

VOGUE AUSTRALIA LIVING CULTURE

WOMEN SHAPING DESIGN



WINNERS OF THE VL50 A NIGHT AT THE GALLERY

S T A T E



The acquisition of a derelict yet *elegant Victorian* presented CRITERIA's Rachael Fry with the project of a lifetime — the *creation* of a cherished family home.

O F

T H E

By YEONG SASSALL
Photographed by SEAN FENNESSY
Styled by JOSEPH GARDNER

A R T

These pages Criteria founder Rachael Fry and her children in the living area of their Hawthorn home; Mindy **sofa**, Asymmetry **armchair** (left), Mama Bear **armchair**, Berlingot **cushion** and Flare wood **floor lamp** all from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier, enquiries to Criteria; 1970s **coffee table** from Castorina; Oeuffice Dorik Chroma **stool** (left), SAT **coffee table** by Pietro Russo, and Apparatus Horsehair **wall sconce** (far right) all from Criteria; vintage blue **vessel**; Piccolo 139 **vessel** (on cabinet) by Jeremy Anderson; vintage wood **sculpture** and glass **vase**; custom silk **rug** by Christopher Farr and Bottle Tiered Mobile **pendant light** from David Weeks Studio, enquiries to Criteria; Kieffer Mondo **curtains** from Rubelli; *Posts and Pillars artwork* (above cabinet) by Miranda Skoczek; *Untitled artwork* by Jules de Balincourt. *Details, last pages.*





This page in the dining room, Roze **dining table** and Mr. Oops **dining chair** from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier, enquiries to Criteria; Piccolo 114 vessel by Jeremy Anderson from C. Gallery; Capodimonte glazed earthenware **planter**; Apparatus Synapse **pendant light** from Criteria; walls in Cumulus from Porter's Paints; ceiling in Capsicum Red Gloss from Dulux; original **floor** in Baltic pine and original **mantel**; *Untitled artwork* by Miranda Skoczek. *Opposite page* in the entry hallway, 1935 **console table** by Jean-Michel Frank and Adolphe Chanaux for Ecart and De La Espada Commune **bench** from Criteria; vintage **coat rack**; Echo 06 **mirror** by Hendel Futerfas from C. Gallery; Lantern **table lamp** from Apparatus; ceramic **vase** by Georgia Morgan; vintage pressed brass and gilt bronze **planter**; walls in Chalk from Bauwerk Colour; original **floor** in Baltic pine; Franklin **runner** from Roger Oates Design; Galerie MCDE Simple Sloping Block **wall sconce** from Criteria; *Stretch artwork* (above bench) by Lucia Bru; *Ode à la mémoire* (2023) **artwork** (beyond) by Elladj Lincy Deloumeaux.





This page in the entry and garden, vintage concrete planters; landscape design by Paul Bangay. *Opposite page* in the study, Studio Liam Mugavin Pebble table, Gratz TG 10 Sling chairs, Ringvide Weave Low cabinet, Snake and Pomegranate rug by Studio Shamshiri for Christopher Farr and Apparatus Median 2 pendant light all from Criteria; glass vessel (on table) by Laurence Brabant; Piccolo 113 ceramic vessel (on table) by Jeremy Anderson and Rising Spring vase by Claudia Lau from C. Gallery; vintage Ettore Sottsass mirror; original paint-stripped wall; Tripod floor lamp from David Weeks Studio, enquiries to Criteria; Carom curtain in Amber from Jim Thompson.

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achael Fry is not a superstitious person, but she can't ignore the sheer serendipity that led her to purchase a heritage-listed Victorian in Melbourne's Hawthorn nearly five years ago. The founder of design store and gallery Criteria and graduate of New York's Parsons School of Design was renting a place around the corner when she stumbled upon the villa. "It looked like it was haunted," she recalls. "It was in such disrepair — there was hardly any paint on the verandah, the garden was like [it was out of] *Grey Gardens*." But something took hold. Telling the owner she loved the house, he replied, "That's great, because it's going on the market in two months." Fry went home and told her husband, "Amon, I found our house. It's so beautiful... but it'll need a bit of love."

