

A photograph of a modern, single-story house with a white facade and large glass windows. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool with a glass safety fence, a concrete deck, and a wooden pergola. The house is surrounded by lush greenery and a clear blue sky with light clouds. The overall aesthetic is clean, minimalist, and contemporary.

Magnificent Modern

Text / Karine Monié *Images /* Sharyn Cairns

Once dark and cramped, this original 1964 Harry Ernest-designed modernist abode has been carefully transformed by Melbourne-based studio Mim Design into a bright, welcoming home for a busy young Australian family. The new owners immediately saw great potential in reviving the single-storey property, located in the leafy suburb of Caulfield North. 'It had amazing bones and we knew something incredible could be done with it,' recalls the homeowner. 'It just needed someone with the ability to bring that vision to life.'

For Mim Design, that vision involved reinstating the 500-square-metre house to its former glory while also enhancing a contemporary family's lifestyle with room for entertaining, privacy and space for the family's two young sons' books and toys. 'The owners wanted to work with a designer who'd fall in love with their home and embrace it as they had, highlighting its features and beautiful characteristics,' says Mim Design principal Miriam Fanning. 'Houses like this are absolute treasures — I've always loved the timeless beauty of mid-century architecture. Before starting to work on this project, I went on a pilgrimage to Palm Springs and realised that the simplicity of this type of home is what makes them great. I wanted to reflect a sense of ease in this property.'

All the internal floor plans were reconfigured to open and connect the spaces. The kitchen, dining room and living area came together to create a central hub for the family, which now benefits from soft, natural light thanks to new clerestory windows that open out to the garden and pool area. 'The abundance of natural light changes the home's dynamic, making rooms more inviting while highlighting features such

as the views and artworks, or aspects like panelling and joinery,' says Fanning.

