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Virginia Trioli on the biggest gamble of her career

Bible bashing: one man's crusade

Fine dining? No thanks

My life as Shane Warne

Fashion: after dark with
Rebecca Twigley

Plus our Christmas survival guide

home

Woods Felicity Lewis
Photography: Shannon Slater
Styling: Neil Fosse



Above: The garage of the warehouse apartment in Collingwood.

Right: An F430 Ferrari has pride of place.

Austin Powers eat your heart out – this is the ultimate bachelor pad.

"I've always wanted to be able to drive into my living room," says Jamie Casabell. "I've thought, how cool would that be?"

His chance arrived last July when a warehouse shell with backstreet access was up for auction in one of the Foy & Gibson department store warehouses in Collingwood. He was renting down the road with his wife, Janine, when they stumbled on the place in one of the developments that fill the huge 1980s red-brick warehouses behind Smith Street. "When I saw that you actually drive into the warehouse space, I thought, great," recalls Jamie, a construction manager at CH Architects, whose his brother David is a director. "I said to Janine, I'm going to go with David to the auction and have a look at it and I went back home and said, 'Guess what?'"

When we visit, a 2008 Ferrari F430 gleams under downlighting in one corner of the apartment, the mini-showroom effect a highlight of the brothers' \$300,000 renovation. When they started, though, the scene was less than sexy, the garage a thoroughfare for builders as they laid pipes under the floor, installed acoustic cushioning in the ceiling and replaced the sprinkler system.

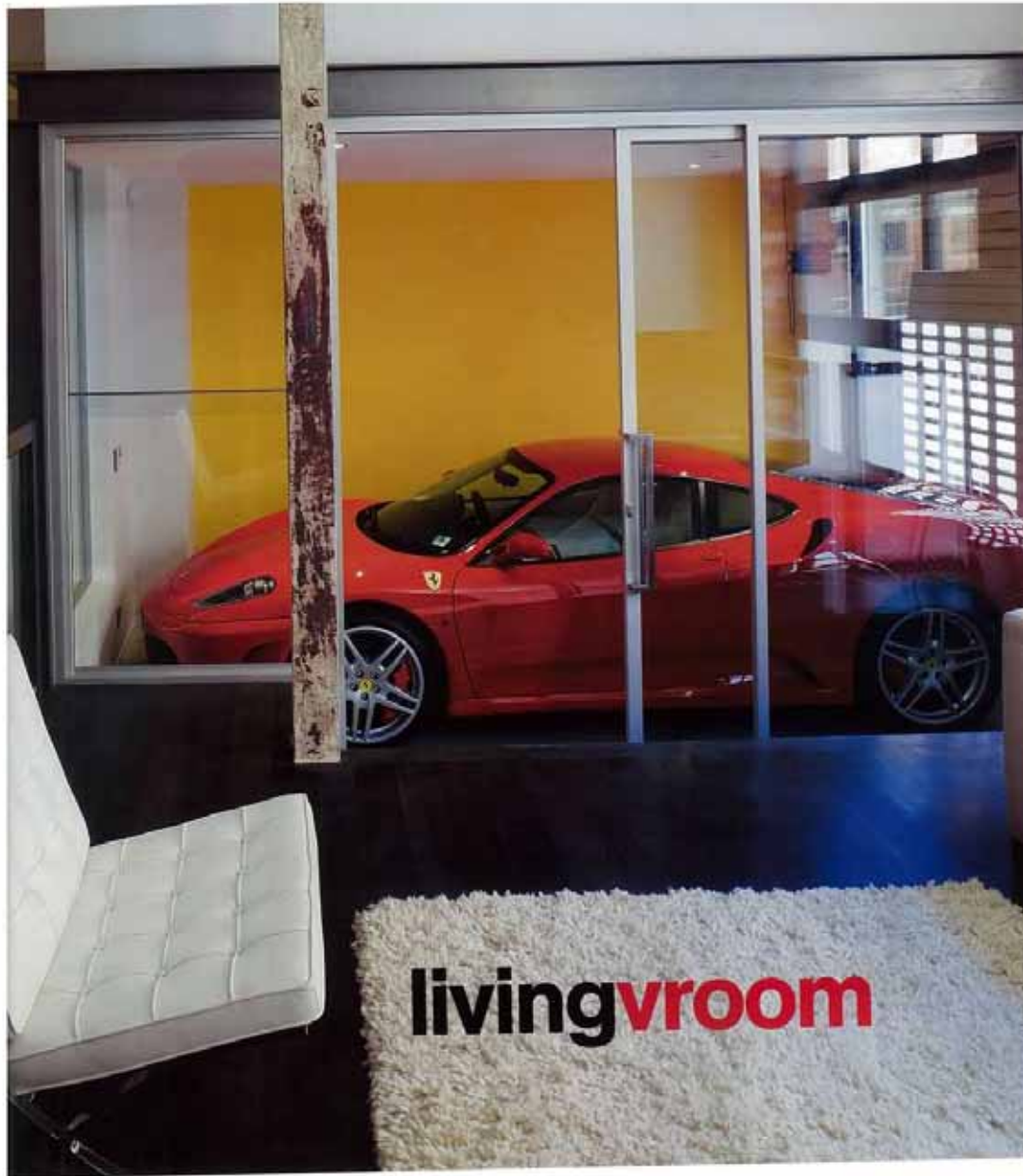
In eight months, they converted a concrete cube with 6.5-metre ceilings into "the ultimate pad", retaining some of the original warehouse features and choosing "rugged" materials for the detailing. They sandblasted the white-painted walls to expose the original brickwork and timber

