

ORIENTED *east*

Doyens of the Melbourne design scene, *Barbara and John Hermon* have a penchant for authentic Asian artefacts.

Photographs CAITLIN MILLS



This page Joshua Yeldham owl painting. Judy Holding metal tree on shelf. Luisa Robinson 'Dragon's Tail' lamp. Milo Naval woven chair. Nagaland Bed coffee table. In foreground, Ivana Perkins metal vegetable sculptures.



This page, clockwise from left Timorese wooden figures and Rajasthan temple horse. Barbara and John Hermon. Alex Rowland painting, Tes Pasola paper art in small black frames, on an antique shoe locker from a Japanese bath house. Joshua Yeldham painting, and Ifugao fertility shell belt on stand.

WHAT HAS INFORMED AND INSPIRED YOUR INTERIORS STYLE? HAS THIS EVOLVED OVER TIME? *Barbara:* Living in Japan as a child has had an influence on my style – in fact the August/September 2006 issue of *Belle* had a six-page story on me, 'Defining Australian Style', and the Japanese influence is very obvious. Yes, it has evolved over time with Asian and handmade being a strong influence from our constant travelling around the region.

IS YOUR HOME A SANCTUARY OR DOES IT DOUBLE AS A WORK SPACE? Yes, it is a sanctuary and a space for relaxing, listening to good music with some of my favourite Ruinart Champagne.

WHAT INITIALLY APPEALED TO YOU ABOUT THE SPACE? DID IT REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT ALTERATIONS? Good bones, one level, well-proportioned rooms with high ceilings, complemented by two spacious bright courtyards and the fact that we can never be built out. As a 23-year-old build the bathrooms and kitchen needed updating.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PIECES? *John:* Over the past 45 years we have travelled to some amazing places and have collected unusual pieces that all have a story. The tribal pieces from the Philippines and India are favourites, as well as Barbara's love of Japanese pieces, thanks to the Kazari store in Melbourne.

WHERE DO YOU SPEND THE MOST TIME IN YOUR HOME? Our open-plan living area overlooking one of the courtyards provides a year-round living space.





This page: In the courtyard, Kenneth Cobonpue 'Lulu' chair, Indian door from Water Tiger, Ifugao boundary markers from Manila and Moroccan lanterns from Francalini.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR PERIOD OR STYLE THAT APPEALS TO YOU? We both have very diverse taste as you can see by our treasures but Asian style and design and handmade are most appealing. Good original design in quality pieces. No copies!

WHAT COULDN'T YOU LIVE WITHOUT? Hard to choose. When we moved in and unpacked all our treasures we thought perhaps we should cull but decided we could not live without any of the pieces, hence the clutter!

IF YOU DIDN'T LIVE IN MELBOURNE, WHERE ELSE WOULD YOU LIVE? We lived on the Greek Island of Skiathos and in Richmond, Surrey, UK, for some years but when we returned to Australia we decided that Melbourne was the only place for us.

WHICH DESIGNERS, ARCHITECTS OR INTERIOR DESIGNERS DO YOU ADMIRE AND WHY? Tadao Ando for his striking, simply designed buildings; Sean Godsell as the best Australian architect; Vincenzo de Cotiis, an amazing Italian designer whose use of diverse materials creates stunning pieces; Thomas Hamel – we love his mix of styles; Christopher Boots – an amazingly talented local designer of simply beautiful original pieces.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE ARTISTS AND DO YOU COLLECT ANYONE IN PARTICULAR? As you can see Joshua Yeldham stars on our walls, he is our absolute favourite. Also Marco Luccio and Judy Holding.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON? As freelance consultants we have a number of clients in both retail and online at the moment.

WHAT IS THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND YOUR WORK? Now that we have closed H&H retail we decided it was time to 'get a life' and enjoy! However, we also like guiding and assisting people in the industry wherever possible. bernonhermon.com.au



This page, from top Yamen painting by Doreen Kowarsky, Joshua Yeldham Red Bull Hunger painting, Ruth Levine bracelet, antique Japanese lacquer pieces, Otafuku mask, painting and dressing table all from Kazari. In the bedroom, two Ifugao figures, two artworks by Dobra Luccio (far left), and one by John McPhee (left), Bedlinen and bedhead from Hale Mercantile Co, Barbara's grandmother's chair covered in Andrew Martin fabric in the study.

