



# EXPRESS *post*

A lightning-speed renovation and a new roof terrace saw this old post office become an art-filled family home.

STORY *Carli Philips* | STYLING *Bec Patterson* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Courtney King*



**DINING** The 12-seater dining table belonged to the previous owners. "It alleviated a lot of the stress of trying to get a new one up the stairs," says interior designer Lee Dwyer of Leftfield Studio. Fritz Hansen 'Series 7' chairs in Pale Rose, Cult. Console, owners' existing. Curtains in James Dunlop 'Kyoto' fabric in Linen, Lynch's Window Fashions. A combination of 'Peak Up' and 'Peak Down' pendants by Michael Anastassiades drop at different heights from the ceiling. **FACADE** *Opposite* This 1900s building was originally the Post and Telephone Exchange in Melbourne's Windsor but was subdivided into private apartments about 25 years ago.

“The multiple living zones allow enough space for everyone to enjoy.”

THE OWNER

One October evening in the early 1900s, post and telephone employees, councillors and members of the Postmaster General’s Department gathered in a large switch room to celebrate the establishment of the Windsor Post and Telephone Exchange. Made of red brick with freestone rockface, ashlar and leadlight windows, the building is still easily identifiable, thanks to its official stamp displayed on the exterior.

Fast forward more than a century and the collection of rooms that formed the public office, mail, terminal and cable rooms is now a converted apartment block that, instead of workers, is filled with family. The building had been bought and subdivided more than 25 years earlier, but the interiors fell flat and the new owner enlisted architect Tim Milton of Milton Architecture and interior



**DINING** The owner has her coffee at the antique wine table and chair. The 12-seat dining table belonged to the home’s previous owners. Fritz Hansen ‘Series 7’ chairs in Pale Rose, Cult. Curtains in James Dunlop ‘Kyoto’ fabric in Linen, Lynch’s Window Fashions. ‘Peak Up’ and ‘Peak Down’ pendants by Michael Anastassiades. Artworks (clockwise from left), by Lauren Jones; John Mollison; Henrietta Harris; Elizabeth Zanzinger, from Gallery 1261; and Tom O’Callaghan, from Gallery 247. The collection of pot plants has been acquired by the owner over the years.

**THIS IS THE LIFE**

"I love that all of the heritage elements were maintained but with functional updates and the addition of loads of green to the interiors," says the owner.

"The self-contained studio means we can easily have people to stay. The vibrancy of the neighbourhood is a big attraction too, especially with the convenience of a train station across the road."

**LIVING** The room is anchored by a 'Corsica' rug in Saltbush, Armadillo. In the foreground is a 'Ruff' armchair in pink velvet by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso, Mobilia. Round 'Sequence 01' table in stainless steel, 'Coco Flip', 'Phoenix' coffee table by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso, Mobilia. Wax and stone floor lamp by Linde Freya Tangelder for Cassina, Mobilia. 'Gogan' modular sofa by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso, Mobilia. Teak record cabinet, Southside Danish, Isla vase, Moss Made and pot by the owner. Flowers by Margo's. Cushions (from left): yellow and light blue cushions, Sage & Clare; Moroso scatter cushions in Clunis, Argo and pink; cushion in neutral, Sage & Clare.

## THE PALETTE

Porter's Paints Dolce Vita  
(kitchen door)

Dulux Natural White  
(walls)

Dulux Garden Pond Low Sheen  
(bedroom)

designer Lee Dwyer of Leftfield Studio to inject the place with the extra layer of personality it was lacking.

The owner – a friend of a friend of Lee's – swore she would never renovate, but loved the apartment so much she was prepared to make the necessary changes. The timeline was short and even before settlement, Lee was in there with a measuring tape. Aside from aesthetic updates, the brief also included transforming the loft into a library and adding a roof terrace.

Given the volume of the rooms, specifying appropriately sized furniture and fixtures was essential. With ceilings soaring to nearly five metres, an oversized 'Gogan' modular Moroso corner sofa was the perfect fit and the chairs and rug were designed at a scale that would anchor the space and create a well-defined zone. An independent bistro table and armchair adjacent to the windows has been carved out as a cosy spot for the owner to enjoy her morning coffee.

Tim says that because of the expansive footprint, they created "rooms in rooms" to minimise any sense of vastness. "Once you sit on the couch you feel like you are in a dedicated area while still being connected to the kitchen and dining. The proportions of the furniture and joinery relative to the existing spaces was crucial to the project."

Lighting helped delineate the periphery spaces, most significantly with low-hanging pendants in areas like the dining and kitchen. "There were 45,000 downlights," says Lee, laughing. "We were able to remove some and substitute them with more ambient, themed mood lighting – floor lamps, sconces and pendants." This included the 'Peak Up' and 'Peak Down' collection of cone-like lights by Michael Anastassiades and Rakumba's horizontal 'Highline' powder-coated pendant over the island. "It was about filling the space vertically as well as horizontally," adds Tim.

