major

renovation from the other side of the world however meant it was critical that Jacqui have someone on the ground to project manage.

As an interior designer herself Jacqui did have some reservations about, not only working with someone across different time-zones, but about how it would be to work with another designer, so ensuring she selected the right one was critical. That right designer was Emma Morris from Eterno Design. "I could not have managed this huge undertaking had it not been for Emma," comments Jacqui. "She was innovative, has an excellent eye and understanding of what was required and moved mountains to implement what we needed."

For Emma it was a dream project. "I have worked on homes in Australia and throughout New Zealand before, so I was comfortable with working with a client who was overseas, and it is amazing how much you can get done over email," she shares. "It really helped that Jacqui and I spoke the same language and had the same desire to bring the home back to the way it should be."

As a kitchen and bathroom designer, first and foremost, Emma found herself tasked with the challenge of not only project managing the renovation, but completing the design of the kitchen, four bathrooms,

WITH FIVE
BEDROOMS,
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THIS IS AN
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LEFT The pool house is flanked by Boston Black Honed Granite tiles from Stone and Tile Solutions.

interior joinery, laundry, walk-in-wardrobes, exterior details and much more. "In all projects it is important that the sub-contractors I am working with are ones I can count on to produce a high quality end result, and especially so in a project of this nature," she comments.

Having known Ross Bailey of Ross Bailey Builders for nearly a decade, and having worked together on previous projects, it was a natural decision for Emma and Ross to collaborate once again. "This was a project that just grew and grew," comments Ross and his team, "and the end result is one of wow. It is pristine, clean and in keeping with the existing style of the home." With the original interior of the home being described as "warren like and cluttered," Ross and his team were charged with stripping everything back to achieve the open and crisp interior configuration desired by Emma and Jacqui.

Ross comments that the challenge and enjoyment of a renovation is the manner in which what was there, and what is to be there, is blended together to achieve a cohesive outcome. "This renovation," he shares, "still features a significant amount of original work, we simply restored and



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Carefully applied by Dennis Brown Painters, About Colour Chalk White is used throughout the interior. It is complemented by Resene Quarter Alabaster on the window frames, skirtings, architraves and ceiling.

replaced as needed." Despite being more well known for his work on modern, architectural designed homes, for Ross and his team the renovation of this character house was a "wonderful challenge" and provided them with the opportunity to translate and illustrate their skills and sympathetic nature when it comes to working with old and new.

Working with Emma on the interior of the home was Mackay Kitchens. As manufacturers of joinery and interior cabinetry they translated Emma's designs into reality. "We manufactured and installed almost all of the interior joinery in the home," shares owner Chris Moore. "The classical look of the home meant, like in a number of other projects we undertake, that we were making up samples prior to manufacturing to ensure the end look was what the client was after."

It was this level of detail and care that saw Emma bring Trethewey Artisan Stone on board. Specialising in kitchen benchtops, bathroom vanities and fire surrounds, they pride themselves on working with a high end product and exceeding expectations. The use of Shitake Caesarstone for the kitchen island and L shaped benchtop, and Purity Essastone for the walk-in scullery, laundry and vanity tops, ticked all the boxes when it came to meeting the client brief of neutral but chic. The natural benchtops coupled with quartz stone worked effortlessly together to achieve a sophisticated and elegant look, which is also prestigious and practical.

To complement the stone benchtops and original timber floors, natural stone flooring tiles were selected for the wet and thoroughfare areas of the home. "It is not often you see a home which features such an extensive use of natural stone," comments Meranie Oliver of Stone & Tile Solutions. "It has been great to see this home undergo such a huge transformation." Working closely with Emma to select the best product for the job, saw an array of natural stone tiles selected, including Paloma Travertine in the kitchen, hallway and two of the home's bathrooms, Avorio Limestone in the remaining two bathrooms and a bold Boston black honed granite tile outside. Like the rest of the renovation, careful selection of the product ensured the natural stone tiles are not only versatile and classic but



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work comfortably with the style and age of the house.

Like many renovations and new builds ensuring a comprehensive lighting plan has been completed is essential in ensuring the interior, and exterior, is useable and practical at all times of the day. As one of the largest independently owned lighting stores in New Zealand, Lighting 351 were bought to the team to provide interior and exterior light fittings which would fit with the existing décor. "We have an extensive range of lights," comments Tony Cutler, "so we have something to suit everyone's tastes and decor. In this case it was about finding lighting which would fit with the modern, yet classic, nature of this home."

Completing the look of the home was the selection of soft neutrals for the exterior and interior walls. With an extensive amount of paintwork to be completed, experience and an eye for detail was a must - requirements which saw Emma bring Dennis Brown Painters onto the project. Carefully applied by Dennis and his team, About Colour Chalk White covers all of the interior walls, with Resene Quarter Alabaster highlighting the window frames, skirtings, architraves and ceiling. For continuity, on the exterior of the home Resene Quarter Alabaster is used as a highlight, while the weatherboards are painted in Resene Concrete.

Upon first entering the property Emma comments it was like discovering a hidden wonderland. "Despite the garden being completely overgrown, the potential was

there and the discovery of the orchard around the back of the section was like uncovering a secret garden," she shares with a smile. Charged with bringing the garden back to life was Bill Howard of Howard Landscaping Artistry. Having had success at both the Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows, Bill was no stranger to the importance of designing a garden that reflects the surrounding architecture. "Our role was to continue the existing traditional villa planting around the house and drive, with an emphasis on foliage and restrained colour, while highlighting the formal courtyard with a distinctly sharper style," shares Bill. By maintaining themes from elsewhere on the property the end result is as seamless, chic and natural as the interior of the home.

For both Jacqui and Emma the renovation was not just about restoring the shell of a building, it was about creating a house that has been designed and invested in, to last. Having just come onto the market, it was also about achieving a striking and simple design which new owners could effortlessly make their own – an opportunity that is ready for the taking. Having managed the entire renovation process for Jacqui, it was a natural decision for her to turn to Emma to manage and coordinate the sale process also.

After all Christchurch has been through it is exciting to see a property of this nature and calibre still standing, let alone restored with such careful and elegant consideration. ■

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