

## tone on tone

A revamped design, moody palette, and fine furnishings came together to give this once-neglected period home a stunning new look

STORY JACKIE BRYGEL STYLING JOHN MANGILA  
PHOTOGRAPHY NATALIE HUNFALVAY

A streamlined living, dining and kitchen extension has helped make busy family life a whole lot easier for Claire and Joel, owners of this graceful Sydney residence. In the living room, a cream sofa is topped with geometric cushions from Boyd Blue, with statement 'Norfolk' glass pendants from Magins suspended above. The dining area, comprising a much-loved timber table the couple has owned for years and classic chairs from Thonet, is positioned perfectly for both family meals and entertaining. Claire designed the billowy two-tone curtains herself and had them made by The Curtain Factory. >





"WE LOVE collecting ART NOW THAT WE HAVE THIS HOUSE AND THE SPACE TO HANG IT" - CLAIRE



Claire and Joel's heritage-listed Sydney home is steeped in more than a century of history, but time hasn't stood still within its grand, newly revitalised walls. The couple, parents to four-year-old Harriet and one-year-old Ashton, wouldn't have it any other way. "We wanted this to be a family-friendly home," says Claire, who juggles motherhood with a full-time career in marketing. "It's important that nothing is too precious for little hands."

The search for a larger home began when the couple realised their previous residence, a compact, semi-detached inner-city terrace, was almost bursting at the seams. "We decided to look a bit further afield," recalls Claire. "We were happy to consider something bigger that we could add our own touches to."

The house they discovered, and now call home, had not seen so much as a fresh coat of paint in decades and was calling out for a major makeover. "It was absolutely derelict when we found it," says Claire. "Nothing had been done to it since it was first built over 100 years ago. An older lady – who had been in the home since she was born – was still living in a couple of the rooms, but the rest of the house had lots of water damage, with floors caving in and lots of other problems. It was literally falling apart." Yet, Joel, who works in construction, was inspired by its immense potential. Before long, he and Claire, with the help of architect Michael Bell, had planned a sympathetic renovation, complete with a reconfigured front, new rear and second-storey extension.

Feeling adventurous, the couple agreed this would be a home in which colour would reign supreme. "We decided that the ceilings and woodwork would be white, but none of the walls," says Claire.

"We spent a lot of time looking through magazines and websites and called in a colour consultant from Porter's Paints. Then we said, 'Okay, we're ready to risk this!' We really love the result. The colour brings so much personality to every room in the house."

The couple also sought the expertise of interior stylist and colour consultant Ann King of Sage Colour And Style. "Ann was so good at working out what we wanted," says Claire. "Now, the house is completely unrecognisable from how it was when we first saw it." On the ground floor, an elegant formal dining and sitting room are dressed in dark, dramatic tones, as is the olive-hued guest bedroom, while softer, muted greys impart a sense of lightness and informality to the new kitchen, casual dining room and lounge. Upstairs, Claire and Joel's master suite – with its romantic, inky-tinged walls, serene reading nook, sumptuous ensuite and walk-in wardrobe – is suitably grand yet soothing, while the kids' bedrooms are brimming with their own enchanting sense of colour.

Through all the changes, the home's sense of history remains palpable – something that is far from lost on its current owners, who have chosen to embrace both its past and present incarnations. "I often think about who the previous residents might have been," reflects Claire. "Hopefully we've done them proud."

**LIVING ROOM** (above left) A plush 'Chelsea' couch from Sofa Studio and a West Elm throw form a must-sit spot. A framed trio of prints by renowned Australian artist David Bromley bring a pop of colour to the soft grey wall.

