

INNER CITY CALM



When two empty-nesters decided to move to an inner city apartment, family and friends were not convinced. But *Stephen Crafti* reports that *Stephen Jolson's* makeover of this converted commercial space with fabulous views has turned a sow's ear into a silk purse.

scenario

domain apartment — vic, australia

JOLSON ARCHITECTURE

Dusha Lefkovits and her husband, Robert, left their family home in East Hawthorn, Melbourne, for an apartment on the edge of town. Thirteen years ago, the move was considered unusual by family and friends. However, their children had grown up and they were ready to make a change.

The couple found what they were looking for in what was formerly BP House. Originally designed by Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong & Orton in the early 1960s, the high-rise office block was transformed into apartments in the early 1990s. Overlooking the Shrine of Remembrance and the Botanical Gardens, the apartment enjoys panoramic views of the city skyline in one direction and Albert Park Lake in the other. “Robert just stood on the terrace and said ‘where else would you find views like this?’” recalls Dusha.

But if the views were impressive, the interior fit-out was less so. “There were some great ideas. But some of the spaces were a little awkward, and some just weren’t fully utilised,” says architect Stephen Jolson, who was commissioned to rework the apartment.

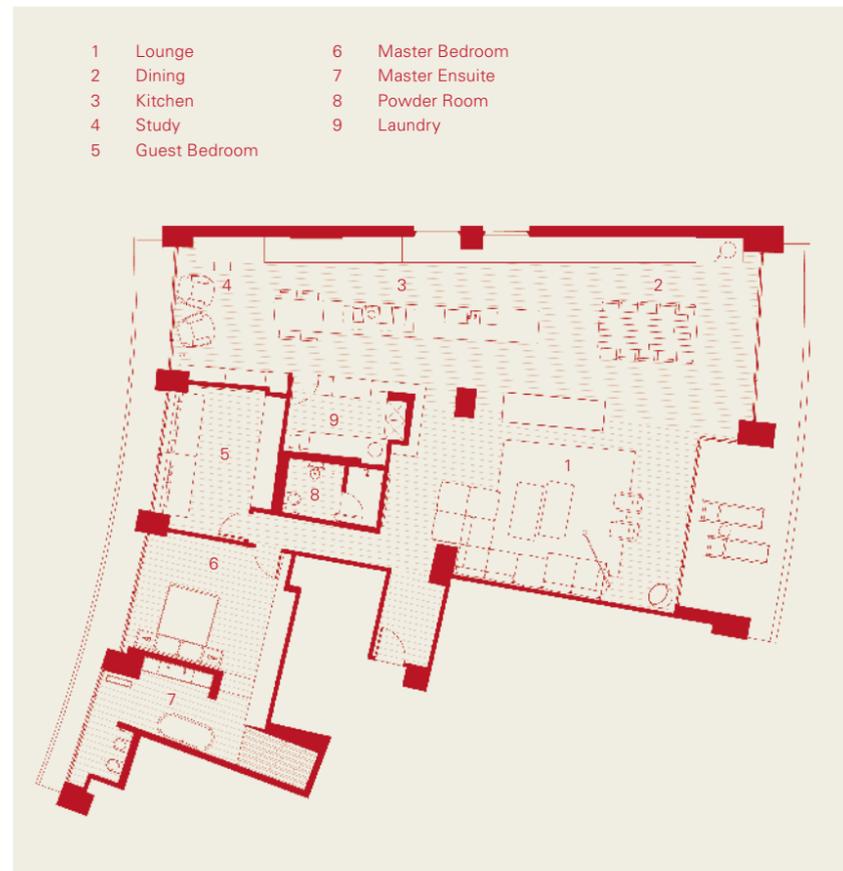
First, two circular partition-like walls were removed and the elevated formal lounge was realigned to form part of one continuous level. Once this had happened, the apartment presented itself as a blank canvas. “We had seen Stephen’s work in a number of magazines,” recalls Dusha. “By the time we rang him, we had quite a file on him. I was drawn to his clean lines. It’s pared back, but you can see there’s rigour with each decision.”

The brief to Jolson was initially a ‘white on white’ composition. “I wear black all the time,” says Dusha. “I thought a completely tonal palette would be appropriate. I think I’d already earmarked white furniture in magazines.” But while Jolson could appreciate where Dusha was coming from, he was also mindful of creating depth and texture.

