

LONDON CALLING

Channelling English sensibility into a Victorian terrace delivered a family-friendly home with timeless European style.

STORY *Sue Ramsey* | STYLING *Sophie Davies* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Alex Reinders*

KITCHEN/DINING Custom dining table in the style of Axel Einar Hjorth. Vintage Danish dining chairs by Henning Kjærnulf from CCSS. Vintage German pendant lights. Lilac marble splashback and wall-side benchtop, Signorino. Cabinetry handpainted in Dulux Natural White (wall side) and Porter's Paints Mariner (island). The island benchtop is Neolith Krater from CDK Stone. Perrin & Rowe 'Ionian' mixer tap, The English Tapware Company. Butler sink, Belfast Sinks. Engineered-oak flooring in Bistre, Tongue N Groove Flooring. Landscaping by Paul Bangay.





After six years in London and the arrival of their first baby, Jess and John Britten decided to return to Australia to be closer to family. The couple didn't want to leave the life they'd loved behind entirely, however, and set their sights on finding a property where they could re-create a slice of the UK capital.

Jess and John had been looking for a while when a two-bedroom Victorian terrace on a 182-square-metre block in Melbourne's inner suburbs came on their radar. "We wanted a home we could renovate in a vibrant, cosmopolitan area," says Jess. After snapping up the property, they lived in it for three years before embarking on a total revamp in January 2020.

The brief was to expand the terrace to better suit their family of four. The main

bedroom with ensuite would be downstairs, with two bedrooms for their sons Jack, now four, and Charlie, two, upstairs. They also wanted an open-plan living area at the rear of the house. "We kept the facade and the front room as they were, but the rest of the house is new," says Jess.

It was a major undertaking, but having family in the building industry made the decision easier. Jess' father, Ken Davies from builder-developers Davies Henderson took on management of the project, while her interior-architect sister, Sophie Davies, was the obvious choice to refresh the interiors. "It was the first time I'd worked with my dad since qualifying as an interior architect," says Sophie. "He's definitely been a big inspiration for me. He's a carpenter by trade, so he knows a lot and it's really nice to have him to call on." There was also a family connection in their

choice of architect, Dominic Pandolfini. Dominic was recommended by Jess' uncle, who had been impressed by his work on a friend's house.

"The initial brief for Dominic was that we wanted to keep the heritage feeling but then do a modern renovation, not a cookie-cutter one though," says Jess. And Sophie took a similar design approach for the home's interiors. "I researched the street, area and history of the house, which formed the basis and inspiration of my design concept," she explains.

Knowing how much the couple loved the style of decor they'd seen in London, Sophie wanted to give them "a little touch of England" somewhere in the house. "I thought the best place to do that would be in the old part of the house, at the front, to go along with Victorian heritage of the home," she says. "We used wallpaper in ►

STAIRWELL The staircase is finished in Tonachino render, a traditional Italian lime-based plaster. Custom dining table in the style of Axel Einar Hjorth. Vintage Danish dining chairs by Henning Kjærnulf from CCSS. Vintage German pendant lights.

KITCHEN The wall above the stove is finished in Tonachino render in Porter's Paints Mist. Lilac marble splashback and wall-side benchtop, Signorino. The kitchen island features brass mesh and knobs from Pitella. The island benchtop is Neolith Krater from CDK Stone. Vintage stools, The Vault Sydney. Perrin & Rowe 'Ionian' mixer tap, The English Tapware Company. Spyco Clip spotlights, Inlite.



LIVING *This page and opposite, left and right* Artworks by Isadora Vaughan, Station Gallery (above window seat) and John Anderson (above console). Custom window seat cushion in Carlucci 'Velluto Di Cotone' velvet, Unique Fabrics; scatter cushion in Mokum 'Alpaca Velvet'. Oeuf table lamp and custom wall mirror by Sophie Davies. Wall lights, Lighting Collective. Antique console. Custom armchair. Jetmaster fireplace with New York marble fire surround. Seagrass rug, The Natural Floorcovering Centres.



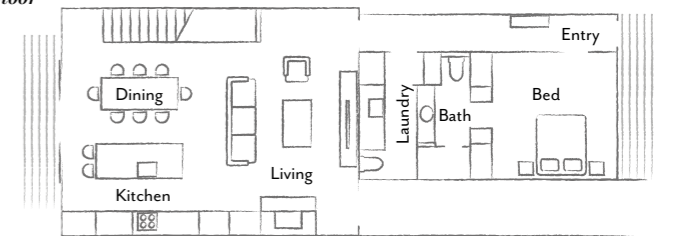
the main bedroom to give it an old-world feel.” In the adjoining ensuite, traditional was blended with some contemporary touches. “There are Popham tiles on the floor which are cement, but then you’ve got the joinery which is a little bit more traditional,” says Sophie.