**KITCHEN** (this page & opposite, bottom left) Grey may be its stand-out hue, but there's nothing drab and dreary about this exquisitely renovated kitchen. Classic Carrara marble is the stone of choice for the benchtops and splashback, marrying beautifully with the misty tones of Porter's Paints Wood Smoke on the walls. The extractor and timber cabinetry are a shade darker in Porter's Paints Elegance. A simple 'Manor' pendant from Beacon Lighting illuminates the island bench, while Ikea 'Ingolf' bar stools are one of Claire's favourite bargain finds. An oversized vintage print from Allposters provides a splash of vibrant ruby, with an eclectic hanging arrangement of retro collectables making an eye-catching feature in the corner. >



**MASTER BEDROOM** (this page & opposite, top right) "We wanted to give this room more of a dark and moody feel, to make it conducive to relaxation and sleep," says Claire. Stylist Ann King paired sumptuous Sheridan bedlinen with a custom bedhead enveloped in 'Sirocco' fabric from Unique Fabrics. Sheer curtains add a romantic, floaty touch.

*we love*

### *Dreamy hues*

After living in an almost all-white abode, Claire and Joel decided to embrace colour in their new home. Their seductive palette of rich navys, steely greys and earthy olives lends soft sophistication. Here in the master suite, navy walls are proof that dark hues can indeed be soothing; Eggshell acrylic paint in Atlantic, from \$43.20/1L, Porter's Paints; porterspains.com.

**QUILT**  
Abbotson linen bed cover in Smoke, \$399.95/queen, Sheridan.



"WE designed THE GUEST ROOM AROUND THE FIREPLACE" - CLAIRE



**GUEST BEDROOM** (top left, above left & above right) In the gorgeous, light-filled guest room, rich olive walls, an original marble fireplace and a gilded mirror from Mirror Gallery evoke a gracious feeling of yesteryear. "We wanted to visually link the walls with the fireplace," says Claire. "If you look closely, it has subtle green touches." The look is completed by a 'Marseille' bedhead from Hudson Furniture and a simple linen quilt cover from West Elm. >



"EVERYTHING IN THIS HOME WAS *designed* TO STAND  
THE TEST OF TIME" - ANN KING, INTERIOR STYLIST

**DRESSING ROOM & ENSUITE** (above) Claire and Joel's walk-in wardrobe is finished in Porter's Paints teal-tinged Napoleon, with floor-to-ceiling cupboards keeping the space streamlined and clutter free.

The adjoining ensuite is awash with sandy-coloured tiles from Arch Stone for a five-star feel.

**ASHTON'S BEDROOM** (opposite) "I was pregnant when we were doing Ashton's room and we didn't know whether we were having a boy or a girl," says Claire. "We tried to choose as neutral a colour as possible for the walls and settled on a very soft grey with white curtains." A geometric Armadillo & Co rug and 'Strandman' wing chair from Ikea introduce eye-drawing navy accents. For a similar blue throw, try Kate And Kate's 'The Kiss' blanket. >



**RUG**  
Addison wool rug,  
from \$290/yrn,  
Armadillo & Co.







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**LIBRARY** Claire and Joel took advantage of the landing between the children's bedrooms to create a library and photo gallery. "We have lots of books, so it's great having these display shelves as well as the storage cupboards below," says Claire.

INSIDE STORY

*Who lives here?*

Claire, who works in marketing; her husband, Joel, a construction director; their daughter, Harriet, four; and son, Ashton, one.

*How would you describe your decorating style?*

Claire: "I love the French provincial look, but I also like rustic style and even modern design, so it's a bit of a mix. We really wanted this house to be sympathetic to the era and the original style of the home."

*Any advice on choosing wall colours?*

"Consider your own personality. We tend to wear a lot of black, navy and dark tones, so that's what we went for, rather than very bright, wild colours."

*Which wall colour do you love most in your home?*

"The Porter's Paints Atlantic colour in our master bedroom. It really signifies our own space."

*Did you and Joel disagree on any of the design decisions?*

"Not at all, and that's one of the reasons we were so happy to do the renovation together! We're definitely in sync with each other, which made things a lot easier."



The formal dining room's rich blue hue - Porter's Paints Polo - is a shade darker than the master bedroom's navy walls. "This shade is a little more black," comments Claire.



First floor

PLANS



Ground floor



It's easy to keep an eye on Ashton in the open-plan living room.

