

ONE GOOD TURN

Flipping the floor plan of this family home has enhanced its sense of connection and captured a delightful new view.

STORY *Carli Philips* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Maree Homer*



STREET ENTRANCE Olive, the owners' jagotto romagnolo pooch, welcomes visitors to the sensitively renovated home. Sconce lights, Le Marché Antiques. Front door and trims painted Porter's Paints Aniseed, walls painted Porter's Paints Popcorn. Awning by Aalta Awnings. Landscaping by Aam Robinson Design



The owners of this 150-year-old house in Sydney say they fell in love with the property's grace and character as soon as they saw it. But after living in the home for five years - with three children under 10 - the once-charming abode was looking a little weary. "We wanted visitors to our home to have the same feeling we had when we first set eyes on it," says one.

Having decided to renovate, the next step was putting a design dream team together. Architect Michael Suttor was first cab off the rank, followed closely by interior designer Denai Kulcsar.

Denai was tasked with bringing the house back to a version of its original state and devising a "predominantly monochromatic" interiors scheme. This involved restoring the original decorative elements the owners loved so much - mouldings, wrought-iron railings and french doors - where necessary, and updating in parts. Most significantly, these updates included a new coffered ceiling in the entrance, herringbone flooring and wainscoting in the stairwell.

Initially, the homeowners were set on a "French-farmhouse-in-the-city aesthetic - nothing too modern or angular". But that plan evolved as they got deeper into the project. "As we spent more time researching fixtures and furnishings, and thinking about how the pieces would fit into our home, we kept returning to European antiques," says the owner. "We drew inspiration from places like Patina Farm in Ojai, California [the home of interior designer Brooke Giannetti] and [UK antique and interior design firm] Maison Artefact. We sourced lots of old French leather club chairs and Turkish rugs to create cosy nooks throughout the house too."

While they were clear in their desire for a neutral colour palette, they were conscious of avoiding anything that might look too stark. "We wanted a mix of textures so the house felt warm," says the owner. "Durability of fabrics and finishes was also important, because first and foremost we wanted it to be a family home where the kids could use crayons on the sofa without us worrying too much." Denai assured them family life and white interiors aren't necessarily a recipe for disaster. "People don't realise that lighter fabrics are often easier to clean," she explains.

Prior to the renovation, the home's two front rooms took prime position on the floor plan: north-facing, they enjoyed plenty of sun and overlooked the pool and garden. This simply didn't work for the current residents. "Nobody ever went in them," says the owner. "Instead, we were using a small kitchen and a south-facing living area that backed onto the garage. It made no sense. We didn't need formal entertaining spaces; we wanted a home that felt light and ▶

FOYER Top Chandelier, Le Marché Antiques. Table, Camargue. Vintage rug. Walls painted Dulux Lexicon Quarter (throughout). **LIVING** Left and opposite Mirror, Le Marché Antiques. French club chairs imported from the US. Cushions, Hermès. Coffee table, Restoration Hardware. Antique console. Vintage rug. Parquetry flooring, Nash Timbers (throughout).



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DINING Pendant light, Le Marché Antiques. Dining table and chairs, Sally Beresford Antiques.
KITCHEN Joinery finished in Porter's Paints Grey Pebble. Calacatta Vagli marble benchtops and splashback, Artedomus. Corona cabinet pulls, Armac Martin. Perrin & Rowe tapware, The English Tapware Company. Curtains made from Les Creations Foggia fabric, Ascraft.



THIS IS THE LIFE

French doors open directly from the open-plan rear to a balcony that overlooks the garden. "We just adore all the outdoor living spaces," say the homeowners. "Now we can open up the whole kitchen onto a big terrace with outdoor dining and have families over in summer to enjoy a meal with all the kids splashing around below us – all within sight." ▶



"We wanted a home that felt light and generous, with an open-plan living area that flowed through to the garden."

HOMEOWNER

generous, with an open-plan living area that flowed through to the garden. A place for the family to gather and spend time together.”

To achieve a better relationship to the outdoors, the interior floor plan was flipped. The main entrance was moved and widened, and walls demolished to create a large open-plan space with a living area. A hallway to the left now leads to the dining and family room and, opposite, a laundry and powder room. Walls at the other end of the house were knocked out to make way for an open-plan kitchen and family room, with french doors that unfold onto a brand new, elevated terrace with a custom-made balustrade.

