

# Bright



# delight

THIS MULTICOLOURED FEDERATION FEAST FOR THE EYES BECOMES A PERFECT MATCH FOR A DYNAMIC SYDNEY FAMILY

Story SUE WHEELER Styling BRETT MICKAN Photography PABLO VEIGA

**COSY COMFORT** This joyous home on Sydney's Lower North Shore draws inspiration from its Federation roots and outlook, with interiors by designer Brett Mickan for homeowners Di and Mike and their children Joshua, Lachlan, Eloise, Harry and Olivia. In the main living, V-groove panelling, walls in Dulux White Duck Quarter and a cathedral ceiling create the backdrop for layers of prints, patterns and colours, while the King 'Concerto' sofa offers a comfortable night in front of the TV. "It's important for the colours to clash a little, to give it energy," says Brett. "Lots of children live in the space and it shouldn't feel like a showroom." The ottomans are by Diane Bergeron for Arthur G, the 'Sprout' side table is from Blu Dot and the curtains in Christopher Farr fabric are from Coco's Soft Furnishings. The entry (opposite) extends a colourful welcome, with a vintage lamp, 'Unfold' pendants by Muuto (try Surrounding) and a 'Ti Vedo' owl wall lamp by Karman (try LightCo). Wainscoting adds grandeur and contrast to Dulux Delta Break gracing the walls. "We also have panelling upstairs, which ties the old and new spaces together," says Di. >



ARTWORKS (ON LEFT WALL) LOW TIDE BUNDANON TANNYA HARRICKS (ON RIGHT WALL, PARTLY SEEN) MISS WONG VLADIMIR TRETCHIKOFF (OPPOSITE) JOANINA GOMBATTO DOG VASE (OPPOSITE) VINTAGE FIND CUSTOM RUG TAPPETI ACTUAL COLOUR MAY VARY ON APPLICATION





With busy jobs and five children under 17, there's never a dull moment for this Sydney family... and the same goes for the colourful interiors of their renovated 1918 Federation home. Its blood orange front door and chartreuse hallway are a nod to the vibrancy beyond.

"I love colour as it makes me feel alive," says homeowner Di, who lives here with husband Mike and their children, Joshua, 16, Lachlan, 15, Eloise 12, and twins Harry and Olivia, nine. "I think the house embodies the personality of our family – there's always a lot going on and we are positive people with a bright outlook on life."

The couple bought the house in 2001 and lived in it for a while before moving to Hong Kong, where they stayed for 12 years. "We did a more straightforward, and mainly neutral, renovation in 2012, but when we returned in 2017 we wanted to build a second storey and stamp our style on it," says Di. "We now had five children and part of the deal of coming back to Australia was that they each got their own bedroom."

Di enlisted designer Brett Mickan, well-known for injecting colour into interiors and creating captivating and unique spaces. Brett and his team, who Di had worked with before, handled the entire renovation from the design and build to the decor. "I love green, as you can tell," says Di, "so I asked Brett to create something colourful that expressed our personalities (probably more mine). I have complete trust in Brett and told him, 'Go for your life'. Well, I'm a banker... he's the designer!"

The family lived through the renovation, which was "pretty full on", but after a year of using a makeshift kitchen, their dream abode was ready. The new second level has two bedrooms, a bathroom, study and a communal lounge that is home to one of the family's two pianos, from which music drifts downstairs. On the ground level there are three bedrooms and the master suite, an L-shaped living, dining and kitchen and what Di calls the "adults' lounge". Outside, Brett had previously supervised extensive landscaping and the building of a pool. This renovation included a covered entertaining area and outdoor kitchen.

With the interiors, respecting the heritage of the home was integral. "I wanted to blur the lines between the original Federation home and the extension, in a contemporary way," says Brett. "I used the green and touches of red found in the stained-glass window of the original front door as inspiration – colour defines the spaces and leads you through." Di's penchant for mid-century design also informed the palette. "The green in the hallway references this period and Federation, but its yellow base is brighter than in a traditional Federation home," says Brett.

A floral theme meanders through – seen in pretty, printed cushions, headboards and ottomans – and connects the home to the garden and the nostalgia of florals in Federation style, while pieces from Hong Kong and other oriental finds imbue the interior with the family's life story.

"The interiors are bright and engaging, but also warm and relaxing," says Di. "When I look at parts of the house, I think, 'Oh my God, how do you pull all those colours together so beautifully?' Our home makes me feel full of energy." And that suits this vibrant family perfectly.