feature beams and left raw the universal beams and columns stamped "Dorman Long & Co, England". (In a nod to the building's more recent history, they transformed the street number that developers had stencilled on the concrete shell into a super-graphic, 803, on an LED lit feature wall with a plasma TV screen set in the middle of the 3.) They clad an enclosed mezzanine with Alucobond aluminium panels, which are mostly used on exteriors; they had concrete poured on site for the 4.5-metre long kitchen bench; each stair in the staircases is laminated oak routed into a steel frame; the bathroom tiles are glossy black, recycled cut to give joints a clean, hard edge.

There are some soft touches, too: translucent white panels slide open to the carpeted master bedroom; a Foscarini lamp in the upstairs living room gives a diffuse glow; the black-stained oak floorboards have a subtle pinkish undertone.

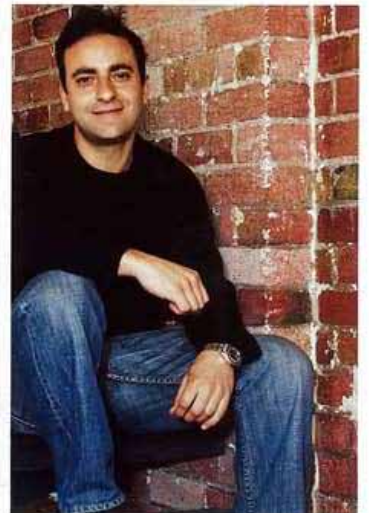
David Casabell says a big challenge was to avoid creating a "bat cave". Natural light streams through full-length windows on the east-facing laneway side of the apartment; David designed a light well that extends down to the ground-floor master bedroom and ensuite. Where no natural light was available, innovation was called for, as in the walk-in robe, which has vertical strip lights laid into the veneer laminate.

Jamie says having separate environments was important too. Unlike in some completely open-plan warehouses, →



livingvroom

home



the design incorporates some private spaces. The enclosed mezzanine clad in aluminium contains a bathroom, study nook and bedroom/office/retreat with translucent louvre windows at one end and a strip of windows at the other. (It could become two rooms with a dividing wall). "You've got a sitting room (downstairs) and another room (on the open mezzanine) where you can sit down and read a book or just chill out," says Jamie. "And then if you want to be totally isolated, you've got the room upstairs where you can shut all the windows."

Various mod cons create an international-man-of-mystery air. The wine cellar is on show behind smoky glass, the bottles arranged on tilted steel shelves. In the sitting room beside the garage, an open gas fireplace is scattered with decorative stones. A butler's pantry has features such as a built-in coffee-maker. And a C-Bus automated system controls everything from opening and closing windows to variations of mood lighting. "I wanted the 'wow' factor," says Jamie. **(m)**

Clockwise from above The kitchen, with a butler's pantry tucked behind it; the master ensuite; Jamie Carabott; the master bedroom and the living room above it, with open fireplace.



whereheshops

Jamie Carabott
construction manager

Space, 629 Church Street, Richmond, phone 9426 3000. "All their pieces are architectural and designer. Everything's quite unusual."

Rogerseller, 587 Church Street, Richmond, phone 9429 8888. "Rather than combine two basins in the bathrooms I wanted one suitable for two people. They had what I liked. They're the best on the market. They're unique."

Reece, various stores, phone 1800 032 566. "The tapware was from Reece. I wanted something cantilevered out from the wall that was in keeping with the chunky look of the basins. They were used in the kitchens and the basins and bath. They supplied the bath and toilets and all the shower fittings."

Miele, 208-210 Coventry Street, South Melbourne, phone 9764 7199. "I like the fact that you could buy a coffee machine and inbuilt microwave as one unit - they could be built into the joinery."

Clipsal Australia, Clipsal Powerhouse Display and Technology Centre, 83-89 Queens Parade, North Fitzroy, phone 9207 3200 for bookings. "C-Bus is an automated system that allows you to control everything from the windows to the configuration of the lighting. The lighting system (in the apartment) is quite a major feature. The black light fittings work in conjunction with the black glass splashbacks in the pantry and kitchen."