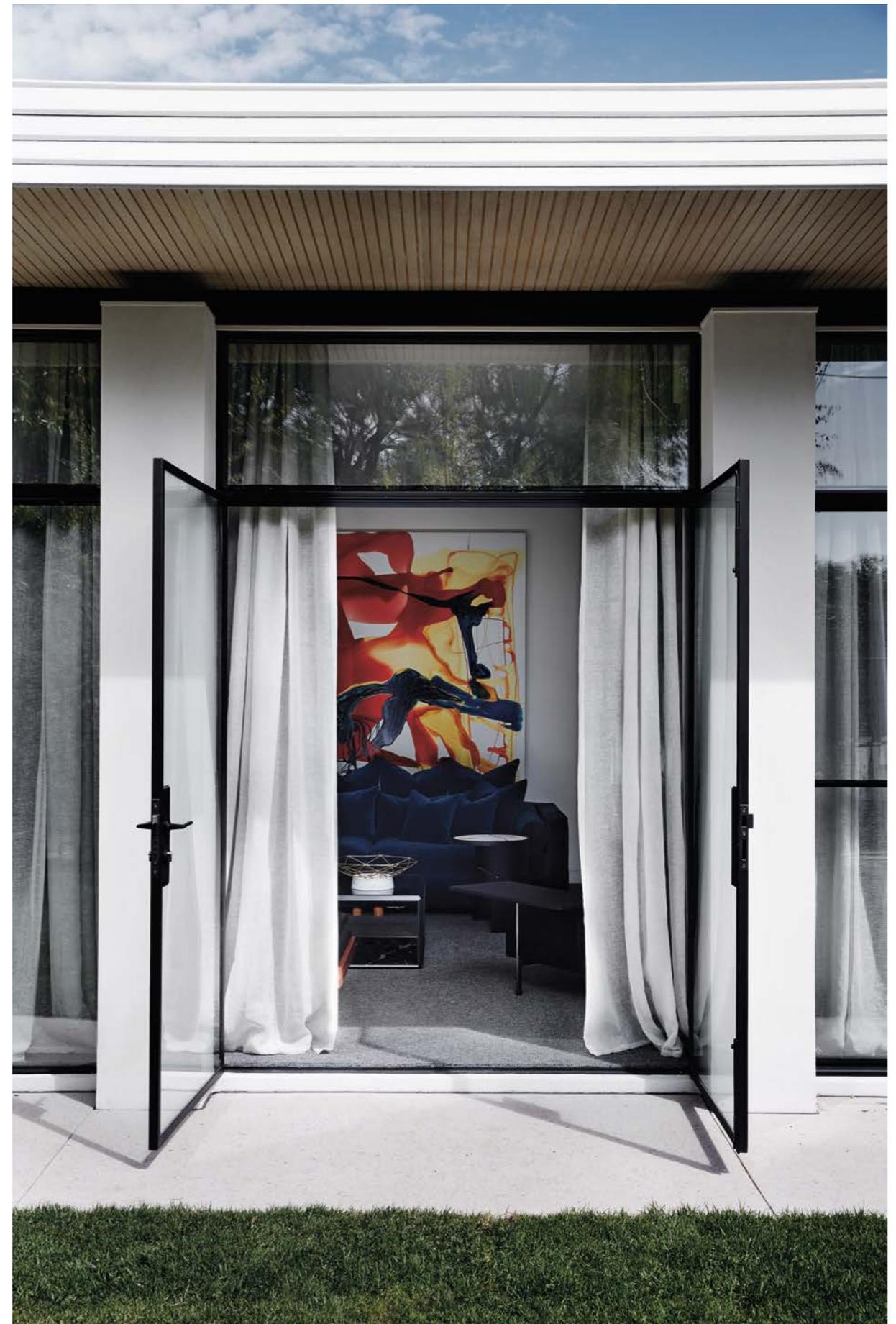
With the help of local specialised builder Project Friday, several of the more intricate original architectural features that pay homage to the mid-century era were restored, including eaves, doors and a geometric gateway entry. The joinery is of a deep walnut veneer, with mid-century style fixtures being added throughout and small white mosaic tiles lining the backyard swimming pool. Some character details such as the paved travertine floors were painstakingly recreated by skilled craftspeople, as was an original pendant light in the dining room. A former bar and second living area was transformed into a peaceful master suite overlooking the garden, with a private en-suite and walk-in wardrobe.

Throughout the house, the new bright and soft palette creates an airy atmosphere, where artworks from the owners' collection add pops of colour. Works by Zhong Chen, Dale Frank, Howard Arkley and Robert Klippel are but a few of the most striking pieces on display. The blackened steel framing and the dark grey carpet in the living room are the only remaining hints of the home's sombre past. Natural materials also play a part in shaping the cosy, modern dwelling, adorned with stone benchtops, wool carpets, natural white and muted grey ribbed cabinetry details, and poured concrete.

'This home is modernist, functional and curated,' says Fanning. 'It only needed love and care to bring it back to being a modern design statement that's liveable and beautiful, and at the same time to acknowledge its original architecture.'

Previous page: Designed by Harry Ernest in 1964, this classic mid-century home in a Melbourne suburb is a showpiece of modernist architecture

This page: In reinstating the home to its former glory, Mim Design masterfully incorporated punchy colours to counterbalance the more sombre structural elements of its original structure, such as the blackened steel framing





Mim Design reorganised the home with keen spatial awareness, creating functional spaces that can easily transition for myriad uses



Rooms that were previously closed off have become pass-throughs, connecting the space, while the open-plan kitchen is now flooded with natural light throughout the day





Original floor plans were reconfigured to suit the needs of a busy young family



While giving the home a brighter and more welcoming feel, Mim Design also retained features of its modernist roots





The former bar and second living area are now the master suite with a walk-in wardrobe and en-suite bathroom. The pixelated artwork adds a playful touch



With a light grey natural stone throughout, the luxurious master bathroom offers privacy and tranquillity in a retreat-like atmosphere