**ADULTS' LOUNGE** (below and opposite, bottom) A palette that says 'pow' and a mix of contemporary and vintage pieces create a lounge that feels lively but lived in. "Despite its vibrancy it's really relaxing," says Di (pictured opposite). "There's also a study, desk and bookshelf built into the wall, so [I do a lot of reading here." Brett paired Di's sofa (see King's 'Plaza' for similar) with reupholstered vintage chairs. "Contemporary pieces are lovely, but vintage pieces bring a story and add layers to your interior," he says. "Also, the mixed periods of vintage diffuses the lines of what particular period it is and gives the design longevity." The 'Matter' cement square coffee tables in Ivory from CB2 and acid yellow *ISO 1* sculpture by Rudi LoveApple bring contemporary flair and pop against walls in Dulux Grape Leaf. "I wanted a special painting – something that reflected the other colours," says Di of *Winter Afternoon* by John Boker (below). Another beautiful artwork, Dana Dion's *Morning Harbour* (opposite, bottom) completes the scheme. >



CUSTOM RUG (BOTH PAGES) TAPPET ACTUAL PAINT COLOUR MAY VARY ON APPLICATION







**KITCHEN** “This kitchen not only makes me smile, but it’s also highly functional and easy to keep clean,” says Di, who loves to bake her favourite honey bread for the family at weekends in her AEG ovens (bottom left). The walls and Shaker-style cabinetry by EKD wear glorious Dulux Grape Leaf with confidence, while a striking Hong Kong cityscape, *Typhoon Warning* by Francesco Lietti, takes pride of place opposite the Carrara Quantum Quartz island from Granite & Marble Works (top left and bottom right). “This was an important piece,” says Di of the painting. “It’s special to us and evokes many memories so I asked Brett to use it as inspiration.” A collection of vases from Blu Dot, The DEA Store and Lunatique (top right) echo the buildings and colours in the picture. **PANTRY** (top left) “An out-of-view but accessible pantry is a must-have with five children all using appliances,” says Di. **DINING** The custom ‘Simon Says’ table by Dowel Jones is a family favourite for dinners and entertaining, and it comfortably seats 10 on sunflower yellow Cantarutti ‘Anja’ chairs (try Eurofurn). A vintage abstract artwork by Jen Ellis from Rudi Rocket matches the yellow and green tones in the room, while an ornate chandelier already owned by Di brings a unique twist.

## WE LOVE... *vivid neutrals*

A neutral setting doesn’t need to be, well, neutral. “Some people think dark colour makes a room darker, but using Dulux Grape Leaf here and matching the curtains creates a blended background which acts as a neutral,” says Brett. “It makes these elements ‘disappear’, leaving furniture and artwork to define the space. Also, choosing curtains in the same colour creates a soft silhouette without being overpowering.” Curtains in Élitis fabric by Coco’s Soft Furnishings. Visit [cocos.net.au](http://cocos.net.au) and [dulux.com.au](http://dulux.com.au). >



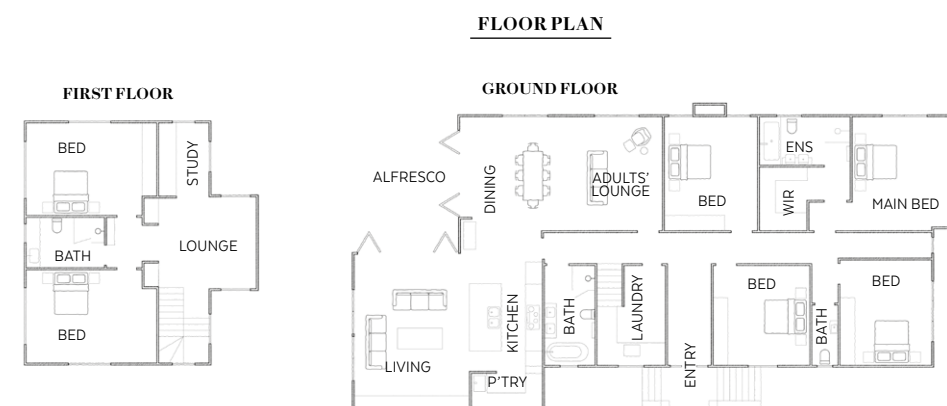
‘DITA’ STOOLS (BOTTOM LEFT) GRAZIA & CO CABINET HANDLES INDEX + CO TAPWARE CEA DESIGN CUSTOM VASE ON ISLAND NATALIE ROSIN RUG (OPPOSITE) INTERNATIONAL FLOORCOVERINGS ACTUAL PAINT COLOUR MAY VARY ON APPLICATION



“THE CUSTOM-MADE *headboard* CAPTURES THE ASPECT OUTSIDE THE WINDOW *beautifully*” DI