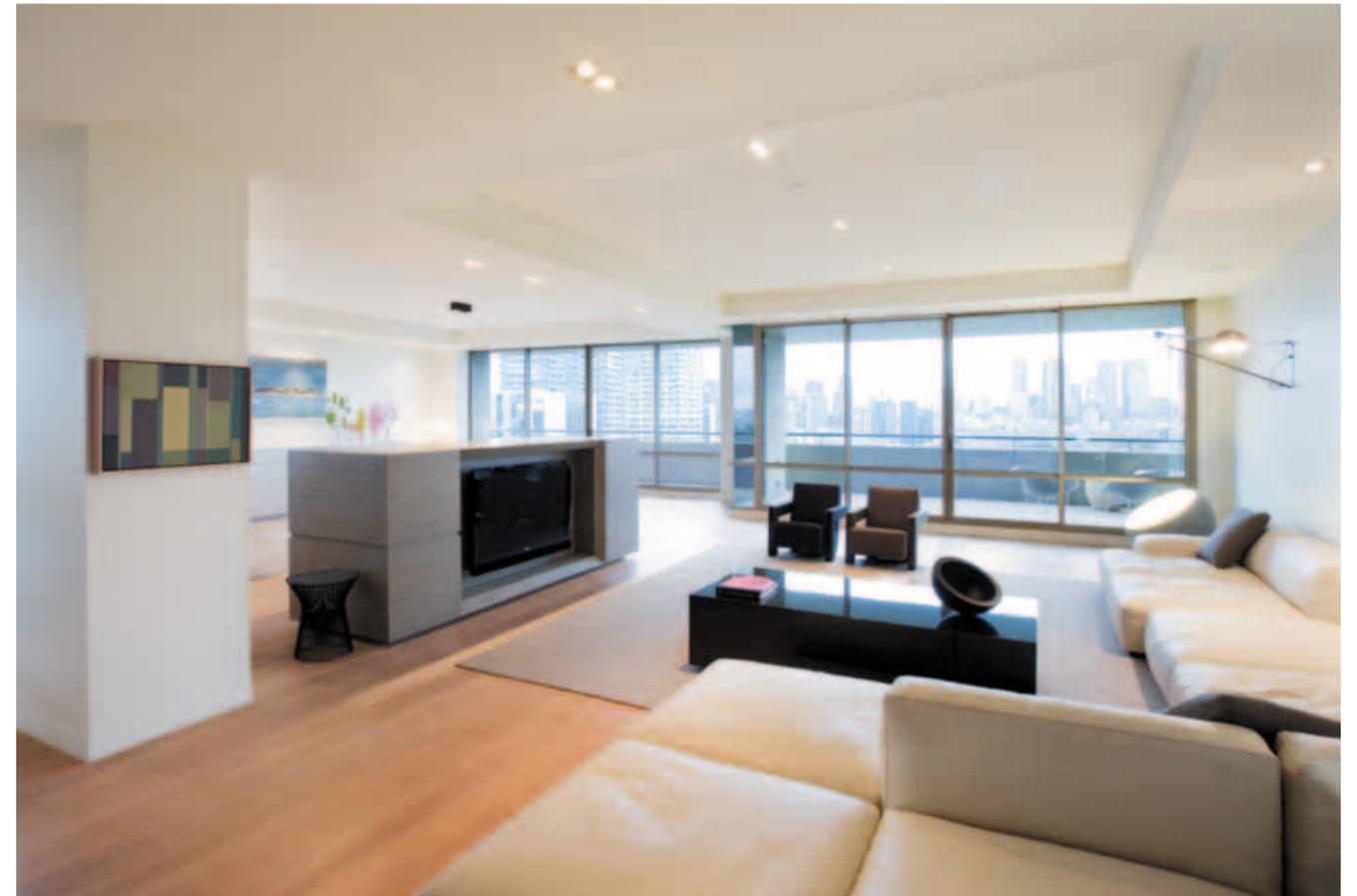
Pivotal to the final design is a seven-metre-long travertine island bench in the kitchen. Complete with integrated travertine sink, this extruded block appears monumental. Framed by 2-pac satin polyurethane joinery and Corian benchtops, the arrangement allows unimpeded views over the living area and beyond. “We saw the kitchen bench as a piece of sculpture, but highly functional,” says Jolson. The rangehood over the bench is just as considered, with a crisp rectangular form. To ensure the kitchen remains uncluttered, there’s a walk-in pantry and appliance cupboards, while a spacious laundry is also concealed.

The same level of detail appears throughout the apartment. European Oak flooring, used throughout the entire apartment, has been acid-washed and brushed. And in the dining area there’s an Oak table, also designed

The *elevated* formal lounge was *realigned* to form part of one *continuous* level throughout the apartment.



