



- episode 3 -
design tips

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dining room

DEFINE THE SPACE

Open plan dining areas can often become a little lost; you can avoid this by adding a rug under your table, which adds the effect of zoning in your space. Make sure the rug is the right size (generally 50-60cm wider than the table on all sides), and that the dining chairs sit nicely on the rug.



CHOOSE YOUR DINING TABLE

When choosing your dining table, make sure you consider the width. There is nothing worse than having a table that cannot accommodate glassware, plates and platters in the middle, especially if the dining area is in an open plan.



CONTRAST AND COMPLEMENT

The dining area is the perfect space for using contrasting but complementary materials. A timber dining table can be greatly enhanced by the addition of a luxury fabric dining chair, such as leather or velvet. Tabletop selections such as linen napkins and table runners bring a rustic or provincial feel when paired with solid timber. To finish the look, why not experiment with coloured glassware and/or plates? Dressing the table really is a great opportunity to showcase your artistic flair and make a statement in your home.



STATEMENT LIGHTING

We love a good statement pendant in any room of the house but none require more careful selection and placement than that which is hung above the dining table. The amount of light, size and height all come into play and it's a selection that can make or break the ambiance of your dinner party (but no pressure). Our top tip is to choose something that provides enough light to be able to play a board game with the family under but not so bright that you would want to thread a needle under. The lighting should be adequate but have a softness about it. Down lights or wall sconces in the same room (but on a separate switch) give even greater control of the light in the room.



CONSIDER A CENTREPIECE

Having a centrepiece on the dining room table draws the eye to the visual centre of the room and gives the space a sense of cohesion and refinement. Centrepieces don't have to be lavish to achieve the wow factor. Interior designers love displaying bowls of green apples or a simple bouquet of hydrangeas. Timeless and elegant, without costing the earth.





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kitchen

ORIENTATION & FLOW

Designing a kitchen can be quite daunting as there is so much to consider! Orientation and flow should be high on your layout planning hierarchy. Make sure that the kitchen makes use of natural light, and all the key areas link up. For instance, make sure that the sink is close to the dishwasher, and the fridge is near the food preparation bench. Also consider having the right amount of available space around key areas such as the fridge and sink, there is nothing worse than having to side step around these busy areas.



CONTRAST MATERIALS

With so many hard surfaces in the kitchen, look at ways to add a variety of materials so that the space is not one dimensional. Consider mixing natural stone and glass to soften the look of dark cabinetry, or the ever-winning combination of marble and timber.



MAXIMISE STORAGE SPACE

Make as much use of the available space in your kitchen as possible! Efficient storage will reduce clutter and mess, allowing for an easy-to-use space. Where possible, use overhead cabinets to store the items that you might not need everyday, which still need a home. Consider using deep drawers to store cooking pots and crockery as this can often be a more functional way to store items.



SELECTING BENCHTOPS AND CABINETS

There are a huge range of cabinetry and benchtop options available with price points to suit any budget. Take the time to research the properties, maintenance and cost of the materials you are looking to use in your kitchen. Some of the more recent developments in cabinetry finishes include finger proof resistant – perfect for the family home.



DON'T FORGET YOUR APPLIANCES

Appliances can take up a significant amount of your renovation budget, so make sure you do your due diligence and shop around. You also need to ensure that an adequate amount of your budget is dedicated to the appliances as a kitchen without an oven or a gas cooker is simply just a storage space. If you need to buy a few appliances, then it's a good idea to enquire about package deals and discounts that may be available. We recommend viewing appliances in person and where possible even having a demonstration on how to properly use them.



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living room

LIVING ROOM LAYOUT



Living rooms are often the gathering space of the house, so make sure the furniture is arranged in a way that promotes conversation and interaction. Depending on the area, this may mean arranging seating to face each other. If this is not possible, consider having items such as ottomans, which can be moved to accommodate a social setting.

TV TIME



Most main living areas also incorporate television viewing as well. When designing your space, consider the TV and its placement. For instance, make sure it is the right size for the space, it sits at the right height, and correlates with the seating in the area.

THE RIGHT SOFA



The right sofa is crucial to the overall functionality of the lounge area. Invest some time researching what shape is going to best utilise the space, and consider the right height (low couches are often hard to get in and out of). There are many materials on the market, so choose a fabric that is going to suit your lifestyle.



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backyard



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BUDGET FOR LANDSCAPING



A beautiful home renovation is not complete without suitable attention (and finances) dedicated towards your outdoor space. A lacklustre backyard brings down both the enjoyment factor and value of a home. The best renovations treat the exterior as an extension of the interior, maximising views of the outdoors from the indoors and creating dedicated zones for entertaining, play, and even vegie patches. Be sure to allocate a suitable amount of the budget to this space or you run the risk of your home being left unfinished.

BECOME A GREEN THUMB



When designing your outdoor area, consider the way in which you will use it. Families with dogs use their outdoor spaces differently to professional couples and retirees and need open spaces and grass as opposed to Japanese inspired water features. Trees, plants and shrubs can also be expensive and if you are not a gardener (or intending to hire one) you need to select easy care plants, or you risk wasting significant amounts of money. Choose plants, shrubs and trees that will suit your lifestyle and gardening expertise, your climate, and provide necessary shade (but not grow to unmanageable heights).

LIGHTING FOR OUTDOOR LIVING



Something often overlooked but essential for Australian outdoor living is suitable lighting for your exterior. Whether it's a friendly welcome light at the front porch, solar lit pathways to guide you from the front gate to the front door, or a well-lit outdoor entertaining area, it is an essential component of a successful landscape design. The right lighting can create ambience, provide security and add wow factor to your home.

ENCLOSE THE SPACE



Your backyard will feel more like your own little piece of paradise if you enclose it. Use clever fences, lattice and screening options to block out the view of neighbouring yards (and their view of yours). Not all structures need to be fencing, you could also use taller plants like bamboo for a softer, more aesthetically pleasing look.

CHOOSE FURNITURE CAREFULLY



Your outdoor furniture needs to be selected as carefully as your indoor furniture. Space, proportion and even the plants in your outdoor space should influence your decision. Large wooden outdoor settings can make small courtyards look smaller. Consider minimalist, slimline or aluminium settings in these spaces. Even built in bench seats atop a retaining wall can be effective to maximise smaller spaces. Wrought iron and French provincial style furniture look perfect amidst a garden filled with lavender, lawn and country style plantings. However, amidst a sea of screening Bamboo, something more contemporary will complete the look.