She wasn't kidding. The house, named Zetland, was a diamond in the rough built in 1874 by esteemed Australian architect William J. Ellis.

As fate would have it, Ellis also designed Fitzroy Town Hall where Fry and her husband had been married. "I'm not going to read too far into that," smiles Fry, "but there were some really nice omens." Unfortunately, the same could not be said of the timing. "We had just started a renovation on a Mount Martha beach house," Fry explains. "And I was about to give birth to our third child." And yet, she couldn't shake Zetland from her system. "It has the most amazing bones and it's so elegant," she enthuses.

Fry signed for the house in mid-May 2019 and gave birth to son Jude two weeks later. "All of a sudden, we had two renovations, two small children and a newborn," she says. The family pursued a minimal redesign, choosing "to make it liveable" with fresh paint and repaired floors and ceilings. They moved in February 2020, and then, well, we all know what happened next.

While most experiences of the Covid lockdowns range from tedious to soul-destroying, for Fry and her family, "the timing couldn't have been better". The slower pace of life allowed Fry to ruminate on what the house needed, allowing her to connect with each space. She enlisted renowned Australian landscaper Paul Bangay to work his magic on the front garden — "his design is exactly what I had in mind" — and then turned to the interiors.

With seven rooms to play with, Zetland is both stately and spacious in design. "If you were building [it] nowadays you would never build such large rooms," says Fry. "The ceilings are four-and-a-half metres! There's a grandiosity to it," she adds. With a façade that features intricate ironwork and stained-glass windows, Fry knew its architectural heritage was its superpower. "I was inspired by the way Europeans live," she says. American-born, Fry adores her adopted country, but is less keen on the Australian way of renovating — namely the "super-modern juxtaposition" of old and new. "I wanted to maintain as much of the old as I possibly could, so I researched which cornices were of this period and I put those back," she says.

With Criteria's roster of incredible designers at her disposal, furnishing the house took on a life of its own. "It had to [have] a slightly traditional slant, but a modern take," she explains. An admirer of French modernists like Jean-Michel Frank for his forward-thinking design, Fry sees parallels with more contemporary stars like Pierre Yovanovitch, the newest addition to Criteria's stable, and Gabriel Hendifar of Apparatus. "Gabe is a visionary — he designs things three or four years before people even realise they want them," she says. Apparatus's most sculptural pieces are found throughout the house — the double Median in the study, the Lantern in her bedroom, and above the dining table, the spherical Synapse, a favourite and a personal gift from Hendifar.

Like many creatives, Fry admits to being something of a perfectionist, so it was lucky her husband relinquished full artistic control. Unafraid of experimenting with bold brushstrokes of colour, like a tomato-red ceiling in the dining area, Fry relied on close friend and interior designer Sophie Di Pasquale, and her Pasquale Cook co-founder Sally Cook, for practical advice. "I'm a maximalist in the sense that I love colour, I love big, chunky furniture," says Fry. "I'm not shy with pattern, but one of my pitfalls is that my brain doesn't process space in a very good way." From consulting on the limewash walls to landing on the perfect shade of red, Fry says Pasquale and Cook were instrumental in achieving her vision.

One area she didn't need advice on was her art collection, which is full of exceptional pieces that hold personal significance. From the María Berrío panting in the dining room (a wedding gift) to the Miranda Skoczek works in the dining and living rooms ("She's a friend, so whenever she paints something I always get a first look") and pieces by Ben Mazey, Jules de Balincourt, Elladj Lincy Deloumeaux and Claudia Lau, the house is alive with vibrant art.