Denai says the first floor needed some “major TLC”. The wall panelling was repaired and the main bedroom suite outfitted with decorative French-influenced elements. Off the hallway at the other end are three bedrooms, with one spanning the rear and opening onto a balcony overlooking the street.

Next, attention turned to the garden. Masterminded by Adam Robinson Design, the new landscaping is built around a central lawn. “The garden was intended to be a bit loose and overgrown, with a profusion of Mexican sage, jasmine, lavender, olive trees and hydrangeas - plants with attractive flowers and foliage we could cut and bring inside,” says the owner.

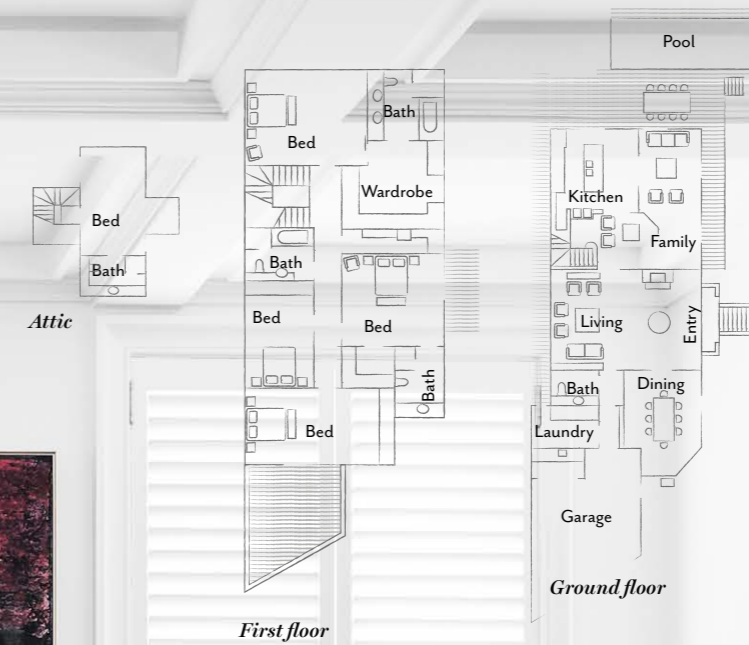
Renovation complete, the house is better connected with the gardens, the layout flows more easily and the home once again exudes the grandeur, grace and confidence its owners fell in love with. It’s the happy ending such a stunning property, and its occupants, deserve. ▶

Denai Kulcsar Design, Maroubra, NSW; dkinteriors.com.au.

Michael Suttor Architects, Waverley, NSW; michaelstutor.com.au.

Adam Robinson Design, Woollahra, NSW; (02) 8354 1077 or adamrobinsondesign.com.

