

Take a seat in this Portland classic

Description



The feature fireplace in the Jarrett-van Roo's Portland home incorporates a cornucopia of materials – crazy slate, marble, burnished copper, granite and timber!

Bluestone columnist and architect CLINTON KRAUSE previously worked in Daylesford before relocating his business to Warrnambool. Clinton explores the architectural styles that gives our region so much character. [Visit his website here.](#)

This month my search for great mid-century architecture takes me to Portland to the home of **Jack van Roo** and **Megan Jarrett** who not only live in a very stylish Tag Walter creation, but are also proprietors of '[be seated](#)' a boutique business specialising in the sourcing, restoration and sale of retro furniture and décor.

The house was originally designed for Megan's grandparents, Theo and Jean, in 1962 and demonstrates an elegant refinement and maturation of Tag's signature style.

The entry to the home is a carefully orchestrated 'theatrical' experience – the large welcoming porch reveals a number of 'tricks' to delight the senses and create an atmosphere of intrigue: walls of glass frame tantalising glimpses of the interior, or draw the view out over the large elongated pond and towards the garden beyond.

Planter beds filled with ferns and exotic foliage flank the terrace and create a 'tropical' bridge to the front door.

Inside the front door numerous original features continue the theme. Seagrass-wallpaper feature walls,

ceiling bulkheads with concealed pelmet lighting, the centrepiece fireplace with its bewildering fusion of copper, granite, marble stone and timber.



Jack van Roo and Megan Jarrett have combined their individual talents with furniture and fabrics, not only in their business, but their home.

With an extensive background in interior design, textiles and furniture restoration, Jack and Megan are

the ideal homeowners and the interior spaces are filled with funky armchairs, well-mannered Danish teak tables and sideboards and original era paintings and prints.

Megan recalls visiting her grandparents at early age and being spooked by the bedroom curtains with their large garish brown rose pattern – perhaps a precursor that has sparked her interest in textiles and fabrics!

One of my favourite areas of the home is the outdoor entertaining terrace. With its stone terrazzo tiles, breezeblock screen wall, innovative built-in outdoor bbq and brightly colored ‘butterfly’ chairs, this composition pays homage to some of the great innovative concepts of the time by architectural heroes such as **Richard Neutra** and **Quincy Jones**.



The \$5 dollar Featherstone find of the century. Such chairs are normally sold for thousands at auction houses.

During our interview Jack tells me of some very special items of furniture that they are currently working on, so we decide to pay the 'be seated' workshop a visit.

Entering through the tradesmens' door, I am completely unprepared for the sight before me – a vast cavern stacked high with row upon row of retro gems, some a little shabby, some very much worse off for wear.

We push into the melee towards the 'holy grail' of the retro afficianado – and there they are!!!

A stunning pair of original **Grant Featherstone** armchairs complete with the original cut velvet upholstery. Rarely seen outside the auction house or museum, these chairs represent the pinnacle of design innovation by Australian designers of the modern period.

Jack takes an almost macabre delight in informing me that the owner paid just \$5 each for these chairs at a recent garage sale.....



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The 'be seated' workshop in Portland is an Aladdin's cave of retro wonders.

We conclude our visit with a tour of the 'be seated' showroom to view the latest items lovingly restored and repurposed.

It is clear that the couple make a good team – with Jack's considerable joinery and reupholstery skills and Megan's eye for colour , texture and pattern in the selections of rich fabrics used to give these pieces a new life.

Once again I leave my visit with the van Roo-Jarretts reassured in the knowledge that not only is another great retro style home in good hands, but there is also a thriving business in our region that is actively preserving the furniture and décor of this innovative era.



Category

1. Archive

Tags

1. architecture
2. Be Seated
3. Clinton Krause
4. Featherstone
5. houses
6. Jack van Roo
7. Megan Jarrett
8. mid-century

- 9. Portland
- 10. retro
- 11. Tag Walter

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Author

clinton-krause