Like most collectors, Fry waits to find the right object for each space. "I don't buy things I don't feel a connection to," she says. "I'm a bit spiritual like that." While no house is ever really finished, it took Fry several years to unveil her home. She knows she placed too much pressure on herself and suffered from the tyranny of choice. "Deciding what to put in your own home is the hardest thing ever," laughs Fry. "I needed to give myself time!" ■ criteriacollection.com.au



This page in the dining and kitchen area, Studio Liam Mugavin Breakfast **table** and Breakfast **benches**, 1932 Upholstered Back **sofa** by Jean-Michel Frank for Ecart, Bzippy Triple Tier **side table** and Apparatus Median 1 **pendant lights** all from Criteria; One **vase** by Ben Mazey, and Standing Below **vessel** by Claudia Lau both from C. Gallery; **wall** in White Duck Quarter from Dulux; **window shade** in Wild Coast fabric from Chivasso; 1950s herringbone **floor**; *Culinary Charm Bracelet* commissioned **artwork** (above sofa) by Ben Mazey from C. Gallery; *Ilma* **artwork** (far right) by Roy Wiggan.





This page in another view of the living area, C2 **grand piano** from Yamaha; Destroyers/Builders Windows of Bo Bardi **side table** from Criteria; Modernist copper and iron **candle stand** from Gallery 25; *Untitled artwork* (left) by Robert Moreland; *Blue Silk* (2022) **artwork** by Atong Atem. *Opposite page* in the main sitting room, 1939 Elephant **chairs** by Jean-Michel Frank for Ecart, Cactus Flower Spring **rug** by Commune for Christopher Farr, and Apparatus Reprise **pendant light** all from Criteria; vintage Ellipse **coffee table** by Roger Capron for l'Atelier Callis from Castorina; Floating Tile commissioned **console** by Ben Mazey, River Rock No. 2 (One Drink) **side table** by Oko Olo, and Growing Below **vase** by Claudia Lau all from C. Gallery; Paw 2 **wall lamp** from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier, enquiries to Criteria; **wall** in Beige Royal Quarter from Dulux; *Pensive Sisters artwork* (above console) by Tristan Chant; *Dawurr (4132-23) artwork* by Gaypalani Wanambi.





This page in the main bedroom, Degrade **nightstand** by Pietro Russo, Ecart Bridge Wolf **chair**, custom silk **rug** by Christopher Farr, and Apparatus Lantern 2 **pendant light** all from Criteria; Petal **bedsheets** from Rose Uniacke; Heavyweight linen **bedcover** from Cultiver; Apparatus Cylinder Uplight **table lamp**; **walls** in Chalk from Bauwerk Colour; Carom **curtain** in Amber from Jim Thompson; *Untitled artwork* by Rachael Fry's great-grandmother. *Opposite page* in the sons' bedroom, **bunk bed** from Rafa Kids painted in Sydney Harbour from Porter's Paints; quilted **bedcovers** and **sheets** in Marigold stripe from In Bed; Fort Standard Cooperage **chair**, Plaid **rug** by Commune for Christopher Farr, and Arca **chandelier** by Philippe Malouin for Matter Made all from Criteria; original **mantel**; Raw Composition (Luffa No. 1) **side table** and Solid Nostalgia (Plank Cabinet No.1) **cabinet** both by Oko Olo, Whangaumu **bottle** (on mantel) by Finn Ferrier, 3-5 Second **mirror XXIII** (above mantel) by Jenny Nordberg, and *Henry II artwork* (above cabinet) by Tia Ansell all from C. Gallery; Mr Fast Robot **paper mache** by Freyja and Rachael; vintage Javanese **mask** (on mantel); **walls** in Garam Masala from Porter's Paints.



This page in the front verandah, Gubi Bohemian 72 lounge chair and Epic coffee table by GamFratesi for Gubi from Criteria. *Opposite page* in the daughter's bedroom, custom bed wrapped in sailing ropes; organic cotton and linen bedcover in Bauhaus from In Bed; Bzippy Double Tier Cloud side table, custom silk rug by Christopher Farr, and Bec Brittain Shy 08.1 suspension light all from Criteria; Green lamp by Ben Mazey from C. Gallery; *The Spell artwork* (black frame, left) by Claire Tabouret; *Untitled artwork* (white frame) by Eytan Messiah; *Follow Me artwork* (above bed) by Tamara Dean. *Details, last pages.*

