

BEFORE + AFTER



# SEA CHANGE

A DATED PROPERTY IS TRANSFORMED INTO A FAMILY'S FOREVER HOME WITH A FRESH BLACK AND WHITE PALETTE

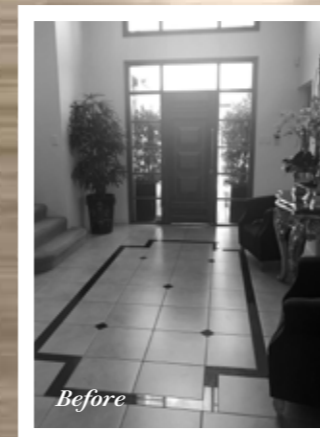
Words KYLIE JACKES Photography JOHN DOWNS

**W**hen Emma and David purchased their Gold Coast home sight unseen in 2015, it took a leap of faith. “We were living in Melbourne at the time and looking for a new base where we’d raise a family,” says Emma.

“This place ticked the key boxes as it was close to family support, had a fantastic canal-front location and we knew it had been solidly built.”

Although already dated when they bought it, they didn’t race to renovate the 2000s build. Instead, the couple were busy raising their two daughters and considering how to eventually redesign the house to create their forever home. To devise a new look and feel, they enlisted family friend and interior designer Lynda MacDonald. “Even though the house was large, it was filled with small poky rooms, so our brief was to open it up and introduce a fresh, modern palette,” says Emma.

*This page: Glossy timber, a tired carpet stairwell and old floor tiles date-stamped the home from the moment you stepped through the front door. Key changes to the entry set the tone for the new look beyond. A sleek black-framed front door and windows instantly modernised the zone, as did beautiful engineered timber floorboards. **Opposite:** Originally a long bedroom that wasn’t utilised, the space was converted into an upstairs retreat with an open-plan office area fitted out with custom cabinetry in Laminex Oyster Grey. The desk and office chair were sourced from Coco Republic. >*



## Beautiful MAKEOVERS



### *The makeover*

During the renovation, the family moved in with David's mum. "It was meant to be a nine-month project, but took closer to 12 due to building and material delays," says Emma. Key to the improved layout was opening up the floor plan, which involved removing a significant number of lower-level walls. This in turn necessitated new concrete footings. While this pushed out the budget and timeframe, it also completely transformed the functionality of the home, enhancing connectivity, brightening up zones and helping draw in stunning waterfront views.

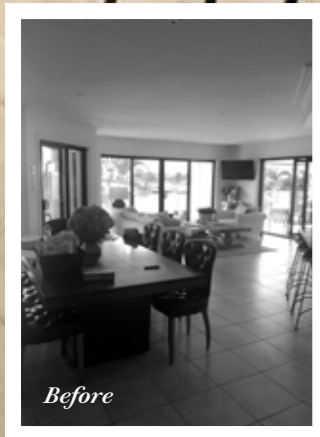
Expertly weaving new and existing furnishings into the enhanced spaces, Lynda balanced the black and white palette with warming timber, luxe marble, brushed brass and elegant lighting. The result is a home that feels entirely new. "We love how it came together," reflects Emma. "Since the renovation, we eat outside most nights, enjoy the pool and the views so much more and feel so relaxed at home. It's like a resort."

### *Best advice*

Not everything you see on social media is realistic. "So often throughout the renovation I'd show our builder ideas I'd seen on Pinterest and he'd say, 'Not all photos on Pinterest are achievable,'" reveals Emma. "Things I saw and wanted to do, I came to realise were not possible either due to cost, layout or logistics. You can't take an idea in isolation and expect it will work in your scenario."



*Belonging to a bygone era, the former kitchen felt enclosed with its wraparound high-low peninsula bench and heavy bulkheads. The solution was to open up the space, add a deep island bench and create symmetry with twin timber doors, one leading to the butler's pantry and the other to the laundry. Bi-fold kitchen windows became a large strut window, creating a connection with the alfresco area and an easy way to courier food outside. Now the hub of the busy household, the kitchen grounds the home's black and white palette, tempered with warm Tasmanian oak veneer and a trio of 'Eddie' handblown brass pendants from Coco Republic. A Designer Boys print adds colour above a Cafe Lighting & Living marble-topped console. >*



