



CUSTOM MADE CREATIONS

By Zoya Sheftalovich

Choosing an interior designer, not to mention a design, is a difficult task. Aldo Virtich of Aldo Virtich Designs reveals some of the secrets to a successful project.

Award-winning interior designer Aldo Virtich has been avidly drawing and sketching from the age of seven, and has always known a career in interior design was his passion. "I just always knew that I wanted to create, create and create." Since then he has established his practice with this in mind, and creativity has been the secret to the success of his business over the last decade. His office is nestled just off Norton Street in Leichhardt, and is certainly something special, setting him aside from other designers. "I often receive comments from clients telling me that it is nothing like a normal office."

Aldo has created a professional yet relaxed and inviting environment, and visitors get to experience Aldo's commitment to originality as soon as they enter. The reception area has been replaced by a bar, with clients relaxing, drinking an espresso or a selection of organic teas. "It's all about the experience," says Aldo. One of the most original aspects of Aldo Virtich Designs is the fact that much of the furniture Aldo uses in his projects is actually designed and manufactured by the company. Many of the pieces on the following pages were custom made for clients. "My personal sense of style is very obviously reflected in all my work. There is really an underlying... sense of luxury."

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Meet the designer

Aldo Virtich of Aldo Virtich Design

- Has worked in the interior design industry for over ten years.
- Designs and manufactures his own furniture, and features this in many of his projects to give them a personalised feel.
- Has won numerous state and national design awards.
- Can be contacted on 9560 0081 or visit www.aldovirtich.com.au

Question & Answer

SH: What do you think is the role of an interior designer?

AV: Designers have to design, problem solve, and offer possibilities. Clients don't like to hear *why* things cannot be done, but as designers we have to remind clients of the framework we are working within and how a decision affects the overall picture.

SH: Why did you decide to go into the interior design industry?

AV: I always knew that I wanted to create. From a young age I was always drawing and sketching, but more importantly, I was always creating and exercising my mind. What keeps me going are all the endless possibilities to create!

SH: Why should someone enlist the help of an interior designer?

AV: The general public are not exposed to materials and finishes that are available to designers. We work in an environment that is conducive to creating. There is also the technical consideration and knowledge that forms part of a designers work.

SH: How should people choose their designer?

AV: Look at their work, and also ensure you have transparent, open communication with the designer. The process should not only be about producing documents. It needs to be an enjoyable and fun experience for people.

SH: What is the design process for a project?

AV: The first step is to understand the client's objectives. Next you need to look at the entire structure (through floor plans) and establish what can be changed and what cannot. You then need to establish the overall look. After you do this, you can commence sketch plans and create the overall design, itemising what materials can best achieve the design objective. We then source samples of all the items and, if it appropriate, we present all the revised layouts and finishes to the client for their consideration and approval.

SH: What happens next?

AV: The next step in the process is documenting, which is where we do the drawing, detailing and scheduling for all the items that have been approved by the client. We then personally monitor how the works are progressing during the building process in order to maintain the design intent. We are constantly working in tandem with the builder and the client to ensure that all decisions made on-site are in keeping with the overall design, and if there are variations then we see how to still achieve the desired outcome even with these variations.

SH: What kinds of things do you have to take into account before you start a project?

AV: Before we start a project we take into account the existing layout, things like height limitations because of low ceilings. This was the case in the featured home. In this home we also looked at incorporating additional items that had not been allowed for in the original layout, things like air conditioning and baths in the bathrooms, given that the bathrooms were somewhat small. We also have to look at our client's budget, and take into account waiting times for certain materials.

SH: What are some problems you face on homes?

AV: It depends, usually there aren't problems, just some limitations. To some degree we are really governed by what the original architect designed and what council approves. So we generally need to

Getting the exotic look

- If you want an exotic Eastern feel, introducing paisley fabrics will give your home an opulent look.
- Feel free to be creative – don't limit yourself to just one or two patterns! Create layers, but keep most in the same colour palette.
- Mixing accessories and furniture from different areas will lead to an interesting, global look.
- Details make a room special. There's a range of trimming options available like tassels, fringes, and beads, so play around with them!
- When choosing flowers, opt for something unusual – it will make a huge difference to the overall look.



