



BEFORE: The deck, living and kitchen area of a Peregian Beach home.  
Photo: Black and White Projects



AFTER: The deck, living and kitchen area of a Peregian Beach home.  
Photo: Rikki Lancaster Photography



BEFORE: The front facade of a Peregian Beach home.  
Photo: Black and White Projects

# RENO ROYALTY: HOW

Coast couple share their expertise transforming run-down properties into quality, comfortable homes, **Shayla Bulloch** writes

**R**ENOVATING a run-down property and transforming it into an authentic and quality home isn't a task Jason and Maria Baron take lightly.

The Sunshine Coast renovators have more than 10 years' property experience under their belt, have overhauled countless homes and now offer their expertise to others in an exclusive Coast-based business.

Their renovation journey began in 2008 when they transformed a small, two-bedroom unit in Sydney.

"We were really excited about the opportunity. It was really run-down and daunting at the time," Jason said.

Despite their nerves, the husband and wife duo took the leap and combined their skills to start their venture.

Jason's key interest in property meshed perfectly with Maria's passion for design.

"It was hard work and we did most of the first ones ourselves," Jason said.

Their skill sets developed when they moved interstate, and people noticed.

"People would always ask us so many questions about our processes and we started to see people showing more interest in renovations," Maria said.

"So we thought it was a good chance to start something new."

While still renovating their own investment properties, the pair formed Black and White Projects two years ago.

The design and construction company offered renovation consulting services to clients, where Jason and Maria took



RENOVATION STARS: Jason and Maria Baron have been renovating homes since 2006 and built their venture into a successful business.

Photo: Patrick Woods

them through every detail of the build.

From designing the functionality of cupboards to choosing their tradespeople, Maria said they created their renovation goals together.

"We work backwards – the first thing we ask is how the house will be used, whether it's

an investment or for a young family," Maria said.

"We thrive on the end result."

The business has thrived and gained attention from many luxe publications including *Adore* and *Interiors Addict*.

Their year often consists of up to five renovation projects

ranging between one month and four months to complete, often with some overlapping.

Despite the stress, they had a secret for staying passionate – never living at their renovation projects.

"We work really well together and bounce ideas around without stepping on each other's

toes," Maria said.

"Maybe that's why we've stayed married," she said with a laugh.

Maria said they treated each project with the quality as if it was their own and despite countless proud moments, they couldn't pick a favourite renovation.



## Choose projects wisely

STARTING small and selling cheaper is the smartest way to ensure profit from a home renovation, with minimalist builds gaining more sales than complete home flips.

McGrath Noosa agent Clint Smith (pictured) said return was directly relative to the input into the home, with a profit up to 30 per cent on offer if quality was the focus in the renovation.

The home renovation rise came in 2013 at the height of popular television renovation shows, but it was harder than

it looked on the silver screen.

Once people realised the stress involved, Mr Smith said interest shifted to ready-renovated homes around 2017.

"Everyone wanted to be a renovator, but you need to do it properly to gain return," he said.

Mr Smith said un-renovated homes were selling for up to \$750,000, but highlighted it was important not to purchase too high.

"If you renovate a home and it ends up in excess of



**AFTER:** The front facade of a Peregian Beach home.  
Photo: Rikki Lancaster Photography



**BEFORE:** The kitchen area of a Peregian Beach home.  
Photo: McGrath Noosa



**AFTER:** The kitchen area of a Peregian Beach home.  
Photo: Jason Smith Photography

# TO REVAMP RIGHT



## TOP TIPS

**Jason and Maria's renovation advice:**

1. Stick to one style - it doesn't have to be cliché, either. Design a mood board for inspiration.
2. Consult your trades early with plans - get everyone in early and think about the cost. People often slip up in that area and don't think about what small adjustments may cost.
3. When in doubt, paint it white - people go crazy with colours, but if you're not sure, play it safe. White makes areas larger and is always a good option. You can paint over it later.
4. Never overlook functionality - the flow of the house and the design is important. Even simple things like cabinets hitting walls, features not fitting.
5. Kitchen and living space is most important - that's where people spend most of their time. Bathrooms follow closely.
6. Always remember why you're renovating - use goals and don't forget them.

"Every time we do a renovation we give everything to it and it becomes our favourite," Jason said.

"Over time we have become more inclined to take risks, and we think one's an absolute beauty until the next one.

"We really look at each house for what it is and keep

the integrity, the look and feel, and embrace that."

The pair have learned "millions of things" in their industry experience but offered their most crucial advice for first-time renovators.

"Always remember why you're renovating," Maria said.

## to cash in on outlay

\$1.5 million, it's going to be harder to sell," he said.

Heavy renovators were spending up to \$250,000 on complete overhauls, but cheaper cosmetic changes proved to be most popular.

Mr Smith said it was vital to prioritise rooms in the renovation process with entertaining areas the most important.

"It's where people spend most of their time and they want to show off their new home to friends as well," he said.

Renovating the kitchen was

also important, closely followed by cosmetic changes like carpets and paint, and bathroom renovations.

While landscaping came after the interiors, Mr Smith said it was an important aspect not to be overlooked as it was the first part of the home buyers saw.

"Landscaping is really crucial... cheap renovations can add value with paint, flooring and the right landscaping," he said. "People will still make a good profit from the small things."



**OLD BECOMES NEW:** Interior designer Danni Morrison converted her home inspired by the Hamptons beach house theme. She believes in the benefits of upcycling.  
Photos: Warren Lynam

## Upcycle for interior styles fit for designer

STATEMENT furniture pieces are bucking the fast-fashion trend as renovators become conscious of their footprint and choose to upcycle rather than buy cheap.

Interior designer and blogger Danni Morrison said the environmentally-friendly ethos had transitioned into renovating over the past few years with DIYers steering away from furniture chains.

Ms Morrison, of Design by Danni, said looking out for quality pieces online, at garage sales or salvage yards was the best way to get bang for your buck.

"You don't have to spend a lot to get a fantastic result," the Sunshine Coast woman said.

"Buying quality pieces to upcycle means they are going to last if you give it a new lick of paint, new upholstery or other features."

The Coast designer is no stranger to compromise, saying it is important to inject the capital into the important areas of the home before fixing other rooms.

"If a room has a good foundation and a good base with no vital faults, you can transform it with some small cosmetic changes," she said.

Ms Morrison said a lot of renovators balked at bathrooms, but painting over tiles and cabinetry was an easy fix



Danni Morrison suggests upcycling items to create new, interesting looks.

to cover ghastly colours.

"Full bathroom renovations can cost up to \$20,000, but if your budget is tight this is a simple and really affordable way to get a great result," she said.

This year, Ms Morrison said design trends were ditching the Scandinavian look and moving into fresh colour.

Corals and greens were set to shine, with natural, recycled timbers remaining strong.

"Metallics are also coming in and we

are moving away from the rose gold finished into brass," she said.

Mr Morrison said interior design was paramount when eventually selling a renovated home.

"Styling gives the buyer the ability to completely visualise how they'll live in the home," she said.

"You need to sell the dream."

**Read Danni Morrison's latest interior design article in today's Weekend magazine.**