The stairwell leading to the entrance was so narrow that the owner decided to purchase the dining table from the vendors to save the complications of getting a new 12-seater in. "It was hard enough trying to get the marble slab up the stairs for the kitchen bench," recalls Lee. ▶



**KITCHEN** Joinery in Polytec Florentine Walnut Woodmatt. Splashback and benchtop in Verde Alpi marble, Signorino. Stovetop, Miele. Custom rangehood in Dulux PowderCoat in Natural Bronze. Tapware, Billi. Vintage chrome bowl, Soft Focus House. *Top right* 'Diiva' swivel stools, Grazia & Co with powder-coated pink frames. Rakumba 'Highline' pendant in black, Est Lighting. 'Dado' sconces, Volker Haug Studio. 'Fiore' vase, Antico, with flowers from Margo's. **HALLWAY** *Below right* At the entrance to the kitchen, dining and lounge, the door is painted Porter's Paints Dolce Vita. Artwork by Lauren Jones.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



HOUSES H&G





“There was only three centimetres either side of the stairwell, but that’s how badly I didn’t want a join line.”

When it came to the piano, numerous movers declined the job given there was no room for error. They eventually found a team of four who needed to dismantle some parts given the treads and weight of the frame.

The home runs across four split levels. From the ground floor, stairs lead to a generous self-contained studio complete with a kitchenette, dining area and lounge suite with projector. Sometimes the ‘party room’ and other times a place for family to stay when they visit, it spans the whole width of the apartment. Up another half-flight lands you in the open-plan living-kitchen,

followed by steps to the bedrooms and ensuite, an emerald and fern-hued space that fulfilled the owners’ wish for as much green as possible.

The third floor contains the library loft and office with access to the new roof terrace that had to be sufficiently concealed so that it wouldn’t impinge on the heritage facade. Tim explains that it’s simultaneously tucked away from the street but also with incredible views of the Melbourne CBD and local lawn bowls club. “It offers the best of both worlds,” he declares. ▶

*Milton Architecture: [miltonarchitecture.com](http://miltonarchitecture.com).*  
*Leftfield Studio: [leftfieldstudio.com.au](http://leftfieldstudio.com.au).*  
*JDC Built: [jdcbuilt.com.au](http://jdcbuilt.com.au).*



**LIBRARY** ‘Clarissa’ armchair by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso, Mobilia. ‘Tung Side Table JA3’ in steel blue by &Tradition, Cult. Custom joinery by Leftfield Studio in Laminex laminate with Verde Alpi marble shelving, Signorino. Large artwork by Sonia Martin. Antique cigar box. ‘Night Desk’ clock by Vitra, Living Edge. Vase, Margo’s. **Opposite, top left** LOFT Vintage sculpture, Soft Focus House. Artworks (left to right): by John Gollings; anonymous; Adam Krigel; and Lee Miller. **Top right** MAIN BEDROOM Walls painted Dulux Garden Pond Low Sheen Wash&Wear. Curtains in James Dunlop ‘Kyoto’ in Linen. Artworks by Mirte van Kooten. The bed is dressed in blue linen in Wildflower, Bed Threads. Other bedlinen, Sheet Society. **Bottom right** MAIN ENSUITE Icon vertical towel rail in English Brass, Astra Walker. Turkish cotton towel, Adairs. **Bottom left** MAIN ENSUITE Custom mirror by Leftfield Studio. Gleeze Giada green gloss wall tiles, Academy Tiles. Vanity in Polytec Woodmatt in Florentine Walnut. Verde Alpi marble vanity top, Signorino. Basin, Caroma. Tapware, Astra Walker. Yellow object bought by client in Barcelona. Polarity terrazzo floor tiles, Fibonacci Stone.

“It was about filling the space vertically as well as horizontally.”

TIM MILTON, ARCHITECT



**ROOF TERRACE** On the rooftop, two ‘Summer Swivel’ chairs by Grazia & Co sit each side of a ‘Sequence Table 01’ in Stainless Steel by Coco Flip. Vase, owner’s existing. ‘Arizona’ pavers in Charcoal, Academy Tiles.



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THE SOURCE

*Modern pieces add buzz to traditional interiors.*



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Produced by Amanda McCourt.

1 ‘Annular’ pendant by Woud, \$1199, Mobel Design. 2 ‘Matcha’ occasional armchair in Olive, \$1399, Freedom. 3 ‘Marely’ round wool rug in white, \$649, Kave Home. 4 *Lady in Blue and Green Stripes* artwork by Camille Olsen-Ormandy, \$1500, Olsen Gallery. 5 ‘Kintore’ appliance pull in Bronze, from \$179, Lo & Co. 6 ‘Victrola’ automatic turntable and ‘Tempo’ bookshelf speakers bundle in Green, \$970, Myer. 7 Parquetry sideboard in Vintage Natural, \$7295, Coco Republic. 8 ‘Checkers’ shaggy tufted cushion, \$165, Banabae. 9 ‘Oslo’ stainless steel coffee table, from \$1179, Fleur Studios. 10 ‘Diiva’ swivel stool, from \$1100, Grazia & Co. H&G