

AN EVOLUTIONARY TALE

Over eight years, the uber-talented design team Juliette Arent and Sarah-Jane Pyke have slowly but surely brought this Victorian-era terrace house in Sydney to life.

By Verity Magdalino Photographed by Felix Forest Portrait photographed by Hugh Stewart



THIS PAGE: *Designers Arent (left) and Pyke.* OPPOSITE PAGE: *in the KITCHEN, De La Espada Together Table and 446 Settle Bench, both by Studioilse from Spence & Lyda; Zanotta Toniotta chairs by Enzo Mari from Cult; vases from Conley & Co; glass from Living Edge; dish from Ondene; de Gournay Le Brésil wallpaper in Amarelo; Robyn Cosgrove Segovia rug in Coral. Details, last pages.*

HAIR & MAKE-UP: ALLISON BOYLE

For Juliette Arent and Sarah-Jane Pyke, principals of interior design studio Arent & Pyke, a Victorian-era terrace in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs has formed the basis of an eight-year journey that has witnessed the birth of a richly layered, intuitive design ethos — and a wonderful friendship.

When the owners — a professional couple with two young children and a love of art — bought the four-bedroom terrace in 2010, they were living around the corner in a home that had become too small for their growing family. “They looked at this house as the next phase in their lives,” says Pyke. “For them, the design is all about longevity because they want to stay in this home.”

Arent and Pyke, along with their associate, Dominique Brammah, worked on various smaller projects throughout the house over the years for the homeowners before completing this — the latest and final grand sweep. “I love that they’ve committed to making it continually work for them,” says Pyke. “That’s been nice to be a part of.” Here, Pyke describes the joy of the collaborative process.

The beautiful thing about this project is that it's evolutionary. We started everything at a light level when the clients first moved in and their children were very small. It was more about cosmetic changes — a fresh paint scheme, furnishings for the main bedroom and front living spaces, and a minor update to the kitchen.

When each of the children turned five, they got a big bed and a new bedroom scheme. The son's room is one of my favourite parts of the house — because it's so minute. It was like a little puzzle to design and it had to feel special. The custom joinery on the wall has 13 colours in it and at the end of the bed we made this little step with a small reading nook that the kids love.

Everything we've done to date has been very practical, so for this final iteration we said we're just going to have fun and enjoy it. The freedom of this approach had a lot to do with the trust we'd built up with the owners. There's an ease around working together, which is how you can then start to do things that are a little more unexpected, like the de Gournay wallpaper in the kitchen.

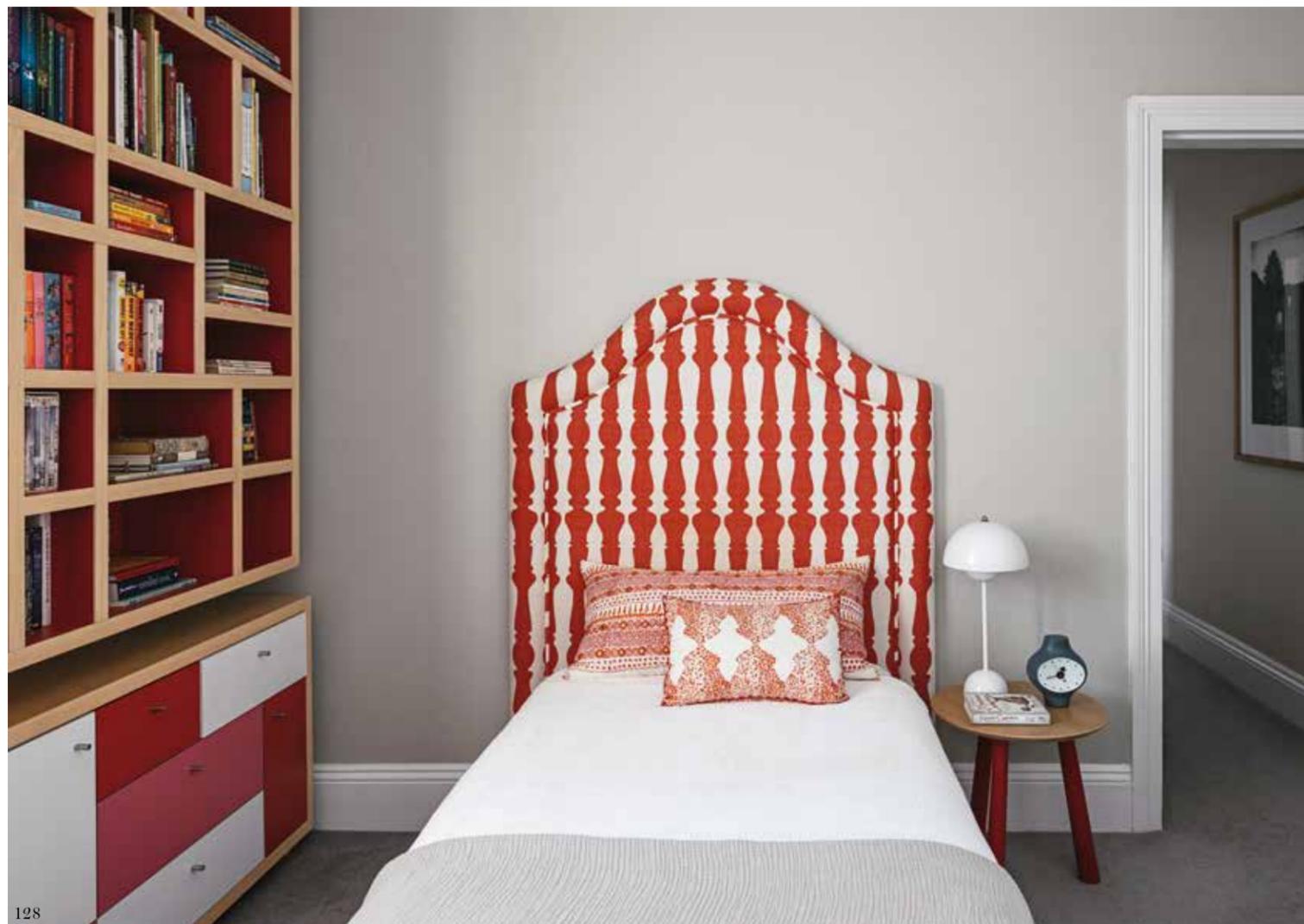
We had this bare wall in the kitchen that didn't have a storage element, so it was an opportunity to embellish the space. Interestingly, when you're in the room, as much as the wallpaper is »