02



03



01 The dining area features a sculpture by Peter D. Cole and Cassina Cab chairs from Corporate Culture.
02 Floor plan showing the fan-like arrangement.
03 The living areas enjoy unimpeded views of the city, also featuring Cassina Utrecht chairs from Corporate Culture and 265 wall lights by Flos from Euroluce.
04 The kitchen’s central island bench creates a sculptural element in the open-plan space.

04

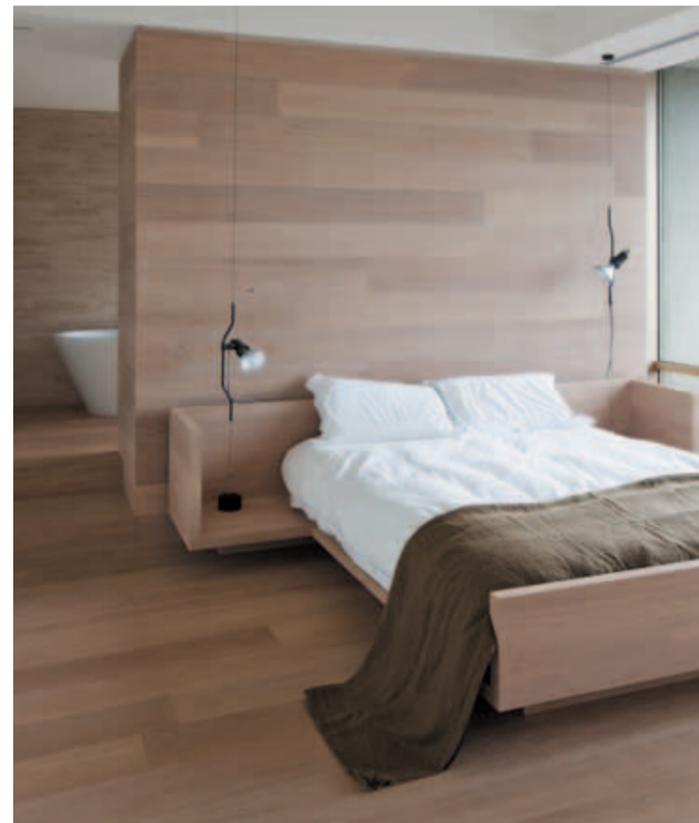
scenario

domain apartment — vic, australia

JOLSON ARCHITECTURE



One of the client's requests was for a library that *integrated* to the living spaces.



06

by Jolson. “We’ve designed the table as though it was carved out from the floor,” says Jolson, pointing out the beautifully matched lines between floor and table.

To demarcate the kitchen and dining areas from the formal lounge, Jolson designed a buffet, made from fumed Oak. On the dining side, doors open to reveal shelves for wine storage and crockery. On the other side of the unit is a niche for the television set, together with cupboards for storage. Jolson even clad one of the balcony walls with a mirror to magnify the city aspect from the dining table.

One of Robert’s requests was for a library that integrated into the living spaces rather than relegated to an unseen corner of the apartment. As a result, shelving wraps around the formal living area, the entrance, as well as the kitchen. And for ease of reach, a modular leather lounge extends from the living room to the library. For the furniture, subtle hues of browns through to soft greens were selected, from Bellini dining chairs to Rietveld arm chairs in the lounge. “Many of these colours were inspired by looking over to the Botanical Gardens,” says Jolson.

Eliminating the curved partitions in the apartment allows a Dale Frank painting in

the entrance can be enjoyed from numerous vantage points, along with Peter D. Cole’s sculpture, ‘Maple Leaves’. There are also works by John Firth-Smith and Jennifer Goodman.

The apartment includes two bedrooms, with a powder room for guests. Originally, the plan was to renovate the kitchen and living areas, leaving the bedroom to be considered as ‘Stage Two’. “But when we started to get quotes,” recalls Dusha, “it would have been more expensive and disruptive to put off the inevitable.”

Entering the main bedroom confirms the decision to act holistically. Featuring an elevated ensuite bathroom with Oak floors, a free-standing bath and travertine walls, it exudes a sense of tranquility. What was once a narrow terrace has been lined with white stones to create the effect of a river bed.

Now, Dusha and Robert couldn’t contemplate living anywhere else. “The thing we notice most is the calmness of the space, reflects Dusha. “It’s understated, but Stephen has considered everything to the nth degree.”

The Albert Road Apartment won two awards at the 2010 Australian Timber Design Awards: Best Interior Fit-Out (Residential) and Best Use of Timber Flooring.

04
Part of the brief was designing a library that was integral to the living areas. Also featuring a Knoll Platner stool from dedece.

