

trade secrets | Lynne Dwyer

Love me render

J & J TRADITIONAL RENDERING
1300 651 254, www.jjtrp.com.au

MOST REQUESTED SERVICE

Renovating terraces by restoring the original facade.

DETAILS

Referrals from a builder or home owner are a good way to find renderers, who should belong to the Master Builders Association. You can also look under cement rendering in the *Yellow Pages*.

Sometimes, a fresh coat of paint isn't enough to give a tired facade a new lease of life. Resurfacing may be needed – like a laser peel for the face – and one of the most popular treatments is concrete rendering.

"Sometimes people want what they call eyebrows – those fancy arches above windows – redone. Or they want their ashlar lines cut in ... for that Victorian look," says J & J Traditional Rendering's operational manager Steven Williams.

The company's owner, Joe Stephens, has been in the trade for 15 years and is an expert at replicating original features on period homes, making his own moulds and plaster casts.

Stephens and his wife, Justina, began J & J five years ago and, although they do a lot of heritage and speciality work, they also can give a house a modern minimalist look. The company does sand-and-cement rendering or acrylic rendering for external walls, and traditional white-set plastering for interior makeovers.

"A lot of the time, when people want to do the outside of their walls, they want to do the inside as well, when the walls are cracked and loose and



drummy," Williams says. The company has 17 tradesmen on the books and four or five jobs on the go at any time. It charges \$66 for a quote, which comes off the price of the job.

Stephens will visit, inspect your property and write up the quote. Then Williams will give a projected start date, which entails a three- to four-week wait.

Trader's tip

Make sure the foundations are sound before plastering or rendering walls, so movement doesn't crack new work.

"Sand-and-cement render won't stick to paint, so that has to be ground off, which is quite a messy, dusty process," Williams says.

"We use a masonry grinder, with an industrial vacuum cleaner attached to suck away dust ... we try as hard as we can to contain the dust". This is done a day or two before the render is applied.

"On smaller jobs, it's applied traditionally with a hawk and trowel; on larger jobs we use a render-pump and we spray it on."

Prices range from the worst-case scenario, which includes grinding back the brickwork and cutting in ashlar lines, of \$5000-\$6000 for a double-fronted two-storey facade. This takes about a week. A fence costs \$500-\$600 to render and is usually completed in a day.

"A lot of our work is renovation work, inside people's homes while they are living there," Williams says. He stresses that a good job is also a clean, no-fuss one. "We'll plastic up every exposed surface, over windows, doors, the carpet ... and we'll put up dust sheets to stop dust travelling to other parts of the house – whatever it takes to protect their property."

On the job:

J & J's Steven Williams, right, and Mark Slater.

Photo: Marco Del Grande