101 GREATEST RENO TIPS OFF ALL TIME

EXPRESS YOURSELF YOUR HOME, YOUR STYLE YOUR WAY

THE $29 OTTOMAN WE'RE BUYING IN BULK! P43
SCALE THE PERIMETER

A clever brick wall means this family can have their urban inner-city home, and a swimming pool too. Turn the page to see more. →

OUTSIDE

PLANT / BUILD / PLAY
OFF THE WALL

THIS FAMILY REFUSED TO LET LIMITED SPACE DASH THEIR DREAMS OF A BACKYARD POOL
IN THE ZONE Creating cohesive spaces from inside the home to the courtyard was important, so the brick wall that is the pool fence also contains a fireplace and seating area in the area off the kitchen. MAKE A SPLASH Nicole and Anthony’s daughters love that their backyard has a pool! The bricks used for the pool fence and lower part of the extension and courtyard are recycled, and painted with Dulux Grey Pebble Half. The bricks used on the first floor part of the extension are from Adobri, in Ebony colour.
SWIMMING POOLS AREN’T THAT COMMON in inner-city suburbs like Melbourne’s Abbotsford. Plots that previously housed warehouses and factories just don’t lend themselves well to the traditional house/backyard/pool combo. But that didn’t stop Nicola and Anthony when they renovated the compact parcel of land behind their Victorian weatherboard cottage. Their brief to design firm MAKE Architecture was for an extension that ticked off the must-haves of an extra bedroom and a new kitchen, but to their delight, the contemporary design would evolve to include another item on their wish list: a swimming pool.

The property is surrounded by brick factories, businesses and warehouses, so this set the tone for the project’s aesthetic and material choice. To maximise external space, the architects designed a brick walled courtyard that followed the perimeter of the plot. But, where to put the pool? “It was tricky to squeeze a pool into the small courtyard space, so the shape had to follow the architecture,” says MAKE director Melissa Bright. “The organic form of the pool strengthens the relationship between it and the landscape, and house. If it was a long, skinny, rectangular plunge pool, it wouldn’t have the same connected relationship it does.”

As with all easy-to-live-in compact spaces, multipurpose design was key. The pool edge operates as a fence, with a seat and a fireplace on the other side. “In such a small space, a pool with a traditional fence would not have worked so the pool edge works as a fence. It was incredibly complex to resolve the pool fence regulations with this design but we got there in the end,” Melissa says. Planter boxes built into the wall allow creeping plants to cascade into the courtyard, adding softness - something Melissa is particularly excited to see evolve. “We can’t wait to see the plants grow, and see how that changes the spaces.”

OLD MEETS NEW Though the original house is a Victorian weatherboard cottage, the extension is a contemporary design in new and recycled bricks. TOP DECK The roof terrace echoes the downstairs courtyard in that it features a brick perimeter, but it has its own identity thanks to timber decking in blackbutt, which has been left to grey. Up here, plantings include myrtle, oecis, olive, lemon and lime trees, plus herbs, succulents and strawberries. GO WITH THE FLOW The architects refer to the curvaceous brick wall that runs through the home to the outside spaces as the spine - everything in the design is connected to it.
“In such a small space it made sense to use the same materials, as though the pool is an extension of the house walls and fences.”