THE LAYOUT



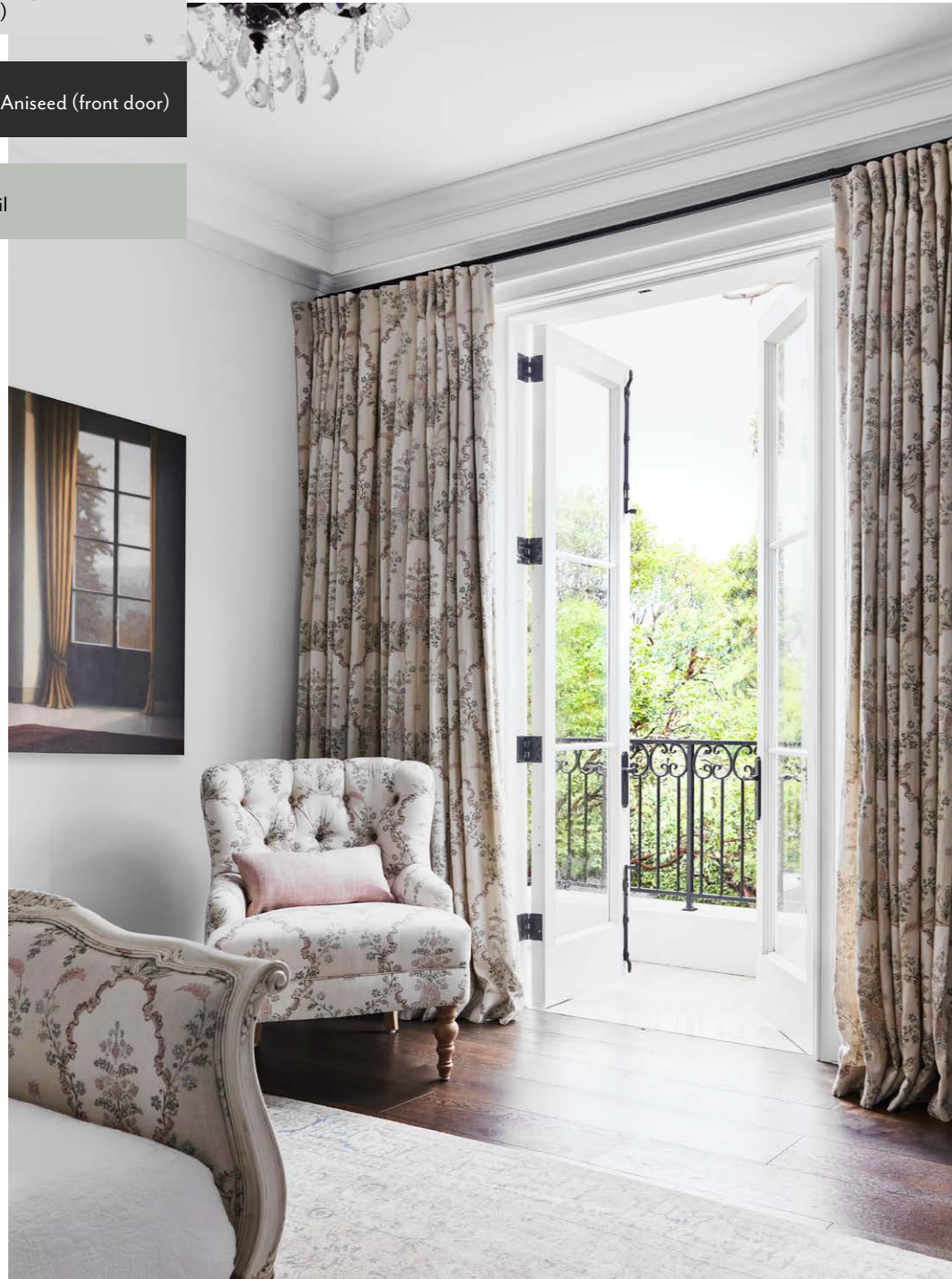
LIVING Feature artwork by Susan Norrie, smaller artworks from Restoration Hardware. Chesterfield sofa upholstered in Lino ‘De Naturale’ linen from Westbury Textiles. Antique coffee table and occasional chairs. Vintage rug and trunk. Floor lamp and antique bottles, Le Marché Antiques. Shutters by Australian Shutters & Blinds (throughout).

THE PALETTE

Porter's Paints Grey Pebble
(kitchen island)

