

BEFORE



## THE CHALLENGE

Take a sprawling Melbourne CBD warehouse with one huge, open space and turn it into an intimate family home. That was the broad brief from owners Ros and Ken Turner to Geoff Lavender and Ken Charles of Centrum Architects.

"We'd always loved places like New York's SoHo and Tribeca that are full of loft apartments," says Ros. "We wanted to capture the warmth we'd enjoyed during our travels in America."

Armed with a dossier of ideas from their time overseas, Ken and Ros formulated the warehouse's theme. "We wanted to use lots of timber and have a grand stairway," says Ken.

Unlike most renovations, it was the sheer volume of space that posed the greatest challenge. "In its original layout, it was overwhelming," says architect Ken Charles. "The place needed a character that could only be achieved by breaking up the huge expanse." ▶



Helping define the living space (above) are American walnut-lined display units. Above the Jetmaster fireplace from Living Interiors is a painted panel by Graham Fansella. The rug by Centrum Architects, is from Tibet Gallery; the Metro Lounge sofa is from Living Interiors. Top left: the unrenovated warehouse. Left: looking from the dining area into the living space. Opposite: creating a sense of drama is the vaulted ceiling lined with American walnut veneer with veneer-clad columns to divide the space; timber floors are jarrah. A huge canvas from Flinders Lane Gallery – *Pat's Vineyard*, by Doug Wright – watches over the dining setting; table is by Mortice & Tenon, chairs by FMCA. In the window beyond is a Zimbabwean sculpture from Chapungu Shona Gallery. See Resources for stockists' details.



A giant Melbourne warehouse is brought down to size for a nearly grown-up family

# lofty ambitions

STORY BY BABETTE HAYES. PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN MAGREE



#### ◀ THE SOLUTION

The ancient Greeks had the right idea – create order out of chaos with columns. “We used pillars to create a central ‘square’ from which all the spaces pivot,” says architect Ken Charles (above left).

With two near-adult children, owners Ken and Ros needed plenty of quiet spaces. A mezzanine level created a cosy, reading library that gives privacy but still connects with the main space below.

Lack of light and the heating/cooling “nightmare” was addressed by introducing lowered ceilings, bulkheads, glass strip windows and subdividing spaces with large sliding doors and wall panels.

And the grand stairway? “As you can see, the eye is drawn to the stairs the minute you walk in,” says Ken Charles. “We love the use of different timbers,” adds Ros. “We’ve ended up with a great combination of what we saw in New York and what we had in our minds.” **H&G**

*Architect: Centrum Architects, Sth Yarra, Vic (03)9821 4644. Builder: Heber the Builder, Sth Yarra, Vic (03) 9824 8930. Project Manager: Phillip Murdoch Resources, Sth Yarra, Vic (03) 9821 5699.*

Timber and concrete benchtops (above) over Wilsonart kitchen cupboards in Aubergine with Midnight Laminex. Black Sparkle splashback on Starfire glass from Interlay Glass. Island bench on castors from Ideal Cabinets. Below: wall finish by Sam Biondo at Faux. Sculpture from Chapungu Shona Gallery. Panels by Joshua Yeldham.



A dramatic staircase (this picture) cuts through the living area; the iron for the stairs was left out in the back lane to rust before being sealed. Balustrade and joinery by Alta Steel. On a handmade Tibetan rug, designed by the architects, is a Minotti Stocoolma armchair from Living Interiors. See Resources for stockists' details. Opposite top right: architects Ken Charles (on left), and Geoff Lavender (right), from Centrum Architects. Bottom right: the revised floor plan.



**Dramatic elements are used to divide the large space into smaller zones**

An enormous walk-in dressing room (this picture), finished in American walnut, uses a distinctive mix of geometric, Oriental-style shapes and curved lines.



**Intimate areas are detailed richly with geometric shapes and warm colours**



Serene hues create a tranquil bedroom (this picture) which opens onto the terrace. Carpet is Tascot Templeton Classic Reflections in Aubergine. Opposite bottom left: a bathing oasis with Romastone floor and wall tiles from Alan Patrick; vanity from Sadler Tiles. Bottom right: random geometric-shaped windows frame the cityscape. A Corona swivel chair from Living Interiors echoes the organic shapes repeated throughout the house. See Resources for stockists' details.