THIS PAGE: in another view of the KITCHEN, joinery by Adam Standfield Cabinetmaking and painted in Dulux SouWester; Pietra Basaltina stone benchtop from Granite & Marble Works; Casa Handmade splashback tiles from Onsite Supply & Design; custom zinc rangehood; Fibonacci Stone Cloud Burst floor tiles from Alexandria Tiles and Flooring; Apparatus Studio Highwire Tandem ceiling light from Criteria Collection. OPPOSITE PAGE: in the LIVING ROOM, Cassina Utrecht navy armchair from Space Furniture; Foscarini Buds 2 table lamp by Rodolfo Dordoni from Space Furniture; custom armchair upholstered in GP & J Nymphaea linen in Stone/Pistachio from Elliott Clarke; Robyn Cosgrove Whicaway rug (left); Three Little Birds (2011, above fireplace) artwork by Michael Muir; The House of Beautiful Lies (2016) artwork by Jason Moad.



THIS PAGE: in a child's BEDROOM, bedhead covered with 36 24 36 fabric in Orange by Kelly Wearstler for Christopher Farr and John Robshaw Primrose cushions, enquiries for both to Ascraft Textiles; The Society Inc bed linen from Ondene; Olba side table from Jardan; &tradition Flowerpot table lamp from Great Dane; joinery by Adam Standfield Cabinetmaking. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT: in the MAIN BEDROOM, The Society Inc bed linen from Ondene; vintage bedside table from The Vault; Bestlite wall lamp by Gubi from Cult; walls painted in Dulux Hat Stand; Untitled artworks (2005), both by Yun Wei. In the ENSUITE BATHROOM, Popham Design Propeller tiles (in foreground) and white ceramic wall tiles (on shower wall), both from Onsite Supply & Design; Italian terrazzo tiles (on shower floor) from Surface Gallery; joinery by Adam Standfield Cabinetmaking; Allied Maker Glass Flush Dome 10 light; Dancing Couple artwork by Garry Shead.



« a strong feature, it doesn't shout at you. It has this great subtlety. And because it's handpainted paper, it's precious. The children love it. Seeing them the day it was installed, looking at the different birds — it's such a lovely element to have in the house.

We painted the main bedroom blue in 2010 — it was our first blue bedroom. When we revisited it eight years later, the owners said they wanted to keep it. It's by far the biggest room in the house, so the darker colour provides some sort of scale and a sense of privacy and comfort. We've done quite a few darker rooms over the years but this was the first time we got to exercise our desire for strong, moody bedrooms, which have since become a thread through our subsequent work. It felt outlandish at the time and I was quite impressed with the clients for embracing it.

