

Herald Sun

home

>> mother love
Make Mum feel
special with a
homemade gift



April 28, 2007

>> all together

Celebrate family living
at the Montego by
Metricon Homes

>> tough players

Drought-hardy roses
show pretty blooms
still have a place

Dancing Queen

Kate Ceberano shares
what's close to her heart



Growth spurt

This makeover produced a carefree, low-maintenance residence for an expanding family

>> **Words** Karen Woods >> **Photography** Chris Groenhout

When Mary-Ann and Justin decided to renovate their Victorian-style Armadale home, they knew exactly what was important – making it family friendly.

With two young children and another on the way, they were aware the next phase of their life involved keeping inquisitive fingers away from the many items of interest to small children, such as audiovisual equipment, pots, pans and crockery.

In addition to this, they wanted their home to be low maintenance as what spare time they had they wanted to spend with the family, not working around the house or garden.

With a background in real estate, Justin and Mary-Ann knew what they were looking for, and bought the house with the intention to renovate.

"We both have a great sense of imagination and knew this area was where we wanted to live, and recognised the potential in this house," Mary-Ann says.

"We wanted a home that was suited to our style, and knew when we bought it that with a facelift this house would do that."

With its previous renovation completed in the '80s, the house was long overdue for a fresh and modern look.

"There was a T-shaped kitchen that really didn't work for us as it was too hard to keep track of the boys when I was in there. The house was very beige and there were lots of walls."

Justin and Mary-Ann are fans of bright, open and lofty spaces, with high ceilings and clean, open-plan living. Once the decision to renovate was made, the couple consulted Sherbrooke Constructions, in Malvern East, about transforming their home.

"As a mum you are scanning all the time to see what the children are doing, so we knew we needed the new design to be open plan.

"We also wanted to have lots of things built-in so they're less tempting for children to play with or investigate," Mary-Ann says.



For this reason, the stereo and TV accessories were concealed in a cupboard at one end of the stone-surround fireplace that is a focal point in the main living area. The other end of the fireplace hides firewood from view. Cabling for the computer in the study is concealed from busy fingers, and there are still plenty of open spaces for toddlers to roam.

Justin and Mary-Ann gave Rob Drechsel, of Sherbrooke Constructions, a list of ideas and wants, and he formulated them into a workable floorplan.

"One thing we were very keen to see happen was to restore the hallway to its full height," Justin says.

"It narrowed and became lower part-way through the house and we felt it was important to reinstate this for the character of the house."

The house now has a wide hallway leading from the bedrooms at the front to a large family/dining/kitchen area at the rear.

To further extend the space, the main living area opens, through





Roam free

There's room for everyone in the spacious living area (left)

Stand alone

A freestanding bath features in the main bathroom (above)

Child proof

Items of interest to little ones are kept out of harm's way (above right)

Old and new

Traditional features such as this fireplace were not touched (right)

Home sweet home

Justin and Mary-Ann changed their house to suit their lifestyle (below)

Finishing touch

Landscaping completes the home's exterior look (below left)

>> Mary-Ann's tips for first-time renovators

- > Think about your family's needs when planning your renovation, and bring those needs into your design concepts.
- > The floorplan has to work for your family.
- > Use all floor space available in a constructive way.



large eight-panelled bifold doors, to a paved and landscaped courtyard with a water feature. Landscaping at the rear and front of the house was completed by Lush Landscape Creations, in Wantirna South. It took five months to finish because concrete had to be removed and retaining walls built before planting could begin.

To allow the bedrooms to be zoned off from the living area, a large pivoting door was installed at the end of the hallway. This provides a thermal barrier and also acts as an acoustic block. When open, the door blends into the surrounding room so it is barely noticed.

As any busy family knows, the kitchen is the hub of the home, and this kitchen is a well-planned and very workable space.

The laundry and pantry are concealed behind matching sliding doors at either end of the kitchen. And there is another concealed, smaller, breakfast pantry serving as an appliance area.



The kitchen is a cook's dream with a large island breakfast bar/servery, an underbench feature panel, underslung double sink with mixer tap, glass splashbacks, Blum drawer fittings and a multitude of large drawers.

A new ensuite with glass-mosaic tiling and a sleek washplane-style basin was also added to the existing main bedroom. The family bathroom now sports a freestanding bath with a chrome floor-mounted spout.

The floors are easy-clean, child-friendly Baltic pine, stained black.

Although many families who have lived through a renovation hope never to do it again, the five-month ordeal was far from traumatic for this couple.

"Like any family we know our needs will change as our children grow, but what we've done is modify our environment to cope with our present requirements: life with toddlers," Mary-Ann says.

Sherbrooke Constructions can be contacted on 9572 4139.