

Releasing your soul

This apartment had everything you could wish for but there was still something missing, writes **Robyn Willis**



The study was conceived as a masculine space with deep blue walls offset by a leather chair.

In real estate terms, this apartment ticked so many boxes. From its inner-city location to its views across the city to the Harbour Bridge, it was blessed with three bedrooms, two balconies and a spacious living area.

But interior design Juliette Arent from Arent & Pyke says it lacked heart.

"It was very commercial," she says. "The ceiling was covered in downlights and there was dark carpet down. The owners knew they wanted a warmer feel to it because they loved entertaining but they couldn't visualise it."

Go towards the light

First to go were the abundant downlights which were ditched in favour of central pendant lights and freestanding lamps.

"People forget the power of ambient and mood lighting and the effect it has on your mood," Juliette says. "Downlights often make you feel like you have a heavy weight above you, particularly now with LED lighting."

"They make a lot of people feel tired so you're often better off having softer lighting at eye level."

The dark carpet was replaced with wall-to-wall carpet in a bold abstract pattern which formed the basis of the palette in the living area. Given the owners were quite happy with the layout of the apartment, the only structural work was some built-in joinery, including a timber and marble window seat that runs the full length of the living room.

"For an apartment, that room was a vast living space and the furniture felt like it was floating in the room," Juliette says. "Both the owners like to sprawl out on that window seat on the weekends to read the papers."

Time to plan

A project like this would normally take about a year to come together but the longer finish date allowed the owners more time to order fittings and commission a couple of bespoke furniture pieces, such as the entry console.

When you are fitting out a whole home in one go, Juliette says the challenge is to avoid the showroom look at all costs.

"We wanted the apartment to be a reflection of their life choices that had classic appeal," she says. "Our approach is to buy once and buy well. They completely fell in love with the look and they will have that furniture for a long time."

Although their furniture choices were limited by what they could fit in the lift, Juliette says they have managed to pull off a few tricks along the way.

"The sofa came in three pieces and the dining table seats 10 but it is actually two tables joined together," she says. "One of the joinery pieces was the maximum length you could get in the lift."

Perhaps surprisingly, the wall colours were one of the last things that were decided on, as the owners became more comfortable.

"Because we had painted the bedroom that colour, we talked about continuing that colour out into the living spaces — it brought the entire scheme together," Juliette says.

"We tried quite a few colours before we chose that. People think colour specification will be easy but it depends on the time of day, what it is sitting next to and making sure it is not too co-ordinated."

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Pictures Tom Ferguson



The custom-made entry console brings the warmth of timber to the tiled foyer.

RENOVATE

PROJECT

Owners

A young professional couple

Interior designer

Juliette Arent, Arent & Pyke
arentpyke.com

The problem

A soulless apartment filled with old furniture

The site

A three-bedroom apartment in Pyrmont with views of the Harbour Bridge

Design solution

Selected built-in joinery, custom made furniture and a subtle colour palette

How long did it take

18 months



THE SOURCE

Dining room sideboard Halo storage cabinet from Zuster, zuster.com.au **Floor lamp** Kyoto floor lamp in ash by Stellarworks from Living Edge, livingedge.com.au **Living room side table** Bell table with glass base by Classicon from Hub Furniture, hubfurniture.com.au **Wall lights** Buddies wall lights in brass in circle and triangle, Criteria Collection, criteriacollection.com.au **Dining room pendant lights** Parachina Aballs light by Hayon Studio from Ke-Zu, kezu.com.au