05
The main bedroom is rich in timber detailing, from the bed to the walls and floors.

ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN
Jolson Architecture
PROJECT TEAM
Stephen Jolson
Mat Wright
Josh Saunders
BUILDER
Visioneer Builders
JOINER
A & C Custom Built
MECHANICAL CONSULTANT
David Couper & Associates
FIRE CONSULTANT
Wormald

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FURNITURE
Coffee table Dama by Poliform.
FINISHES
Kitchen bench Corian. Mirrors Viridian Glass. Paint finish China White by Dulux. Bulletin

board in study by Forbo from Duraloid. Credenza in E veneer Saltwood from Elton Group. Travertine to Kitchen and Master Ensuite Classico slabs and mosaic in Bathroom from Signorino Tile Gallery.

LIGHTING
Integrated lighting system Clipsal.

FIXTURE/EQUIPMENT
Hot water Rheem. Wall mixer Zuchetti Spin from Streamline Products. WC and bidet Catalano soft-close toilet from Rogerseller. Bath Kaldewai Classic Duo, available from Bathe. Wall basin Alape, available from Reece. Sink mixer Oxygene from Abey. Oven, microwave and fridge and freezer from Miele. Bar fridge from Liebherr. Rangehood Casair. Kitchen storage Häfele. Cooktop De Dietrich. Music room manager Hills Home.

in focus

domain apartment — vic, australia

01. Dale Frank artworks

Chosen for their artistic merit and connection with the greens of the Royal Botanic Gardens viewed from the northern terrace.

02. Utrecht chairs These have a sculptural quality and are comfortable with an intimate detail in the blanket stitch. Again, the colour was selected to reflect the shades in the park landscape.

03. Peter D. Cole sculpture

A work which is based upon the Japanese Maple. It is a whimsical addition to the space.

04. 265 Light This is a flexible reading lamp option for the living area. It also provides a third dimension above the floor level which gives the living area an interesting scale.

05. Mex low modular sofa

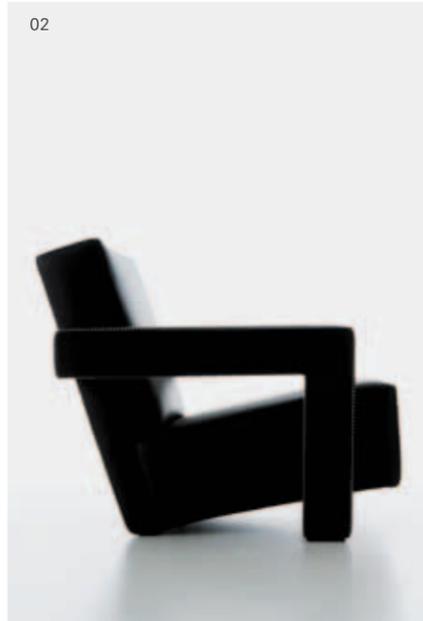
Although it can be raised, it was chosen because it adds volume to the apartment which has restricted ceiling height.

06. Cab chair Chosen for comfort, the lineal form of this Bellini classic also relates to the lineal form of the timber dining table. Also, the elevation of the Cab chair is equally beautiful from the rear and side.



The Flos 265 wall lamp (image 04) was designed in 1973 by Paolo Rizzatto. Born in 1941 in Milan, Italy, he undertook a degree in Architecture in 1965 at the Politecnico di Milano. In 1978 he founded Luceplan together with Riccardo Sarfatti, and he has since designed for Arteluce, Artemide, Luceplan, Alias, Cassina, Nemo, Molteni, Knoll, Kartell, Philips, Montina, Thonet and Guzzini. Many of Rizzatto's works are included in permanent collections of various museums including Wave Hill Museum Centre in New York, Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. As well, he has been awarded numerous prestigious international design prizes. Still based in Milan, Rizzatto now works freelance in the fields of architecture, design and interior design and continues to design lighting.

JOLSON ARCHITECTURE



01
Dale Frank
artworks available from Anna Schwartz Gallery annaschwartzgallery.com.au

02
Utrecht armchair designed by **Gerrit Thomas Rietveld** for Cassina Available from Corporate Culture corporateculture.com.au

03
Peter D. Cole sculpture from John Buckley Gallery johnbuckleygallery.com

04
265 wall light designed by **Paolo Rizzatto** for Flos Available from Euroluce, euroluce.com.au

05
Mex low modular sofa designed by **Piero Lissoni** for Cassina cassina.it Available from Corporate Culture corporateculture.com.au

06
Cab chair designed by **Mario Bellini** for Cassina cassina.it Available from Corporate Culture corporateculture.com.au