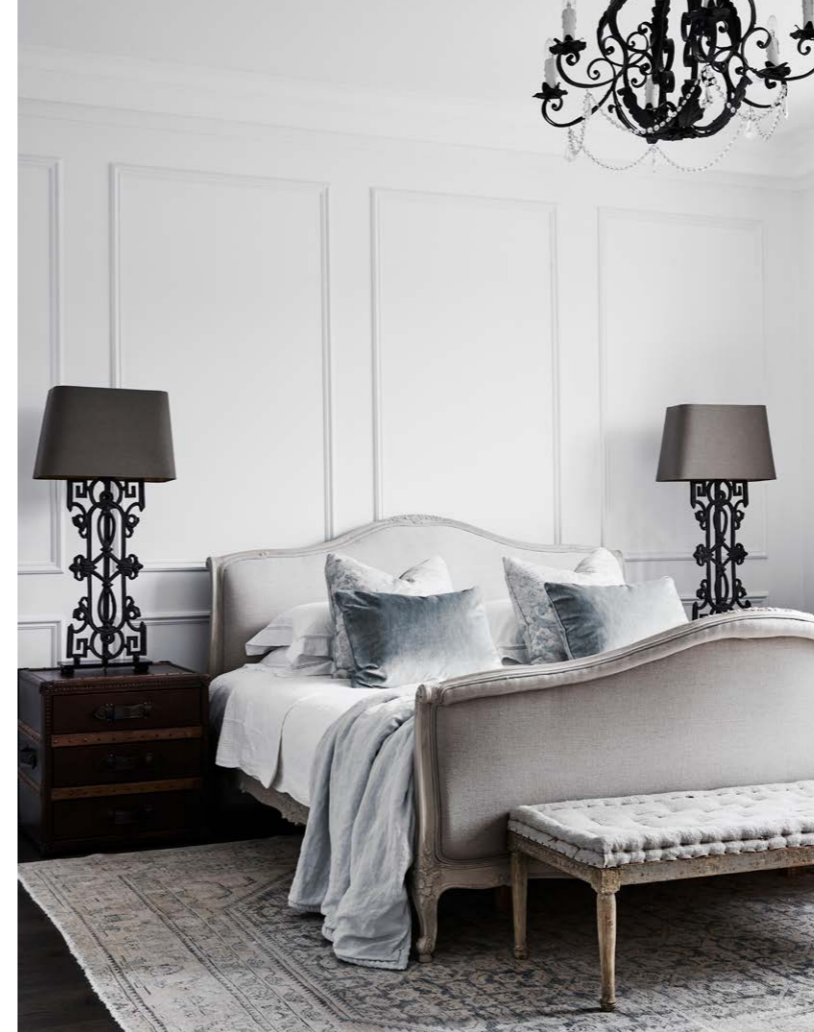
Porter's Paints Aniseed (front door)

