

# From stark to eclectic with style counselling

A sophisticated but uninviting home was transformed into a vibrant retreat for its new owners. LOUISE BAXTER reports.

When Angela and Darren Byrne moved into their contemporary North Coogee home, they knew they had a quality foundation to play with.

The original style was sophisticated but stark and didn't suit the family's fun personality and love of colour and culture.

So they enlisted the help of Lisa Ewart from Collected Interiors to turn the house from something styled up for sale into a vibrant but cosy retreat for the couple and their children.

"When they bought this

house, it was a very 'glam' look, which didn't suit their existing furniture, so I tried to incorporate things they really liked, such as a rustic Asian influence and bright colours," Ms Ewart said.

"We repainted the whole house, ripped out the gardens, brought in new furniture and used colours to match the existing, to get everything to work together."

"I tried to keep the downstairs colourful and fun, while the upstairs is more subdued as it moves into the bedrooms."

The ground floor comprises an open-plan living area, kitchen, a home theatre and two outdoor entertaining areas. Each room connects with a seamless flow but has its own distinct, measured character, for a casual zoned effect.

Flamboyant artwork hangs in the entrance alongside a timber-and-yellow hall table and is tempered by a black-and-white floor rug.

The "dark and atmospheric" theatre room is an inviting haven off the hallway, with predominantly black walls, a soft grey lounge and pops of

colour from a film noir-style print and cushions.

This energetic mix of styles culminates in the main living area. Here, whimsical accents such as an oversized painted "blackboard" wall, glass lolly jars, pastel kitchen accessories and wall decal quotes inject quirky contemporary flair.

Mr Byrne said the blackboard had been a particular hit, already used for birthday messages and a pizza challenge with the kids and guests.

The lounge area features an oversized pendant light suspended above the white leather lounge and custom-made ottoman, and hints at a retro influence with the help of surreal artwork and an Armadillo & Co rug.

"Old and new is what we love, it's our personality," Mr Byrne said.

"We already had the dining room table for 15 years and got the modern chairs to go with it. The original benches are now in the garden."

Old wooden wine barrels were also used in the courtyard instead of plant pots, to reflect their rustic, down-to-earth taste.

Upstairs, a family heirloom takes pride of place in the main bedroom's retreat area — a wooden rocking horse that was passed down from Mr Byrne's grandfather.

The rest of the main suite is elegant and restrained, which Ms Ewart created as a sanctuary for the couple to relax and unwind.

The bed is dressed with an upholstered bedhead, crisp white bed linen and a pile of



**TIP / Painting walls a dark colour adds depth and helps disguise a TV and window frames.**

- Lisa Ewart

Angela and Darren Byrne in their North Coogee home.  
Pictures: Astrid Volzke



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## STYLE FILE

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cushions, and is flanked by vintage-style bedsides and copper lamps. A dreamy print hangs overhead and a large mirror is opposite, beside a distressed chair found at a roadside pickup.

Missoni towels and greenery balance the muted ensuite.

"There are so many details and everything contrasts and complements each other," Ms Byrne said. "Everyone has been blown away; you tell them how beautiful it is but they don't realise until they come in and see it."

"Lisa has been perfect to work with. It has been really easy and fun."

Collected Interiors, 0404 063 068,  
[collectedinteriors.com.au](http://collectedinteriors.com.au).

## get the look

### LISA EWART'S TIPS FOR AN ECLECTIC CONTEMPORARY HOME

- Old rustic items add so much character to a new home. They soften and complement.
- Armadillo & Co rugs (available from Remedy in Fremantle and Leederville) are natural and affordable, giving an earthiness to a room.
- An easy and cost-effective way to change the colour of timber floors is to stain them darker for a rich result.
- Colour can be added through cushions, artwork, flowers and greenery or even by painting two end dining chairs a different colour.

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