ACTUAL PAINT COLOUR MAY VARY ON APPLICATION

**Top left:** Shaker-style cabinetry, accented with knobs from *Kethy*, introduces a modern farmhouse feel in the butler's pantry, where a second sink and abundant storage space makes a wonderful prep zone. **Top right:** Originally a hallway, this zone was opened up to create a wine cabinet - one of David's bucket list items. The couple worked with Caesar Wine Cellars to fit out the purpose-built space with blackbutt shelving and black-framed glass. **Bottom left:** Wall panelling, finished in *Taubmans Cotton Ball*, adds grandeur to the entrance, complete with a *Cafe Lighting & Living* armchair and console table, plus *Pottery Barn* lamps. **Bottom right:** *Super White Dolomite* infuses the benchtops with natural patterning, complemented with classic 'Artisan Snow' splashback tiles from *DIY Tiles*. Counter stools from *Coco Republic* turn the island into an informal meals zone. **Opposite:** The dining area, furnished with an eye-catching table and chairs from *Coco Republic*, now enjoys water views thanks to new stacking doors. >

## Beautiful MAKEOVERS

Previously three separate sitting areas, Lynda removed multiple internal walls to completely open up the downstairs space, where a single living room now links to the kitchen and dining area. "The original rooms felt so poky and we didn't use them, so it made more sense to just create one large, connected area," explains Emma. The couple kept their existing sofas and updated the scheme with a Bayliss rug and generous Globe West coffee table. Layers of lovely, soft furnishings come in the form of Eadie Lifestyle cushions and Coco Republic 'Bungalow' Armchairs.

### THE RENO JOURNEY

**Who?** Emma and David, and their daughters Eloise, seven, and Penelope, five.

**Where?** Queensland's beachy Gold Coast.

**Original property?** An early 2000s canal-front home.

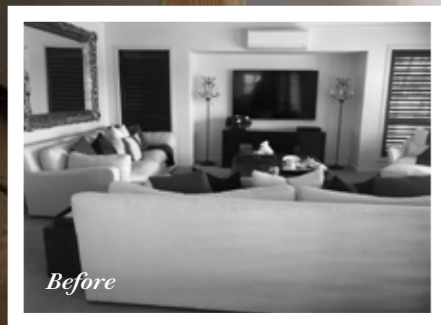
**Timeframe?** Renovations took 12 months and were completed in December 2022.

**Why the reno?** To improve the home's flow and create a more functional floor plan.

**Must-haves:** "We wanted an open-plan layout, enhanced outdoor area for entertaining, a modernised interior and a wine cellar for David's collection," says Emma.

**The works:** The lower level was gutted and walls removed to create a new kitchen, living space, dining area and cellar.

**Favourite aspect?** "We love the improved water views and outlook to Mt Tambourine." >



Before

**This page:** Lynda custom-designed the bedhead in the main bedroom, upholstered in leather-look 'Eastwood' vinyl by Warwick. She selected textural linen-look wallpaper from Zepel Fabrics and linen-wrapped 'Astley' bedside tables, complemented with lamps, both from Cafe Lighting & Living. **Opposite, left:** The gleam of brass in the girls' bathroom - through cabinetry handles, Nero tapware and Middle of Nowhere arch mirrors - creates a soft, feminine feel. **Opposite, right:** A Fienza freestanding bath basks in the abundant natural light, which streams through updated plantation shutters, sprayed to match the walls.



### Lessons learnt

As renovation first-timers, Emma and David had much to learn throughout the project. "We discovered the importance of setting a realistic budget and timeframe and then adding a little, at least 30 per cent," recommends Emma. "It was also important to regularly communicate with our project manager and keep on top of trades."

Maintaining flexibility also helped the process. "Being open to change was another key lesson," admits Emma. "Many of our finish selections weren't available due to supply issues, so we needed to choose again."

### Designer detail

A big investment was the Super White Dolomite natural stone from Tuscan Stone Co, which flows across the benchtops. "As this is our long-term home, I wanted the timeless quality of natural stone. It adds character and continuity in every wet area," explains Emma.

Another important material was the Heartridge 'Highland Oak' engineered floorboards, which replaced beige floor tiles. "We get so many comments about the floorboards," shares Emma. "They've dramatically enhanced the home's character and balance the black and white palette."

### Source book

**Interior design:** Lynda MacDonald Interior Design, [lyndamacdonald.com.au](http://lyndamacdonald.com.au).  
**Building design:** Brock Heap Design, 0421 418 215, [@brockheapdesign](https://www.instagram.com/brockheapdesign).



Before