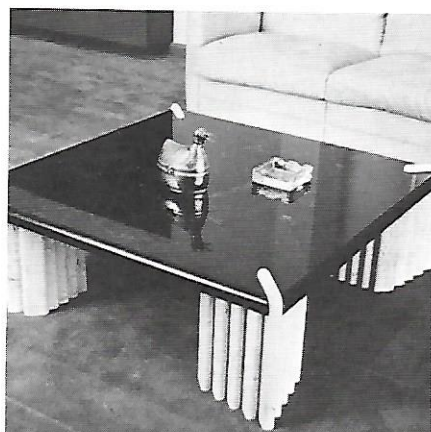




Above: Dark painted steel frame with a brown orange Brolite top, with curved edges and double radius corners.

Top: An extension dining table in black Brolite lacquer finish, with small quirk under edges.



Above: Tiled L-shaped verandah follows contours of penthouse apartment. Rigid positioning of tubs and furniture defines the walkway.

Left: Coffee table with Roman Travertine underframe with polished Imperial black granite from South Australia.

MARSH FREEDMAN ASSOCIATES

If there is one word that describes the work of Neville Marsh and George Freedman it is *permanence*. Their clients rarely change the look of houses designed by this very specialised firm.

'Unless they move to another house that is quite different, our clients seldom look for a change,' Neville Marsh says. 'We try not to design what is in current fashion. We design rooms which after much time will still be valid and comfortable.'

'We design a good deal of our own furniture, particularly cabinets and other fittings, because it is virtually impossible to buy what we consider our clients need. If we specify something "off the shelf" that is almost right, it is buying a compromise.'

George Freedman and Neville Marsh formed a partnership eight years ago. George Freedman is an American architect who stayed on after completing the design and installation for the Bank of NSW, as a designer from the planning unit of Knoll International, New York. 'I enjoy the forms of architecture and the planning of space — hence a natural progression to interior architecture.'

It is George Freedman's architectural background that prompts this design firm always to work to careful drawings for all their interiors.

'It is the only way to be completely sure of interiors. We know exactly what we need and we know to the last detail of lighting where everything will go. Once our furniture is in place and all the accessories are chosen, that is where everything should remain. If furniture is moved, then the lighting will no longer be rational. We really design a total look. From the very beginning we know exactly what the interiors will be like.'

The two partners work closely together and have a very clear idea of what they seek.

'We look for balance in the use of space, colour and texture,' Neville Marsh says. 'The first thing we solve is the use of the space. Where traffic will go; how stairs can be reached or windows and doors opened. It sounds simple, but is often overlooked — and one tends to find rooms which are merely filled with furniture. They just don't function well.'

'The next thing is the placement of furniture and then the rest follows. It is tremendously important to have the creative vision . . . to be able to see what will happen.'

To George Freedman, the approach to each new room is like creating a painting, refining and building an art form, making an art experience in the building up of a room. It is not always easy to make the client understand what is happening.

'We go through a period of assessing the needs of the client, making them understand, moulding them a little perhaps, but finding out what their hates and likes are and exploring the pattern of their life. How far you extend their imagination is what makes the difference between the exciting and the ordinary. Every time we work we extend ourselves further. It's a continuing process.'

Marsh Freedman Associates is not a low budget business. 'We do of course work to a budget for our clients, but that really means we give a price and then stay within its bounds. Very few people know how much interior design will cost. Occasionally we have clients who ask for a complete plan, but then carry it out progressively over a few years. It usually takes about nine months to complete a house.'

It is interesting that more young people are travelling and becoming educated towards designed interiors. There is much more

understanding of what is available and what is attainable in the minds of young Australians today than there was even five years ago.

'Ultimately the job is largely a reflection of the intelligence of the client. The more receptive the client, the more exciting the job.'

'We are not designing for a throwaway society. We prefer to think of permanence where individual items retain their design validity for a lifetime, where houses and decorating schemes last and give pleasure today and tomorrow and for decades to come.'

Marsh and Freedman make a complete presentation of their plans to a client after weeks of thought.

'Ultimately the job is largely a reflection of the intelligence of the client. The more receptive the client, the more exciting the job. If a client refuses a major presentation, they have not served themselves well, for the second thoughts are not likely to be as suitable. There has had to be a compromise.'

But for the most part, clients are eager to accept the elegant sophisticated furnishings, the smooth lines of specially styled cabinets, the soft furnishings chosen from the best the world has to offer, the brave colours of Marsh and Freedman. 'We are not designing for a throw away society. Ours is a permanent world where individual items retain their design validity for a lifetime, where houses and decorating schemes last and give pleasure today and tomorrow and for decades to come.'