

INSPIRED INTERIORS



BRIEF

Design an interior that looks fantastic but is also highly practical



IN ANNA'S WORDS

In today's post-GFC market, traditional notions of luxury are being replaced by a more fiscally responsible ideal: that of Practical Luxury. This style looks fantastic, performs well, but also generates a positive return on design and decorating investments. Practical Luxury is often challenged to innovate, the results of which can be inspiring.

A recently completed project in inner-city Brisbane has the mark of Practical Luxury all over it, and the clients could not

be happier, as one said: "The home is stunning, it performs well. We never imagined such an amazing result could be achieved with such a modest budget!"

The success of the project can be attributed to two factors: innovative layouts and well-researched material choices. Innovative layouts have added interest and flexibility to the interior spaces, while savings made through material selections could be applied directly to investments in high-quality appliances and selected finishes.

The resulting spaces are robust, flexible, and provide a luxurious escape from the outside world. The kitchen, which caters for the family of four as easily as for a party of 40, looks out over the backyard pool. The built-in kitchen nook is a favourite place for everyday meals, homework and children's projects. The home office that adjoins the kitchen serves as the management hub of the home, yet, because of its proximity to the kitchen, can double as a preparation area for a catering crew. The inclusion of a scullery ensures that the open-plan space is always presentable.

The colour palette and material choices are timeless, low maintenance, and provide a welcome escape from the ubiquitous white-on-white kitchens of the last decade. "We thought we really wanted Carrara marble benchtops," the owner relates. "Fortunately, with Anna's advice, we did some experiments with red wine and balsamic vinegar, and opted for a CaesarStone benchtop instead.

The marble would have been tarnished within a week of installation in our kitchen."

Although the marble surface was found to be too porous for the benchtops, the much-loved material was incorporated into a vertical feature panel on the face of the kitchen island.

One of the most satisfying outcomes of working on this project was the innovation that was necessitated by the brief of Practical Luxury.

In a fascinating behind-the-scenes glimpse of how professional designers work, we asked interior designers Anna Harrison, Angela Morrison and Sue Lawler to tell us about a recent project and explain how they brought it all together.