Moving past the main bedroom, ensuite and laundry area, there’s an expansive open-plan living area that opens to the rear courtyard. “It’s an extension of the living space,” says Jess. “It’s good for entertaining, with the fireplace in winter and alfresco entertaining in summer.” This room features the spectacular staircase, which Dominic and Sophie worked on together. “It was actually made out of timber and then rendered with a special finish so there was a bit of work involved to get the curve looking the way it does,” says Sophie. “I think the thickness of the arched wall gives the room strength, and because it’s all rendered, softness as well.”

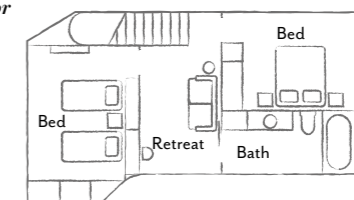
On the second storey, between the two upstairs bedrooms and second bathroom, is another smaller living space. “It’s hugely useful,” says Jess. She utilises the area as a home office for her part-time advertising role, as well to run her side business, ▶

THE LAYOUT

Ground floor



First floor





THIS IS THE LIFE
 Now extended and reconfigured, this Victorian terrace is ideally suited to a modern family. Two bathrooms have made life much easier with young children, says Jess, and the sensitively designed interiors have struck the right note. "One of my favourite rooms – the laundry/powder room – has a special yellow finish on the wall and has a very calming feel," says Jess. "I also love the main bedroom. It transports me to another world."