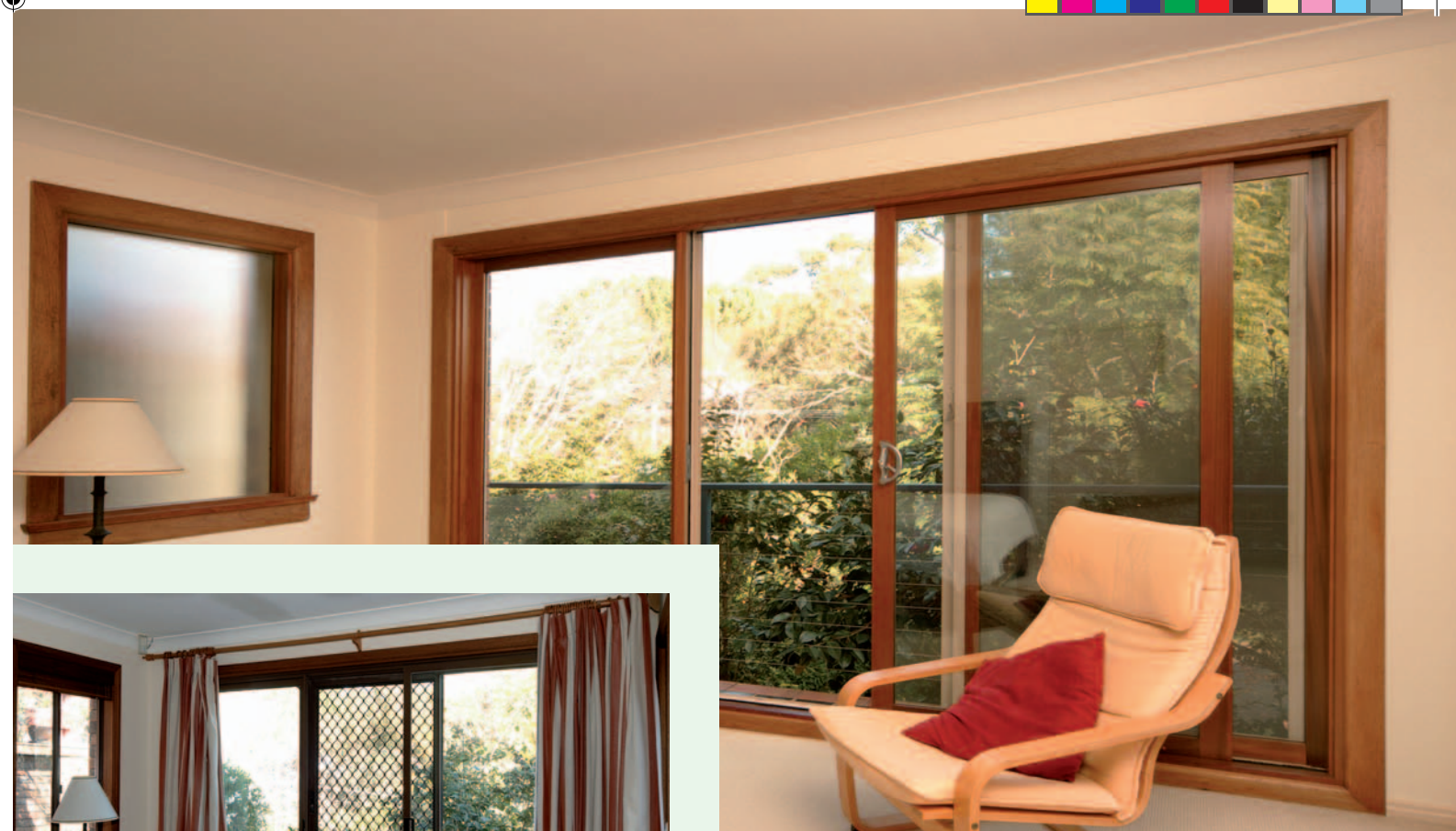
This Rose Bay project was planned to link interior & exterior.



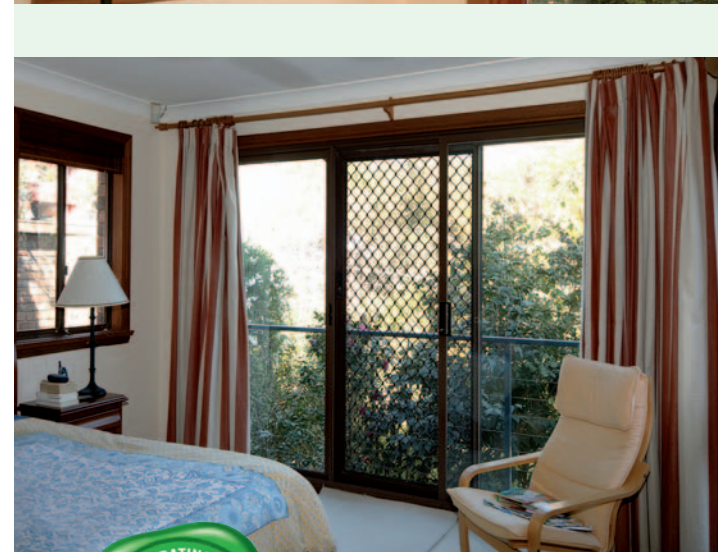
The design was a mixture of contemporary and exotic.



Mirrors were used extensively to maximise light.



After



Before



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Design Brief – Initially asked to do a quick face lift, this Mosman home turned into a mammoth project for Aldo, who created a French provincial feel punctuated with a contemporary twist.

Originally we were asked to simply re-paint the existing home and update the bathrooms. Upon further investigation it was apparent that the project involved much more than a simple cosmetic face lift.

What needed to be looked at were the overall finishes, space planning, and adjusting all the proportions to make the space look larger and somewhat consistent.