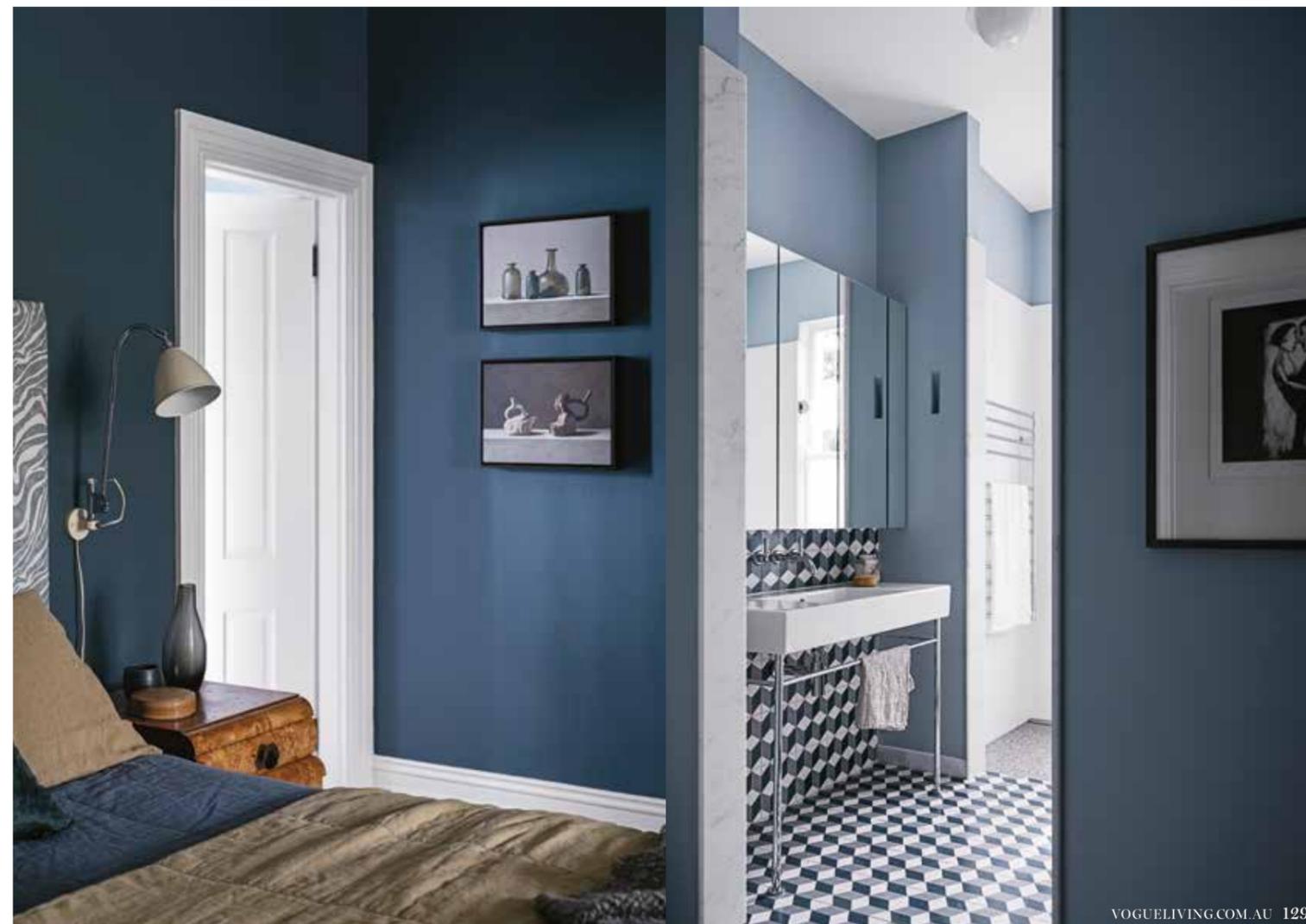
The terrace has a lot of moody lighting. If you have a dark room, it's not about pumping it full of light because there's nothing you can do to change that. For us, it's about creating mood and texture in those spaces — enriching, enlivening and embellishing with colour, texture and art. We always talk about natural light, which of course is really important, but half the time when you're

in your home it's the evening, so it's all about the artificial lighting and layers of lamps — of which there are many in this home — and creating mood with light.

The homeowners travel to France every year and suggested a French farmhouse feel to the kitchen. The original kitchen was white with a pale limestone floor and we wanted it to be stronger and bolder. We were inspired by the kitchen in the Ilse Crawford-designed hotel Ett Hem in Stockholm, which is a huge favourite of ours. Ilse's bench from the De La Espada collection was in the design from the very beginning. We then introduced some leather via the Zanotta Toniotta chairs and went for a much stronger floor — a terrazzo with a really classic black-and-white graphic — in addition to handmade Moroccan tiles and a handmade zinc rangehood, which is a nod to that French influence.

The great thing about working with people over time is that they get to evolve with you. What felt daring 10 years ago doesn't feel daring now and you can really build on that. You both want to see something unexpected; you want to see something that brings a smile to your face. It's a nice journey to be on with people. *VL*

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THIS PAGE: in another view of the MAIN BEDROOM, Molteni&C D.154.2 armchair by Gio Ponti from Hub Furniture; The Society Inc bed linen from Ondene; curtains by Simple Studio; Banquet (2015) artwork by Diana Watson. OPPOSITE PAGE: in another view of the LIVING ROOM, Zuster coffee table; custom sofa upholstered in de Le Cuona fabric, enquiries to Boyac; vintage vase from The Vault; Moller #80 stool from Great Dane; Lampadaire Droit floor lamp by Serge Mouille from Cult; custom European Tortoiseshell sisal rug from International Floorcoverings Australia; Bird Market, Paris '47 (1991) and Chiesa del Carmine 1947 (reflected in mirror, from left) artworks by Frank Hodgkinson; Colonial Gold (2016) artwork by Jo Davenport (above stool); Afternoon (2004) artwork by John Olsen. Details, last pages.