

The locals still rave about "Favs" Cafe in Pall Mall, where the vanilla slices have never been rivalled and the marble soda fountain was a definite talking point.

A favourite spot for wedding receptions throughout the 1940s and 50s, the cafe was renowned for its unsurpassed quality and superb pastries.

However, a lesser known stamp this family left on Bendigo was its contribution to historic architecture.

The Favaloro Brothers' success brought with it wealth, invested in Bendigo in a most ostentatious fashion.

Between 1926 and 1930, Jack Favaloro built "Fiesole" at 1 Barkly Terrace East, one of a pair of red brick Edwardian mansions to grace the city's streets.

The other home, named after the city Venice, is the jewel of Kennington.

"Fiesole" is also a proud Italian, sitting high above Barkly Street, its tiled roof jutting above a 10-foot Cyprus hedge framing three sides of the property.

Entering the grand formal entrance is like stepping back to an era where wealth was expressed in the height of the ceiling and good taste in the quality of fittings.

And in this house, nothing's changed. The surprising and delightful fact here is, despite an ensuite added in the 1970s, the house is all but original.

Through ornate, stained glass doors to the left, the formal lounge/dining room boasts original carpet, good as the day it was chosen.

Cavernous in proportions, the room could double as a ball room; in fact it was the venue of choice for huge St. Patrick's Day parties, 21st birthdays and, of course, Christmas dinners.

Italian alabaster light shades hang from the ornate ceiling, a timber mantle takes centre stage along one wall and the decorative cornice is nearly two feet wide.

The house has been privy to three owners, the



current being the Meredith family. Dr. Harry and Catherine Meredith raised seven daughters behind these walls.

The family maintain this house was never a showpiece, always a family home.

The informal lounge room, almost as impressive, was central to family life. Here, a massive timber window, spanning the width of the room, defies any preconceptions of a dark and musty old house.

Built-in crystal cabinets sit either side of the mantle and gas heater. An air-conditioner is a modern addition to the picture rails and double doors.

The eat-in kitchen is in pristine, original condition, and the new owner would be forgiven for leaving well alone.

Small mint-green tiles line each wall, while cream and green cabinets circle the room. Each overhead cupboard is of frosted glass.

There is a walk-in pantry, a 900mm gas stove and a floor of that same cream and green vinyl squares.

A third living room is near the kitchen, while a return hallway leads to four of the five bedrooms.

The main suite is all vintage luxury. Silver screen legends Greta Garbo and Frederic March could have easily made this room part of the 1935 Anna Karenina set.

A bed sits recessed into a massive stained-glass bay window, with views through twin Canary Island Date Palms over Bendigo beyond.

A pendulum light shade hangs from a gold-leaf ceiling rose and there is room aplenty for mahogany antique furniture.

The family bathroom is again original, in shades of pastel yellow and gold, with a shower rose the size of a dinner plate.

Downstairs is the fifth bedroom, its entire ceiling is pressed metal. This theme continues in the billiard room next door, where the carpet shows the worn tracks of many a competition. Double French doors lead to the front garden.

A storage room and cellar are also on this level.

The girls remember shying away from the cellar, a place Dr. Meredith once hung a pig in readiness to donate to the local orphanage.

Outside there are several storage and garden sheds under the house, a benefit of being built into the sloping block.

A double garage with upstairs storage at the rear has access from Moore Street.

The laundry, off the wide back porch, still boasts its copper; thankfully now just a talking point.

Harry and Catherine purchased this house from one of the doctor's patients more than 40 years ago.

He loved this place, no doubt for its colossal size, grand period features and blue chip location.

But speaking to his daughters, it is evident he loved it for not only its sense of history, but for its sense of home.

~ Lauren Mitchell, Bendigo Weekly

