

Paul Hecker's Home Truths: 'I rented the broom closet off the kitchen'



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Paul Hecker. Picture: Nicholas Wilkin

Paul Hecker is an interior designer and architect at Hecker Guthrie. His most recent interior-design project is the [No. 94 River St](#) apartments in South Yarra.

Where do you live?

In St Kilda, in a home I built 20 years ago. But I'm currently renovating an Arts and Crafts house I bought in St Kilda East.

Have you changed anything about your home?

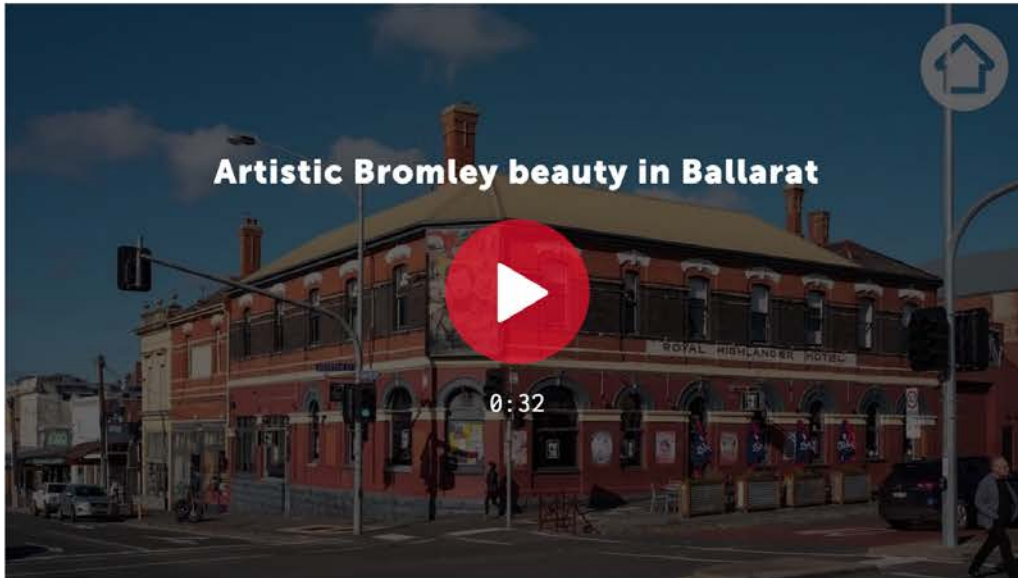
No. Do it once, do it well, do it forever. For better or worse, my home represents what my tastes and priorities were in 1999. Would I do it differently now? Absolutely. But I am nostalgic.

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One thing you'd change?

The glass walls facing north. Art, furniture and timber are damaged by direct sunlight. If I could pick up my house and rotate it 180 degrees, I would. I would then open the curtains more and probably use a lot less airconditioning.

Most memorable home you've lived in?

A flat in Maida Vale, London. I rented the broom closet off the kitchen. There was room for a single bed and a tiny chest of drawers with all my clothes neatly folded in colour-coordinated piles on the pantry shelves. I loved that room. It had perfect proximity to the kitchen and a late-night cuppa.



Artist's impression of the No. 94 River St apartments in South Yarra.

Your first foot on the property ladder?

An apartment in Charnwood Grove, St Kilda in 1987. I put down a \$40,000 deposit and had a \$38,000 mortgage — seems ludicrous now. But I think my take-home pay was only about \$900 a month.

How many homes have you ever bought and ever sold?

Bought seven and sold three. It requires way too much energy to sell. Also, I'm fearful that as soon as



I sell a property, prices will skyrocket.

The highlights of your property journey?

I am a real homebody, so creating beautiful, cosy environments where I can sit, read and watch telly fills my heart with joy.

The lowlights?

Getting plumbing fixed, especially having to wait around after receiving a message like, "We will arrive any time between 9am and 1pm".



What No. 94 River St will look like inside.

Best property advice you've heard?

The perfect property may never come along but, regardless of what you buy, you can create a beautiful interior — or employ someone to create it for you.

Worst property advice you've heard?

You don't need an architect or interior designer when renovating. You may have great taste, but very few non-professionals have the ability to realise a great renovation, trust me.

Tips for homebuyers?

If I was starting out now, I would accept that a home in St Kilda may not be possible and I would look further afield, like regional Victoria. Then rent in the city while renting out the country property.

Future property plans?

Finish renovating my new property. I can't wait to move in, lock the door, put on the kettle and snuggle down with a book.

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The South Yarra development is Paul Hecker's most recent interior design project.

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