

Side-sizing

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Another world



A European sensibility pervades this Melbourne home, with a roster of sumptuous pieces collected over time and assembled with a deft hand by *Christian Lyon*.

Photographs **ANSON SMART** Words **CARLI PHILIPS**

This page A pair of 18k gold-plated Knoll 'Platner' chairs are paired with an antique ormalu table with a marble top and decorative base. 'Plane' chandelier by Tom Dixon hangs above; in the hallway, a series of original artist proof serigraph prints by Victor Vasarely, 'Whistle' lamp in polished brass by Laurie Beckerman in the foreground. Opposite page Marion Borgelt's Luna Tango No 3 is reflected in a handcrafted shagreen and bronze mirror from Editeur. Vintage Spanish gilded wrought-iron console with marble top from Editeur holds a black glazed vase by Les Dalo and porcelain candleholders by Porcelain Bear, all from Editeur.



This page, clockwise from top left Three mirrored works by Christophe Gaignon, and a 'Columbian' sofa by Christian Lyon for Editeur, upholstered in Rubelli 'Lampas'. Serigraph prints by Victor Vasarely. A gold tea wallpaper has been custom antiqued by de Gournay. A Christian Lyon-designed 'Salon' sofa is upholstered in Jim Thompson antique gold silk velvet. 'Saucer' armchair by Christian Lyon upholstered in Dominique Kieffer velvet. Collection of 1960s French Poterie d'Accolay on the wall. Vintage Shanghai art deco rug from Editeur. Opposite page Liquid Light 70 Degrees by Marion Borgelt on the far wall.

Well, what did you expect?" asks Perth designer Christian Lyon in reference to his latest residential project deep in the quiet, leafy streets of Melbourne's South Yarra. Truly, from the shuttered, ivy-covered brick facade, assumptions gear towards a farmhouse-style maison not dissimilar to one you might find in the French countryside. Pastoral misconceptions aside, this is more Milan than Melbourne, a sophisticated residence with layer upon layer of period pieces and modern art arranged over three vastly different, yet masterfully cohesive levels.

With an aversion to cookie-cutter design and a magpie's eye for provenance, it's a defiantly inimitable arrangement that saw Christian dig deep within his network of international antique dealers and pull vintage items from his retail gallery, Editeur. It's here that he rediscovered a chinoiserie-style drinks cabinet purchased more than a decade ago but kept in storage, waiting patiently for the right client. "I didn't want anything gimmicky, 'of the moment' or transient. I wanted something that would last," he says of the refurbishment and furniture.

Downscaling from a large property nearby, the homeowner carried across only a single mirror in the move, yet it was of utmost importance that nothing feel contrived. "Everything has its own story. I wanted to curate a collection that seemed as if it had been gathered and edited over generations, much like you see in the significant houses and apartments of Europe," says Christian. "Contemporary artworks and custom furniture served as a counterpoint, ensuring that the look was young and relevant to the owner and her family." It was a collaborative process made faster and easier by their existing relationship. "I'm her brother from another mother," he laughs. "There was an enormous amount unsaid because we've known one other for such a long time and have an innate, mutual understanding."





These pages Christian Lyon designed the 'Columbian' swivel armchairs for the living room. Vintage Italian travertine coffee tables from Editeur. Antique chinoiserie drinks cabinet sourced in San Francisco holds Peter D. Cole sculptures, *India Song (Yellow)* and *(Blue)*, *Love of Diagrams* by Marita Fraser from Moore Contemporary hangs above the fireplace. French mid-century wool tapestry by Alain Hieronimus from Editeur.



This page, clockwise from top left A Christopher Boots 'Nepenthes' chandelier hangs above the dining table. In the kitchen is custom Flos track lighting from Euro luce. The existing floor tiles were retained. A vintage Spanish gilded wrought-iron console and handcrafted shagreen and bronze mirror from Editeur in the entrance. Porcelain Bear table in marble and porcelain with Tom Dixon 'Slab' chairs. Opposite page Christian Lyon for Matsuoka 'Opera' table and custom-designed swivel chairs in quilted velvet with brass base. Vintage Paul Evans 'Cityscape' series credenza from London. Belgian wall sculpture in aluminium by Marc D'Haenens.



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The ground floor is mapped with large formal dining and living spaces separated by full-length, heavy metallic-mustard velvet curtains that accentuate the high ceilings. It was underfoot, though, that informed the colour palette, with the original washed-out Mediterranean-style tiles and stone flooring inspiring the collection of rugs custom made in conjunction with New York's Fort Street Studio. The most dramatic of these – and the smallest – is a blood-red version lining the floor of an opulent nook off the foyer, hiding a gold wunderkammer room arranged with highly collectable 1960s handmade vases from Accolay's Gauloise series. "Everything had to be beautiful. When you're doing an interior you can't ignore anything. You need contact and connection with every single piece – that's what makes it personal. If you just put generic elements in you lose the personality and appropriateness to the residents."

At the rear is a commercial kitchen, inherited and untouched from the previous owners who were chefs, with a table by local creatives Porcelain Bear and chairs by Tom Dixon. Steel-framed windows lined with breezy curtains open onto the deck and a surprisingly large pool. It's here that urbanity hits, with an exposed brick wall and very tight-fitting neighbours. An Escheresque staircase off the meals area leads to the basement utilities and a self-contained guest wing on the first floor. "There's no formal or casual, it's just about transitioning," says Christian of the blueprint.

Private spaces are accessible by a second, wrought-iron staircase near the front entryway. In the master wing, shiplap-style pitched roofing, dark parquet and grungy radiators contrast with elegant new additions. Plump quilted velvets, damasks, satens and chenilles in blush, nude and mauve hues have been folded in, creating a "feeling of nurturing, calm and wrapped containment", says Christian. At the risk of overkill 'girly-girly', the palette was amplified to 'bold-feminine' with unexpected details such as a 1970s stainless-steel dressing screen and fleshy, opalescent high-gloss joinery. "I love that inside it's so gentle and rich, but then you look outside and it's inner city. This house is almost a little fantasy, like stepping into another world." ■

For more go to editeur.com.au; christianlyondesign.com.



This page A Philippe Starck 'Caadre' mirror for FIAM hangs above a 'Palm Springs' lounge chair by Christian Lyon. Vintage Italian chrome floor lamp. Behruz rug. Opposite page, clockwise from top left 'Prometheus 1+1' pendant lights by Christopher Boots hang above a custom-designed bed in Dedar velvet from South Pacific Fabrics. Vintage Murano glass lamps with silk shades from Editeur. Cashmere rug from Raby Cosgrove. French 19th-century polychrome terracotta corbel holds a Tom Dixon 'Bash' vessel. Foliage by Steven Gabriel Maccora. Artwork is *Blue Highway* by Helen Smith from Art Collective WA.

SPEED READ

» Designer Christian Lyon was called on to decorate this South Yarra home for an owner who was downsizing from a nearby property and kept only one mirror in the move. » Christian sourced items from near and far, including his own retail gallery, Editeur, a repository of all manner of sophisticated and eclectic pieces. » Everything was chosen to fit a look that is 'more Milan than Melbourne' with art and furniture that seem to have been collected over generations. » Contemporary and custom pieces are a counterpoint to the more sumptuous accoutrements, such as velvet curtains, plush custom rugs and beautiful, high-end collectables.