

renovation



# Space encounter

There were problems aplenty, but design ingenuity and clever use of levels demonstrated how tiny can be transformed into tremendous

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## Sleek ways

Granite benchtops and tiled splashbacks create a touch of kitchen class (top right)

## High light

In the hallway, a large skylight with leadlighting is a feature in itself (top)

## In the swim

A skylight sheds light on the stylish marble-surrounded spa (above)

**A** long narrow block may not be your first choice when building a family home, but, with good planning and clever architecture, there can be room for all.

This was the challenge that confronted Paul Grossi, of Grossi Constructions, when approached to renovate a Carlton home on a block with a frontage only five metres wide.

"It was tricky to create a house with multiple bedrooms and living areas on such a tight block, but still make it feel reasonably spacious," he says.

Because of planning restrictions, Paul had to take into account height limitations and the necessity to maintain the original heritage-listed facade.

So, other than the facade, the

existing house was completely rebuilt.

"If you'd walked through the door when work was underway, you would have stepped on to dirt," Paul says.

The entry features a solid marble threshold and steps leading into the formal lounge, with a dome-shaped ceiling and decorative mantle surrounding the gas fireplace.

The house has been built with a modern feel, but includes traditional features, so the facade doesn't seem at odds with the rest of the building.

Because it sits almost boundary-to-boundary, Paul had to think laterally when designing to fully use the available natural light in the house.

To do this, a large curved leadlight-styled skylight was installed in the hallway, with mirrors on either side

to reflect the light that flows in. Continuing along the hallway from the formal lounge, you step down into the dining room, the first of a series of steps throughout the house that subtly define each of the living areas.

"The block has a front-to-back slope and, as you walk through, the ceiling heights are lowered and steps drop down to each new level gradually, so you aren't even aware of it," Paul says.

"It was necessary to do this so we wouldn't be exceeding the maximum limit for height at the boundaries of the building."

Conservatory-style windows have been used to provide light in the dining room, which is overlooked by the upstairs mezzanine hallway leading to the bedrooms.

The house is classically styled, with elegant touches throughout, such as stepped cornices, decorative archways, columns and corbelling.

In the formal living areas, these features have been created in white to provide contrast against the soft yellow walls.

Throughout the house, hydronic heating units have been cleverly positioned, or disguised, to minimise their visual impact, including being recessed against the surrounds of the spa upstairs, or hidden behind decorative timber panels in the living areas.

"We've used texture to add dimension to the rooms and to create features with things like the decorative columns and marbled mirrors, as well as a series of oval windows," says Paul.

Tasmanian oak floors have been polished to perfection on the lower level of the house, while the upstairs bedrooms have been carpeted for added warmth.

Grossi Constructions designed and made many of the ornamental elements, including columns and windows.





A striking feature wall with a block-work look in the dining room includes french doors leading to the study.

"We don't work so much with things that are off the rack. We have an architectural practice, so we are able to cater for complete design and construction," Paul says.

"The first thing we do is build rapport with the customer, because the job we're doing requires a lot of trust on each side.

The striking timber and black granite kitchen in the light-filled informal living area at the rear is near the dining room. With black tiled splashbacks, European stainless steel appliances and mirror-backed open glass shelving, it is as stylish as it's functional.

The adjoining family area has a recessed ceiling and built-in timber cabinetry, which houses heating units and a TV and provides display space for an assortment of photographs and books.

The room features arched windows and matching french doors opening on to the back yard.

Upstairs, the main bedroom has an ensuite with large marble-sided spa, as well as a large shower and a skylight overhead.

An oval feature window here allows the owners to view a large palm tree at the front of the house.

At the rear of the house are two more bedrooms, one with an iron plant balcony overlooking a glass-roofed and paved area which includes off-street parking.

Grossi Constructions can be contacted on 0412 307 070.

#### Cover-up

Built-in shelving includes a TV and heating units (top right)

#### Made to order

Standout features, such as this ornate column, were specially created (right)

