

Colour, texture and scene-stealing wallpapers are the making of this beautifully renovated 1920s family home in Sydney. STORY Georgia Madden | PHOTOGRAPHY Pablo Veiga KITCHEN Iksel wallpaper, Boyac. Island topped with Caesarstone White Attica. Oven, Miele. Wine fridge, Vintec. &Tradition 'The Pavilion' stools, Cult. Articolo Lighting 'Moni' pendant, Est Lighting. Bolon 'BKB Sisal' vinyl flooring, The Andrews Group. LIVING The artwork is a photograph homeowner Clive took while travelling. The decorative plates are family heirlooms. White side table, Fred International. Black side table, Boyd Blue. Lamp, Bragg & Co. Blue pot, Jardan. Yellow pot, Blu Dot.

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THIS IS THE LIFE

When a home has such an incredible view, it's all too easy to forget the interiors, says interior designer Brett Mickan. Here, colour, texture and artworks help create spaces that are interesting in their own right, preventing the view from dominating. "Each room reveals special moments," says Brett. "It's lovely to see how the spaces spill out so naturally to the outdoors, but it can also be closed up for a cosy, cocooning home when the weather is dreary."





t's the stuff of renovation nightmares... Homeowners Clive and Sarah spent a year renovating and extending their 1920s brick home on Sydney's Lower North Shore only to find that the reality fell short of their vision. Unsure how to fix it, the couple, who live here with their children Holly, 13, and Alex, 12, turned to interior designer Brett Mickan for help. "They couldn't pinpoint why, but it just didn't feel right," says Brett. "The whole scheme was very flat and austere, with lots of grey and hard edges. They're a young, active family and it didn't reflect their personalities."

The layout of the five-bedroom home was to remain the same, so Brett focused on colour, texture and pattern to introduce the warmth and character the family desired. "I come from a theatre-design background and I had to use all my theatre tricks to make the spaces work," he says. Brett began by removing a lot of the fussiness, such as heavy light fixtures, then whitewashed the walls and ceilings to make the rooms feel lighter and more spacious. Next came a medley of beautiful upholstery fabrics. "The family is originally from the UK so I wanted to incorporate a little bit of that traditional English feel into the design through the fabrics, but with an Australian twist," says Brett.

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DINING Dining table, owners' own. Poltrona Frau 'Archibald' dining chairs, Cult. Vintage chandelier, The Vault Sydney. Custom credenza by Bespoke Creations. Kizu table lamp, New Works. White planter, Lightly. Handvark Studio floor lamp, Fred International. Original leadlight windows. HALL Table, owners' own. Vintage mirror, Lunatiques. Florence Broadhurst runner, Tappeti. LIVING Brunschwig & Fils Wood-Bark wallcovering, Elliott Clarke. Central Australia 2 by Loretta Blake, Art2Muse Gallery. Armchairs and vintage writing desk, owners' own. Bosko sofa, Jardan. Rug, Tappeti.





ALEX'S ROOM Left Magnetic Curves Map wallpaper mural, Murals Wallpaper. Custom bedhead by Jade Wallpaper. Custom bedhead by Jade Upholstery in Peggy Platner 'Georgia' fabric, Motivo. STAIRWELL Florence Broadhurst 'Japanese Floral' wallpaper, Materialised. Articolo Lighting 'Fizi Trilogy' pendant, Est Lighting. HOLLY'S ROOM This page bottom *left and opposite* Headboard in Anna Spiro Textiles 'Kandilli' fabric. Wall light, One Forty Three. The Lap nightstand, Blu Dot. B and K at the Eden Roc by David Parise. Blinds in Osmond Kantilla Pandanus Paperbark fabric from Willie Weston. Window seat in Houles Ilaya from Unique Fabrics. Cushions in Colleen Ngwarraye Morton 'Singing Bush Medicine' fabric from Willie Weston (on bed), Anna Spiro Textiles 'Camona' fabric and Christopher Farr Cloth 'Pollen' fabric from Ascraft (on window seat). ▶

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THE LAYOUT

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"ALL THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A WARM, FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOME." Sarah, homeowner



"The fabrics are a key part of the design so we kept the surrounding colours very simple – almost gallery-esque – so they would sing."

But it's the previously characterless kitchen that is the star of the show. Step inside now and you're greeted with views to Sydney Harbour on one side and an incredible wallpaper mural on the other. "The mural was an investment but Clive and Sarah love the way the sepia tones cosy up the space and connect it to the outdoors. Personally, I love how it adds a little whimsy to the room. This is a family home, after all. You don't need to be too serious," says Brett. To make the cabinetry 'disappear' into the background, Brett changed the existing gunmetal grey finish to white. Luxury-vinyl floor tiles that mimic the look of sisal complete the fresh new look.

The scheme is equally simple in the adjacent dining room - white walls, clean-lined dining table and upholstered dining chairs - to keep the focus on the vintage French chandelier, specially selected for the way its colours speak to the Art Deco stained-glass windows behind it. One of the areas that particularly bothered Clive and Sarah was the living room: with its high ceilings and narrow footprint, it felt cold and uninviting. The solution was a timber-look wallpaper, which extends only as far as the picture rails to create a feeling of intimacy, says Brett. The room is decorated with family treasures, which contributes to the inviting vibe. "The vintage writing desk is an heirloom that they weren't sure would work in the new scheme, but I encouraged them to keep it. I think it's important that a home shows your history," he says. Another highlight is a framed photo Clive took on his travels, which sits alongside

The main bedroom, too, was dark and impersonal. Brett began the makeover by removing a wall that concealed the wardrobe in order to open up the space, then introduced a dramatic and contemporary fourposter bed with a mohair bedhead to give the room a focal point. The walls were lined with grasscloth wallpaper, while above the dressing table a vintage Venetian mirror was paired with minimalist modern wall lights. Cushions shot through with gold thread add a touch of luxury. Now, the space is an appealing mix of old and new, with a tangible sense of calm. "It's both opulent and comfortable," says Brett.

a trio of ornamental plates from the family's collection.

Clive and Sarah finally have the idyllic home they envisioned. "We love the way all the different elements work together to create a warm, family-friendly home. It's given our entire home a stunning visual focus," says Sarah. "The kitchen mural and the tranquil main bedroom are two of our favourite features." H&G Brett Mickan Interior Design, Surry Hills, NSW; (02) 8065 5492 or bmid.com.au.

MAIN BEDROOM Arteriors 'Kiki' table lamp, Boyd Blue. Grasscloth wallpaper, Porter's Paints. Frame canopy bed, CB2, with custom bedhead. Cushion on bed in Dedar 'Maybe Spitalfields' fabric, South Pacific Fabrics. Vintage Venetian mirror, The Vault Sydney. Articolo Lighting 'Eclipse Short' wall lights, Est Lighting. Stellar Works 'Blink' vanity stool, Living Edge. *Low Tide Bundanon* by Tannya Harricks, Art2Muse Gallery. Dressing table base finished in Dulux Lexicon Half.





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