

THIS IS THE LIFE

Interior designer Jillian Dinkel assuaged any fears that Rebecca and Robert had about veering too much into modern territory. Rebecca says the renovated home is a perfect mix of old and new: "The best bit is that we've lost none of the character of the house. Its beautiful heritage features have been refreshed and brought to life with natural light and new materials."

EXTERIOR Charred timber cladding covers the home's rear exterior. Arbon pavers, Eco Outdoor. Inside, the kitchen features Venture Plank engineered floorboards from Havwoods.
KITCHEN *Opposite* The stone on the benchtops and island is Arabescato Corchia marble from Granite & Marble Works. On the underside of the island is a strip of marble and fluted cabinetry in Dulux Flooded Gum. Built-in oven and microwave oven, both Neff. Thomas stools, SP01.

NEW TRADITION



Determined to protect their home's distinctive heritage features, one Sydney family embarked on a sensitive renovation that balances old-world charm with contemporary confidence.

STORY *Carli Philips* | STYLING *Madeline McFarlane* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Pablo Veiga*

KITCHEN *This page and opposite left* Custom Articolo 'Lumi' pendants, Est Lighting. Walls are painted Dulux Lexicon and the cabinets painted Dulux White Duck. Under-cupboard rangehood, Sirius. Handles, MadeMeasure. Charlie jug (beneath books) by Katarina Wells from Curatorial + Co. Cooktop, Neff. Ceramic planter (holding flowers) by Tatsiana Shevarenkova from Saint Cloche. Bolero sink, Franke. Icon kitchen mixer, Astra Walker. **BUTLER'S PANTRY** *Opposite right* Carrara marble mosaics in a basket-weave pattern from Surface Gallery have been used to define this space.



Rebecca and Robert Lee were so concerned about compromising the traditional features of their home in Sydney's inner west that they put off renovating for more than a decade. Then, after finally having plans drawn up, they waited another five years. "Eventually, the planets aligned and we knew it was now or never," says Rebecca. "But the question was, how to move forward without destroying things like the ceilings and fretwork while still making the house work for modern life? At first, it was almost 'do no harm', but then we found the right person who could bring old and new together harmoniously." That person was designer Jillian Dinkel, who specialises in heritage homes.

Under the direction of Jillian and architect Maryanne Taskovski, the charming facade and front section of the house have remained intact, with a central corridor and two rooms running off either side. To the immediate right is son Harrison's bedroom, which is followed by the main bedroom with an ensuite and walk-in-robe. To the immediate left, two small bedrooms were transformed into one guest bedroom and a more formal sitting room.

"They didn't need four bedrooms, so we used this as an opportunity to create a more 'adult' space with some grown-up furnishings," says Jillian. "Because there was absolutely no way of getting more light into the existing rooms, we just embraced

it, leaning in and creating a cosy atmosphere by painting them a dark colour and adding a rich chocolate leather sofa, mature artwork and an eye-catching chandelier." All the original ceiling details, fireplace features and skirtings remain in pristine condition. "The patterned ceilings were amazing," adds Jillian. "I hadn't seen anything quite like them in a long time."

The same approach was taken in the main bedroom at the front of the house. "There's nothing wrong with a dark bedroom," Jillian says. "We just decorated it to suit the owners' tastes rather than focusing on the light." This involved creating cabinetry that walked the line between traditional and contemporary, with integrated features that include small crown mouldings at the top and little legs at the base. "It feels like a freestanding piece, which connects to a more traditional style of design rather than something seen in modern homes today."

The house had all the typical problems of a Federation home: cramped rooms, a disconnected garden and minimal storage. The main focus of the renovation was eliminating these concerns at the rear. Jillian marked the threshold to this area with a neat marble strip in the floor and then colour-matched the new floorboards with existing ones (but she ran them in a different direction to create a visual contrast).

