

Reno queens share insights

■ Cy Clayton

Between them, Lana Taylor, Erin Cayless and Bonnie Hindmarsh have renovated no fewer than 11 houses in the space of just five years.

And the women behind Three Birds Renovations have one hard-earned piece of advice to share when it comes to renovating: "You can never plan enough!"

The Sydney trio launched their now-thriving renovating business back in 2014, and since then have extended, upgraded and redesigned their way through 32 bedrooms, 11 kitchens and 18 bathrooms. They've also notched up a massive social media following, including 466,000 Instagram followers and almost 130,000 YouTube subscribers, and launched a successful online education platform, The Reno School.

But while they've become famous for their amazing makeovers and stunning styling, they all agree the biggest lesson they've learnt in that time is that it's what's you do long before you pick up a paintbrush that has the most impact on a reno.

"The more you plan your budget, your quotes, your timeline—everything—the less room you'll have for a budget blowout," Hindmarsh says. "Time is money in renovating."

The women, who have been best friends for 20 years, say they originally started TBR "in pursuit of a more fulfilling life".

"We took a leap of faith together," Taylor says.

This meant leaving behind their respective corporate careers in favour of doing something they loved, while also giving them more time for family. (Each is married to a former professional rugby player — Bonnie to Nathan Hindmarsh, Lana to Jason Taylor and Erin to Nathan Cayless — and between them they have nine young children).

While they started out renovating for profit, they say their focus has since shifted to something that drives many Australians to renovate: creating "forever homes".

"We started out flipping houses and then reno'd our forever homes," Taylor says. Her own family home of 15 years was the first to undergo a transformation, followed by Hindmarsh's "modern coastal barn" renovation, which was the biggest project



Bonnie Hindmarsh, Lana Taylor and Erin Cayless. **BOTTOM:** One of the Three Birds Renovations team's previous projects.



they'd ever undertaken. They all agree that those two projects are their favourites, though Hindmarsh's was also the most challenging.

"We intended to keep a lot more of her original home than we actually did because, when demo-

lition started, we found that it was riddled with termites," Taylor says. "This meant that we had to rebuild a lot of walls from scratch. Also, Bon's was our first renovation with a BAL rating (fire zone) — we learnt so much about BAL requirements, like

needing to have aluminium window frames in some parts of the home."

When they're not busy working on their own before-and-afters, TBR's other key focus is proving that renovating isn't just a man's world.

"We are totally focused on inspiring and empowering women to create their own dream homes," Hindmarsh says.

"It's the 'why' behind everything we do.

"Now we are wholly focused on inspiring and empowering women, anywhere in the world, to turn their renovating dreams into reality," Taylor adds.

"We've poured all that hard-earned knowledge into our online renovation course."

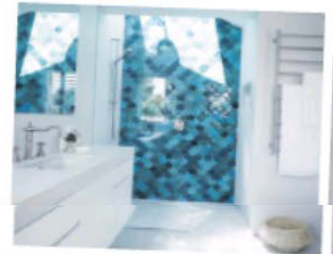
While home improvement has always been something of a national pastime in Australia, the women agree there has never



A Three Birds Renovations work.



Lana's forever home.



TBR is a thriving reno business.



Bonnie Hindmarsh's own family home was recently made over by the team.

been more interest in renovating. "With the emergence of social platforms like Pinterest and Instagram that are all about sharing beautiful images, we've got more inspiration at our fingertips," Hindmarsh says.

"Home renovating is no longer just about being functional, it's about creating a way of life for you and your family that feels and looks amazing."

As for the number-one tip they want other would-be renovators to know? "Always get three quotes — don't just reply on the first quote you get for anything," Taylor says.

"And reuse and repurpose wherever possible — whether it be relocating windows and doors within your renovation, painting old garden pots or finding some bargain shutters on Gumtree — go for it! It'll help your budget and the planet."