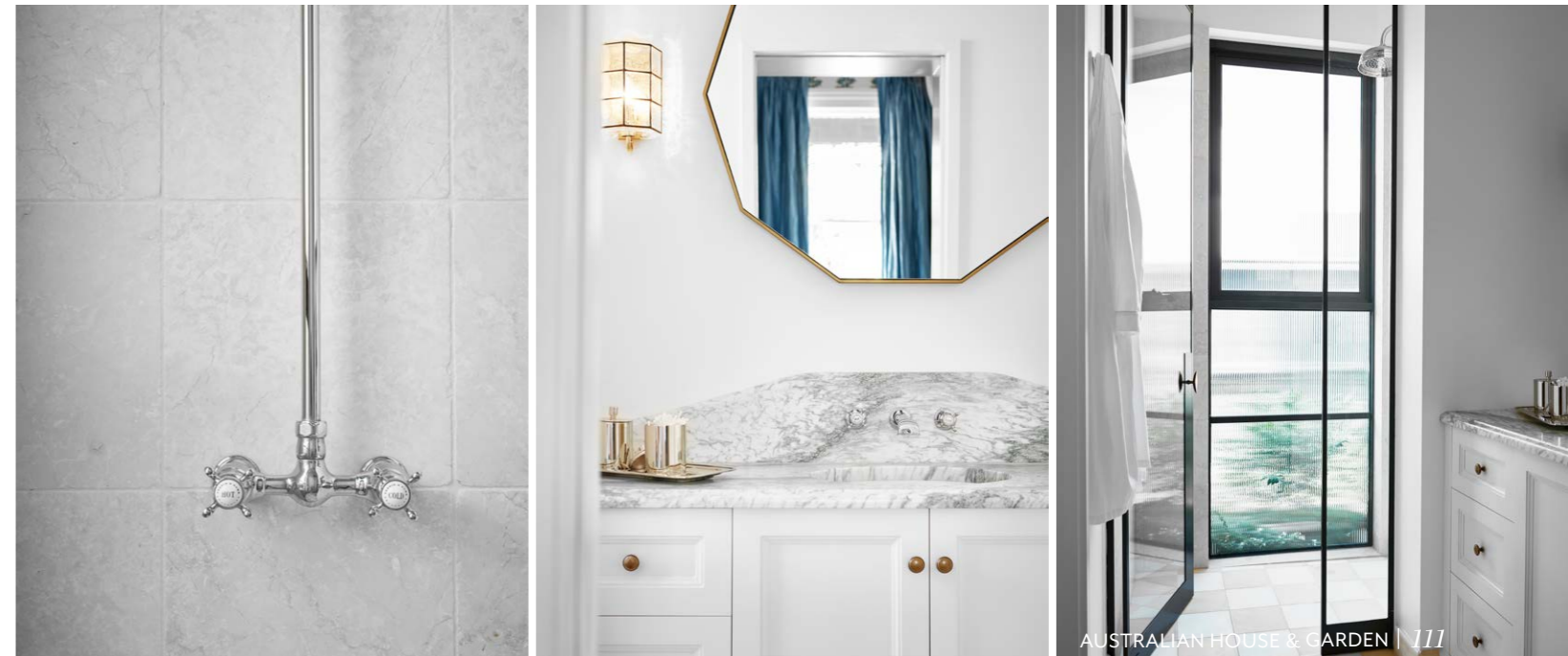
THE PALETTE

- Porter's Paints Mist (kitchen feature wall render)
- Porter's Paints Mariner (kitchen island)
- Dulux Natural White (main walls, throughout)



MAIN BEDROOM *Above and opposite* Soane 'Osmunda Frond' wallpaper in Azure. The moulding on the wardrobe is colour-matched to the wallpaper. Custom bedhead by Sophie Davies, upholstered in Brochier 'Sanforizzato' from South Pacific Fabrics. Pendant light from Fat Shack Vintage. Boracay bedside table, Provincial Home Living. The bedside lamp is an old piece of Jess and John's dressed up with a new shade. Envy carpet in Icelandic, Fyber. **MAIN ENSUITE** *Below* Vintage German wall light. Olde English shower set and basin tapware, Astra Walker. Rjf Italian Botticino Antiqued wall tiles and Blue Cheese marble benchtop, Aeria Country Floors. Popham floor tiles, Onsite Supply+Design. ▶

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.





LAUNDRY *This image and right* Joinery by LWW Interiors. Wall light, Anna Charlesworth. Custom mirror by Sophie Davies. Perrin & Rowe 'Ionian' tapware, The English Tapware Company. Sink, Belfast Sinks. Benchtop and splashback in Superwhite Grain from Stone Italiana. Wall finished in a custom yellow render, cabinetry finished in custom grey paint. **FIRST-FLOOR BATHROOM** Vintage German wall lights. Avalon white wall tiles, TileCloud. Pietra Grey limestone mosaic floor tiles. Splashback and bath cladding in Calcite Caraibica Blue marble, Signorino. Tapware, Astra Walker.



Bibo, which specialises in eco-friendly bibs and children's tableware. As it's next to the boys' bedrooms, it's also an extra play space/living area for them.

The home's colour palette is soft, fun and warm. But with Jess and John being in Melbourne and Sophie in Sydney, lockdown made the approvals process more challenging. "Everything looks different in the actual space," says Sophie.

The choice of oak for the downstairs flooring contributes to the light, modern look of the living areas. "I suggested we go for a pale colour because the house isn't huge and is on the darker side as the back faces south, so I wanted to lighten it up," says Sophie.

With the renovation complete, the reconfigured and beautifully decorated house is working perfectly for Jess and John and their boys. "I genuinely love coming home," says Jess. "It's a really amazing space to be in." **H&G**

Sophie Davies, Sydney, NSW; sophiedavies.com.au. Davies Henderson, South Yarra, Victoria; davieshenderson.com.au. Pandolfini Architects, Cremorne, Victoria; pandolfini.com.au.



"I GENUINELY LOVE COMING HOME. IT'S A REALLY AMAZING SPACE TO BE IN." JESS BRITTEN, HOMEOWNER

1 Dancing pendant light by Iksos-Berlin, \$1900, Huset.

2 Storm on the Flinders Coast artwork by John Anderson, POA, Australian Galleries.

3 Vintage Razorblade chair by Henning Kjærnulf, \$330, Curated Spaces.

4 Elements window blind in Shale, POA, Wynstan.

5 Cascade 30531 tap set, \$531, Faucet Strommen.

6 Flynn Geo wall mirror, \$397, Life Interiors.

7 Scrolling Fern Silhouette wallpaper, POA, Soane Britain.

8 Boracay bedside table, \$799, Provincial Home Living.

9 Twister table lamp, \$1250, Sophie Davies.

10 Tonico Per La Pelle skin tonic, \$72, Santa Maria Novella.

11 Classics cushion with fringe, \$220, Lucy Montgomery.

12 Keely sofa, from \$6480, Fanuli. *For Where to Buy, see page 196.*

THE SOURCE
Team vintage pieces with modern elements to fashion a look that's traditional but never dated.

Produced by Saffron Sylvester.