Dulux Grey Pail



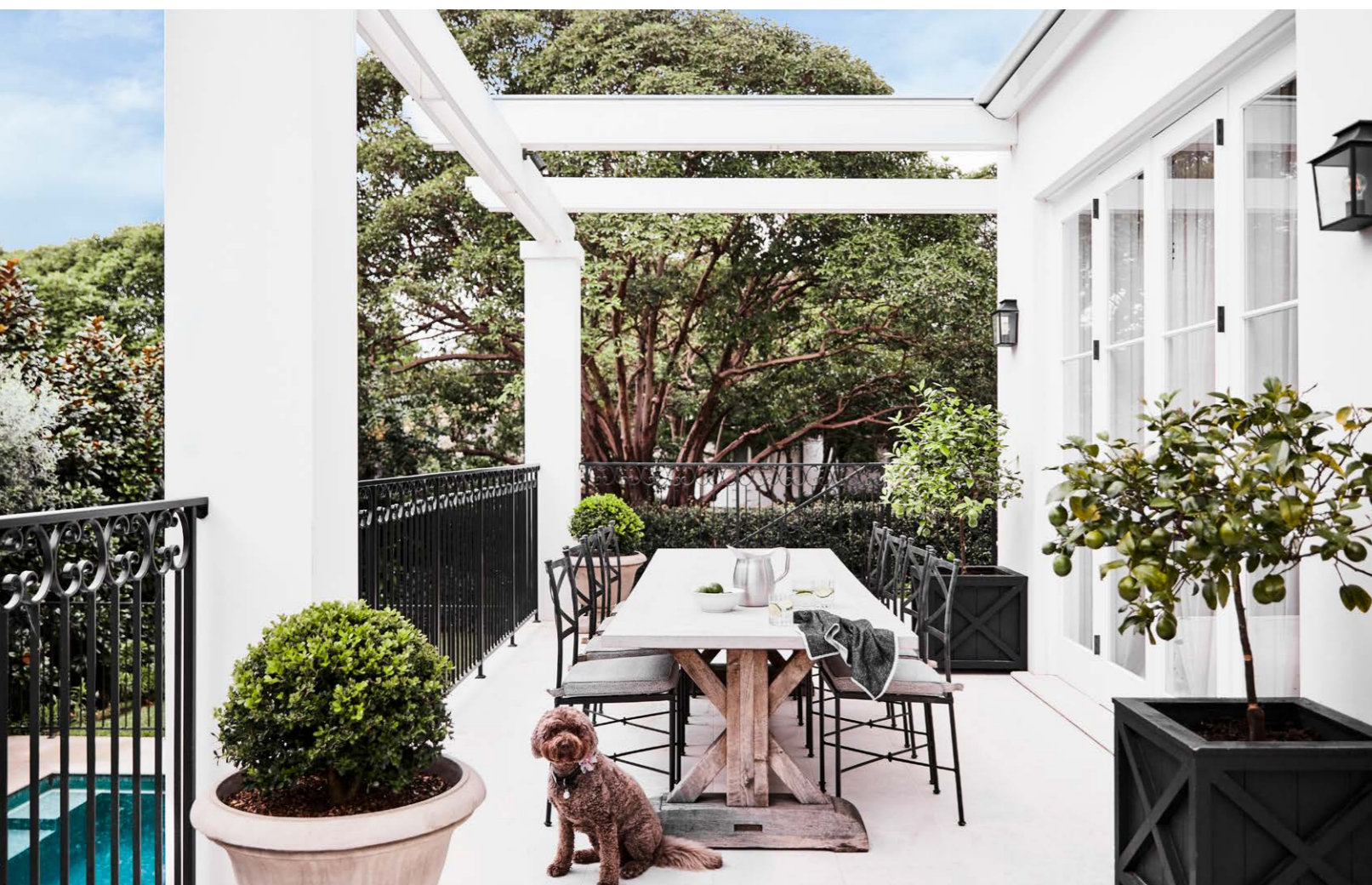
DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM Above Artwork by Peter Boggs. Bed, Camargue. Custom chair, Denai Kulscar Interiors. Bed and chair upholstery and curtains in Lewis & Wood 'Vallance' fabric in Myrtle Pink, Elliott Clarke. **MAIN BEDROOM** Opposite top left Chandelier, Sally Beresford Antiques. Table lamps, Le Marché Antiques. Bed, Camargue. Vintage rug and bench. **POWDER ROOM** Opposite, top right Mirror, Shades of Pale. Sconce lights, Le Marché Antiques. Classique tapware, Brodware. Carrara marble vanity benchtop and splashback, Granite & Marble Works. **SON'S BEDROOM** Opposite bottom right Floor lamp, Le Marché Antiques. Armchair sourced in the US. Bedside table, Restoration Hardware. Bed, Domayne. **MAIN ENSUITE** Opposite, bottom left Classique tapware, Brodware. Worcester bath, Victoria+Albert. Grigio Orsola marble tiles, Artedomus. ▶

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



“We wanted a mix of textures, so the house felt warm. Durability of fabric and finishes was also important.” HOMEOWNER

GARDEN “The garden was intended to be a bit loose, wild and overgrown – nothing too formal or manicured,” says the owner. **POOL AREA/TERRACE** *Left and below* Overlooking the pool, the new terrace is the perfect vantage point to enjoy the garden and supervise swimmers at the same time. Niebla pool tiles, Ezarri. Sconce lights, Lighting Design Direct. Custom dining table, Camargue. Curved planter, Restoration Hardware. The square planters, potted with Meyer lemon trees, are custom pieces.



THE SOURCE

Vintage-look pieces in neutral tones and a variety of textures create a classic home with universal appeal.



Produced by Antonietta Panuccio.

1 Colombo mirror, \$1299, Provincial Home Living. 2 Vintage Turkish Isparta rug (262x163cm), \$2850, Cadrys. 3 Thomas O'Brien 'Piaf' double-sconce wall light, \$649, The Montauk Lighting Co. 4 Jovi vase in Milk, \$220, Manyara Home. 5 H Riviera wool and cashmere cushion in Seigle, \$945, Hermès. 6 Reverence Aromatique hand wash, \$43, Aesop. 7 Australian House & Garden 'Otoway' floor lamp with linen shade, \$299.95, Myer. 8 Perrin & Rowe 'Aquitaine' one-hole mixer tap in Polished Brass, \$1550, The English Tapware Company. 9 Flexform 'Adda' leather 3-seater sofa, POA, Fanuli. 10 Ludlow trunk-style side table in Black, \$829, Pottery Barn. For Where to Buy, see page 206. H&G