Space-wise, everything felt very closed in. "We wanted a kitchen where things didn't fall on your head when you're ▶



STUDY NOOK Cesca chair, Thonet. Custom joinery in stained American oak. Drippy vase, Jordan. Lisa Johansson-Pape 'Senator' table light, Great Dane. Artworks (from left) by Hannah Nowlan and unknown artist. **DINING** *Opposite* Ceramics by Karlien van Rooyen and artwork by Daniel O'Toole, all from Curatorial + Co. &Tradition 'Formakami JH4' pendant light by Jaime Hayon, Cult Design. Cesca dining chairs, Thonet. ▶

trying to reach up and get the ingredients you need out of the pantry,” says Rebecca of her brief. Jillian achieved this by including an inordinate amount of storage space. “Now, not only does the kitchen benefit from a dedicated study desk and a home ‘command centre’ but there’s also a multitude of storage solutions such as a full-height pantry, drawers and cabinets for concealing appliances, recycling and rubbish bins,” she says. “All this, plus there is an adjoining butler’s pantry.”

Adds Jillian: “I don’t think I’ve ever put as much storage into a residential kitchen. Rebecca and Robert’s initial concern was that we wouldn’t be able to fit enough – but it’s possibly even more than they expected.”

There was even enough space to incorporate a three-metre-long island bench in Arabescato Corchia marble, using a slab selected early in the design process. “We always wanted it to be finished in one single piece without a join,” says Jillian. “We planned it right down to the millimetre to get it absolutely right.”

Creating the perfect look for the joinery was crucial, too. This was achieved by constructing traditional Shaker-style units with minimalist joinery pulls. ▶



SITTING This page and opposite Cleo sofa in Fleck ‘Pluto’ fabric with Luna cushions, Jordan (this page). Painting by Anthea Kemp from Saint Cloche. The limestone sculpture is by Lucas Wearne from Curatorial + Co. Aerin ‘Loire’ chandelier, The Montauk Lighting Co. Walls painted Dulux Knight of the Realm. Vessels by Valerie Vigar from Saint Cloche (opposite) rest on the ND side table from Great Dane. Continental sofa, Swedese. Maison de Vacances ‘Royal Velvet’ cushion, Bastille and Sons. Silk rug, The Rug Establishment. Painting by unknown artist.

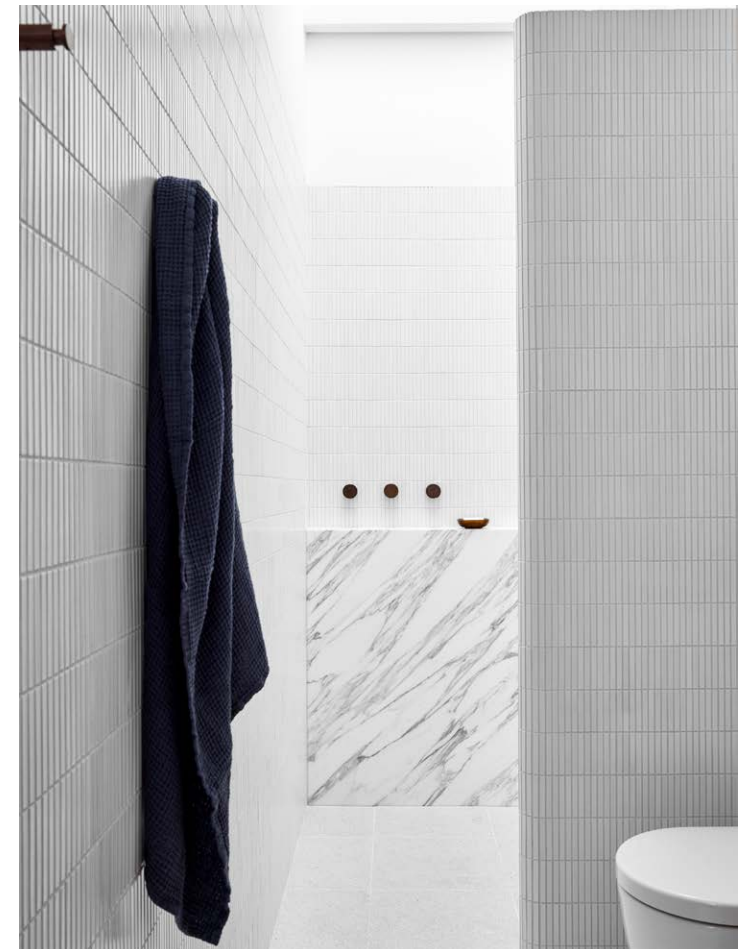
“We found the right designer who could bring the old and new together.” *Rebecca, owner*

THE PALETTE

Dulux White Duck (joinery)

Dulux Flooded Gum (joinery)

Dulux Knight of the Realm (sitting)



Unlike the original rooms, the extension was designed to incorporate as much natural light as possible. Glass doors and new windows were installed, along with large skylights over the open-plan kitchen. While some garden space was lost, it's now more functional than ever and has direct access to the house via the kitchen.

