

A WORK OF ARCH

Some called it ugly but the owners loved the European touch at the front of this Mount Hawthorn home and decided it had to stay when renovating

It was the eye-catching arches at the front of this Mount Hawthorn home that first captured the attention of Marcus Kotsoglo, so when it came time to renovate he couldn't bear to get rid of them.

The managing director of Building Solutions bought the three-bedroom property four years ago.

"Apparently it was originally a Federation-type house and an Italian owner in the 1970s decided to put his little bit of Europe on the face of it," Marcus says.

"I think they call it 'ethnitisising'.

"They are very distinctive arches and very much a feature of the house, so we decided they had to stay."

With the aim of maintaining the character of the house, Marcus set to work on the renovations he had in mind.

The interior was ripped out and the house brought back to its bare bones. All the plumbing, lighting, cabinetry and tiling and some of the flooring were replaced.

Marcus put in new ceilings and cornices and totally renovated all of the wet areas.

Porcelain tiles were laid throughout the living areas, but floorboards discovered under the old carpets were restored and stained to a richer, more attractive colour.

Old aluminium window frames were stripped out and replaced with timber.

Upstairs, a studio was created as a parents' retreat and a cellar underneath the home is set to be converted into a kids' cubby.

"The footprint of the home didn't change one iota," Marcus says.

"We were bringing it up to current times, but we basically kept the fabric of the building."

"We only knocked out one or two walls." Entertaining is a big part of life for the Kotsoglo family, so indoor-outdoor living areas were given top priority.

Two walls were removed in the living area to transform it into an open-plan kitchen, dining and lounge room. Bifold doors now open up the living area to the outdoors.

"When you've got mates round, we just throw those doors open," Marcus says.

"It's something that we love, kids racing around on their little bikes and friends coming over."

The backyard was another matter.

"It was basically several tiers of brick paving and brick walls," Marcus says.

"Our earthmoving contractor took away 12 truckloads of sand and rubble just from the backyard."

With two young children, Marcus wanted a functional backyard perfect for their playtime.

The entire area was levelled and synthetic grass put down for the kids to play on.

An elevated alfresco area with barbecue facilities and pergola was built by Marcus and some of his mates.

"That's my favourite part of the house," Marcus says.

"Eventually when the wisteria takes off and grows over the pergola it will be a gorgeous little place to sit under on summer evenings."

The front of the house was a major focus during the renovation, with the two-car garage moved to a laneway.

"With the front elevation, we had to make a conscious effort not to have the garage or a carport off the street," Marcus says.

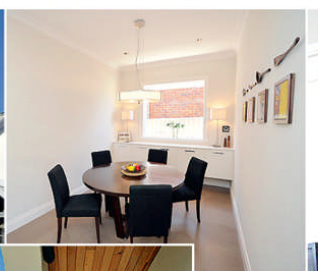
"We ripped up the kerb across the front and reclaimed that area and then landscaped the front of the house."

And the arches are there to stay.

"Some people go 'wow, they're ugly', and some people go 'wow, they're fantastic'," Marcus says.

"But I think the arches are perfect."

Katie Robertson



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- * **Builder:** Building Solutions, phone: 9209 2289, www.buildingsolutions.net.au
- * **Siteworks:** Westcoast Siteworks, phone: 0405 534 439
- * **Cabinetry:** Unique Furniture Manufacturers, Osborne Park, phone: 9446 6992
- * **Electrical:** Aurora Electrical Services, Kewdale, phone: 9353 4770
- * **CaeserStone:** Norwest Stone, Neerabup, phone: 0409 687 247
- * **Painting:** Newpaint, phone: 0403 603 640

Marcus Kotsoglo with his wife, Christine Moran, and children Cassin and Pia at their renovated home in Mount Hawthorn.
Pictures: Kerris Berrington