The client did express her desire for a French provincial feel with a refined, simpler, contemporary twist. She wanted the feel of luxury without being pretentious.

We then defined a design direction, making initial selections for finishes and looking again at the space and how to make better use of it. This was achieved by stripping the entire residence back to the bare walls, removing all the bulky skirting boards, interior shutters and cornices, and stripping the bathroom and kitchen.

We then reinstated shadow lines to the ceilings to visually increase the ceiling levels. Dropped ceilings were raised to their highest level, and ceiling lights were all recessed into the ceiling.

One floor finish (European oak, herringbone) was used throughout the residence, which expanded the space beyond the confines of the interior walls.

Simplifying the fixed finishes resulted in a visually larger, warmer and less segmented backdrop for the subtle palette of exquisite fabrics and furnishings.

Fabrics were sourced from America and Europe, which provided a softer, elegant dressing to the large window openings.

All furniture for the project was custom made in various shades and finishes, giving us more flexibility.

What resulted was a very delicate, elegant and extremely stylish interior reflecting the owner's tastes and lifestyle. The entire space was transformed, offering the illusion of a much larger, sun drenched residence without having to increase any existing window dimensions.



Bulky skirting boards and architraves were removed.



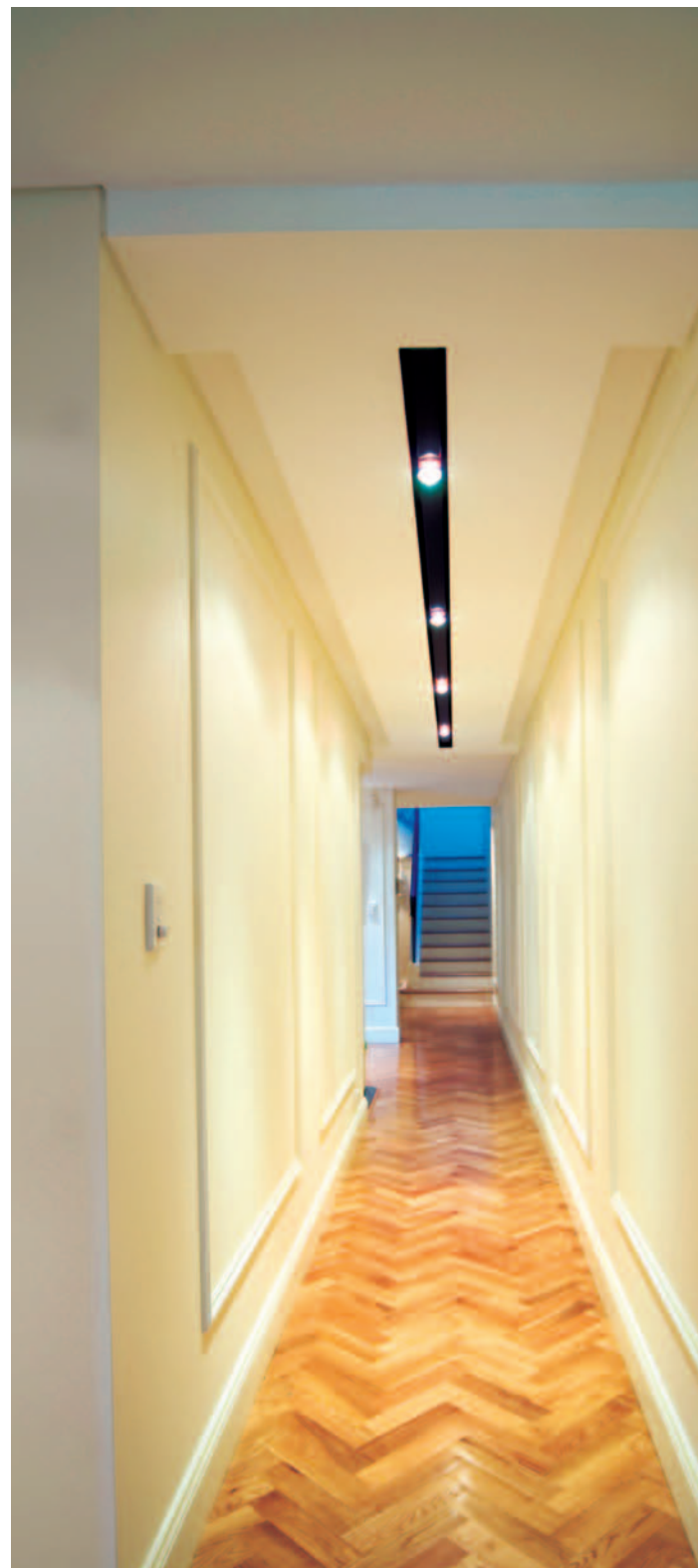
The colour palette was consistent throughout the home.



The furniture, in French provincial style, was custom made.



The project was carefully planned to maximise the space available.



Ceilings were raised and lights were recessed.

If you are a designer, or a home owner with a recently renovated property, please contact the *Sydney Home* editorial department at editor@sydneyhome.com.au

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