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Good Vibes



Oswald Homes' Palm Springs display.



The Barnhaus by Residential Attitudes offered retro touches.

Balance proves key when old meets new

GRETA ANDREWS-TAYLOR

There is plenty of charm in vintage home detailing, but the trend is not without its challenges. It can be difficult to nail the mix between the classic looks of old and modern day function.

The key to incorporating vintage looks into a home without going overboard, according to Oswald Homes Principal Designer Brook Leber, is to focus on a few key features.

"People desire the nostalgia of the past, and the unique nature of one-off pieces of furniture," he said.

"The most popular way to incorporate this is by adding conversation pieces – good quality bespoke furniture that adds interest and character to a space."

Mr Leber said items like baths, mirrors and knick-knacks, along with furniture, were a great way to incorporate older styles into the home. But there are some areas where you're best to stick to newer technology.

"Fixtures and fittings have advanced so much that old taps, light fittings and electronics can be inefficient, non-compliant and even unsafe," he said.

Technology and innovation have come a long way in a short time, and Mr Leber said it was possible to style a home with nostalgia without missing out on modern comfort – particularly in the kitchen.

"Luckily, designers have created character appliances in recent years which give the best of both worlds," he said.

The Reno Lounge is based at Home Base Subiaco, and focuses on renovation, building and design. Managing Partner Steve Stott said the old-new mix was shining through particularly in the renovation space, with designers embracing creativity and delivering some surprising results.

"Mixing styles can actually be a more cost-effective option," he said.

"For example, an extension or addition based on the original style of a character home will require high ceilings in order to stay true to the original look. By embracing a mix of old and new styles, you can include lower ceilings to the modern areas of the home and reduce costs considerably.

"Mixing two styles also means you can design for climate, as modern home designs are more considerate of orientation and climate-sensible design elements."

Mr Stott said the key in renovation was clearly defining old and new spaces.

"I would always recommend creating a distinct break between old and new," he said.

"Breezeways or courtyards are a great way to connect the old with the new."

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