ILLUSTRATION KENZIEDSIGN.COM CUSTOM BLINDS MADE WITH FABRIC BY (ABOVE LEFT) DIANE BERGERON AND (ABOVE RIGHT) JIAN MANKIN (TRY FABRIC STUDIO) FLOOR & WALL TILES (ABOVE RIGHT) OLDE ENGLISH TILES 'LET ITUCE VASE TAPWARE RESE HANDLES INDEX + CO 'IL FANALE 'MOLECULA' PENDANT LIGHT (OPPOSITE) LIGHTCO ACTUAL PAINT COLOURS MAY VARY ON APPLICATION



**OLIVIA'S BEDROOM** (above left) A harmonious marriage of vintage and contemporary fills Olivia's room with personality. A floral bedhead (get the look with Sanderson fabric from Domestic Textile) and vintage-shop painting sit next to a 'Lap 2 Door' credenza from Blu Dot and 'Bear Perch' table lamp by Stephanie Ng Design (try Luna Luna). "The credenza is contemporary, but the panelling is a lovely tick to Federation style," says Brett. **LAUNDRY** (above right) Dulux Clunies (upper wall and joinery) and Dulux Lexicon Quarter bring a fresh, clean look to a room that punches above "A hanging rack is around the corner and all the storage under the staircase, where I keep linen, is really clever," says Di. **MAIN BEDROOM** (opposite) "I wanted this to feel comfortable and knew Brett would turn it into something calming," says Di. "It isn't vibrant, but it isn't bland either - it's just a different application of colours." Bedside tables from Hong Kong inspired the Dulux Chintz Grey on the walls, and the headboard upholstered in Zoffany 'Verdure' fabric (try Domestic Textile) nods to nature. On the table, an Arteriors 'Tassel' lamp from Boyd Blue makes a statement and Tumi-isi 'Stacking Blocks' from Provider Store whimsically reflects the palette. The curtains were made with Virginia White fabric from Tigger Hall Design. >



**ALFRESCO** Brett knew Mike “would live outside 365 days a year if he could” and built an outdoor kitchen with all the bells and whistles, selecting louvered covering by Vergola for year-round practicality. “Mike loves it and uses the Weber barbecue and smoker all the time,” says Di of the custom bench by Townsend Landscaping. Fermob ‘Bellevie’ furniture from Design Nation makes this a favourite spot. “A friend’s tip to have a built-in ice machine was fantastic,” says Di of the Devanti life-saver. “How many people go and buy ice when they have a barbecue? If you want ice on hand for a vodka, lime and soda like I do – it’s great!” A ‘Circula’ side table from Blu Dot and cushions in Osborne & Little fabric from Domus Textiles continue the blue theme.

### Source book

**Interior design:** Brett Mickan, 0439 888 581, bmid.com.au.

**Builder:** Cape Cod Australia, (02) 9849 4444, capecod.com.au.

**Kitchen and joinery:** EKD (Euro Kitchen Design), (02) 9604 4476, ekdkitchensandjoinery.com.

**Landscaping:** Townsend Landscaping, 0408 816 946, townsendlandscaping.com.au, @townsend\_landscaping.



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## INSIDE STORY Di and Mike's home

### Who lives here?

Di, a fintech company owner; husband Mike, an electrician; their children, Joshua, 16, Lachlan, 15, Eloise, 12, twins Harry and Olivia, nine; and cavoodles Frankie and Lulu.

### Why do you love colour?

Di: “It makes me feel alive and gives me energy. While the house is bright and engaging, it feels relaxing, not busy. The children love the colour, too.”

### Your favourite place to relax?

“I love sitting in the ‘adults’ lounge’ reading, with classical music on in the background. Mike’s favourite spot is on the lounge outside.”

### How did you balance vintage with contemporary pieces?

Brett (designer): “A few vintage mixed in with contemporary pieces make them feel special, like a piece of art. A whole room of vintage would feel more like a set from ‘The Sullivans!’”



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1. Lulu the cavoodle grabs a spot on a vintage chair reupholstered in Gaston y Daniela fabric (try Domestic Textile).
2. Hallway walls in Dulux Delta Break offset Lexicon Quarter wainscoting.
3. Custom cushions in Gaston y Daniela and Osborne & Little fabrics by Coco's Soft Furnishings enliven the living area. The ‘Lens’ sconce is from West Elm.
4. Flaxfield bedlinen from Ivy Lane and custom cushions in Brochier's dotted ‘Puffo’ in 005 Limone from South Pacific Fabrics dazzle in the main bedroom.
5. Natural light brightens the dining area.
6. A collection of wall plates from Dutch designers Studio DeSimone-Wayland makes a unique statement in the hallway.
7. In The Sac bedlinen and half-walls in Dulux Mauve Stone finish Olivia's room.

TABLE LAMP (#1) ORIENT HOUSE ARTWORKS (#1) DANA DION (#3) JOANNA GOMBATTO (#5) JEN ELLIS (#7) VINTAGE FIND ACTUAL PAINT COLOURS MAY VARY ON APPLICATION



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