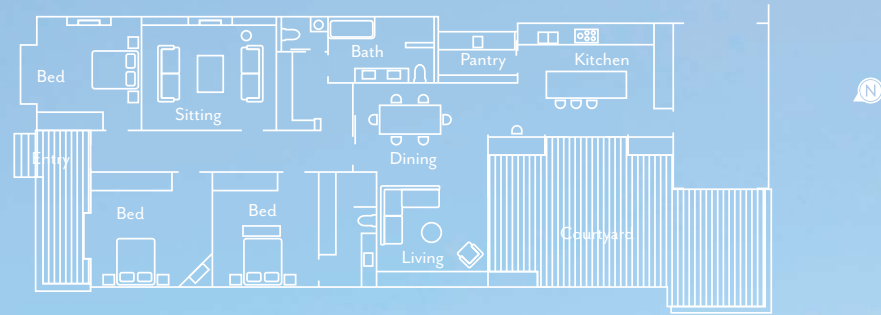
“We always envisioned being able to open up the steel-framed doors to the backyard so we could watch our son run inside and out from the comfort of our sofa,” says Rebecca. “The home we have now really suits our needs as a family and is a joy to live in. It's just so easy!”

Jillian Dinkel Designs, Mosman, NSW; jilliandinkel.com. Maryanne Taskovski Architect, Surry Hills, NSW; 0411 098 185 or mtarchitect.com.au. Green Anvil Co., Botany, NSW; (02) 8054 2387 or greenanvilco.com. Adam Robinson Design, Woollahra, NSW; (02) 8354 1077 or adamrobinsondesign.com.

POWDER ROOM *This page, top left and bottom right* Tapware, Astra Walker. Hawthorn Hill washstand, The English Tapware Company. The vanity is topped with Arabescato Corchia marble from Granite & Marble Works. Stoneware bottle by Asahi So from Saint Cloche. Articolo ‘Domi’ wall sconce, Est Lighting. Gubi ‘FA33’ mirror, Cult Design. Window frame painted Dulux Silkwort. **ENSUITE** *Top right* Tapware, Astra Walker. Inax ‘Yohen Border’ tiles from Artedomus feature on the walls. Juno towel, Jordan. **MAIN BEDROOM** *Opposite* The cushions were made from Kelly Wearstler ‘Graffito’ fabric in Deep Sky. Vase by Valerie Vigar. Moller ‘Bench #63’ in Natural Paper Cord, Great Dane. Bedside tables, Zuster. Custom rug. Articolo ‘Domi’ pendant, Est Lighting. Joinery in Dulux Silkwort.



THE LAYOUT



FACADE Fresh paintwork has enlivened the home's heritage features. "We've lived in the inner west for nearly 20 years and have had so many people stop and comment on our house and the quality of the work – and that's just from the outside," says Rebecca.



1

THE SOURCE

Heritage homes are best honoured with accessories that span the realms of classic and contemporary.



Produced by Shayne Burton.

1 Leaf vase in Blush, \$149, Domayne. 2 Thonet 'S 32 V' dining chair, \$1850, Anibou. 3 Gubi 'F.A. 33' mirror in Polished Brass, \$1499, Finnish Design Shop. 4 Changes ceramic bowl in Burgundy, \$305, Greg Natale Flagship Store. 5 & Tradition 'Formakami JH4' pendant light by Jaime Hayon, \$420, Cult Design. 6 Trembling in Earth's Breath artwork by Hannah Nowlan (80x80cm), \$3400 (framed). 7 Aphélie women's eau de parfum (100ml), \$299, Trudon. 8 Australian House & Garden cotton towels in Ocean Blue, from \$12 for a facewasher, Myer. 9 Estancia Leather Co 'The Vittoria' leather 3-seater sofa in Taupe, \$4595, Coco Republic. For Where to Buy, see page 190. H&G