

## GOLDEN AGE

Combining its period charms with the cutting-edge present, a grand Sydney home skilfully straddles three centuries while fulfilling the needs of a young family.

STORY *Chris Pearson* | STYLING *Claire Delmar* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Anson Smart*

**FRONT GARDEN** An avenue of manicured buxus hedging, massed agapanthus and mature trees create a sense of arrival, and expectation, which is beautifully fulfilled once visitors cross the threshold of this Sydney home.

**FORMAL LIVING** Custom sofa and cork table by Arent & Pyke. Tacchini 'Julep' armchairs, Stylecraft. Jean side table, James Said. Sancal 'Elephant' stools, Ke-zu. Custom rug, TibetSydney. Molecule tall table with custom Rosso Levanto marble top by Daniel Barbera. Iva bar stools, Grazia & Co. Apparatus 'Cloud 37' pendant light, Criteria. Artwork by Tim Summerton, Olsen Gallery. Ceiling painted Dulux Irish Moor. ▶





**B**alancing old and new at this sandstone home in Sydney's inner west was a "high-wire act", according to interior designer Sarah-Jane Pyke. A delicate manoeuvre it might have been, but the firm's expertise and experience always ensured a safety net. "Respect for the elegant architecture and restraint to ensure the balance doesn't tip too far between either traditional and contemporary were key," she says.

The home's heritage, dating back to 1885, was a major drawcard for the owners when they bought the property three years ago, so its past needed to be honoured and preserved, but it also had to embrace the future as a dynamic family home.

"We have always been drawn to period homes and this one was truly special," says the owner. "The privacy and large, level yard were immediately appealing." With its wraparound verandah, generous rooms and manicured gardens, the property certainly had a majestic air. But for its current residents - a family with three children under five - it needed to let its hair down. Heavy curtains and timbers made the large spaces surprisingly dark, while the ornate neoclassical decor, the result of a previous makeover, was dated. "It was a handsome and much-loved home, but it needed to suit this family for the foreseeable future," says Sarah-Jane. "We wanted to remove the frills and celebrate its innate charm and elegance."

The owner adds: "We sought spaces conducive to the busy day-to-day life we lead with our young, active family, but also appealing to the adults in the house." But perhaps the trickiest part: "It was about respecting the period features, yet injecting the fun and vitality that reflects us a family. And we wanted some wow factor."

When briefed in 2020, Sarah-Jane and co-principal Juliette Arent encountered spaces "with incredible volumes and heights, and a beautiful connection to the outside through french doors, giving a sense of looking outward in every room," says Sarah-Jane. And it was largely intact, with the original timberwork - including the stately staircase - cornicing and architraves blissfully untouched.

No structural changes were needed. A long hallway, flanked by a formal living room on one side and a playroom on the other, leads to a generous open-plan space, the happy result of internal walls being removed in a previous renovation. That elegant timber stairway leads to five bedrooms and two bathrooms on the first floor. In the makeover, all the bathrooms, including a powder room, were remodelled while the kitchen received a facelift with new door hardware and a Moroccan-tiled splashback. ▶



**DINING** Rich Brilliant Willing 'Gala 72' pendant light, Koda Lighting. Custom dining table with Viola marble top by Daniel Barbera. Carl Hansen & Son 'CH24 Wishbone' dining chairs, Cult Design. Vase and bowls, Alex and Trahanas. Walls painted Porter's Paints Cashmere, shutters in Porter's Paints Mariner. Artwork by Mitch Cairns, The Commercial. **FORMAL LIVING** *Opposite top* Pierre Jeanneret 'Easy' armchairs, Tigmi Trading. Existing coffee table. Piano stool cushion by Arent & Pyke. Apparatus 'Arrow' pendant light, Criteria. **BAR AREA** *Opposite bottom* Iva bar stools, Grazia & Co. Molecule high table with custom Rosso Levanto marble top by Daniel Barbera. Ceiling painted Dulux Irish Moor. Existing joinery repainted Dulux Vintage Green, refurbished with new marble shelving.



**THIS IS THE LIFE**

A constant buzz permeates this home, reflecting its young inhabitants and their love of entertaining. "Most of our time is spent in the kitchen, dining and casual living areas," says the owner. Despite the home's generous size, every space is regularly used, both inside and out, testament to the heritage home's newfound versatility.



**CASUAL LIVING** Edra 'Standard' sofa and Baxter 'Nepal' armchair, both Space. Enoki side tables, Living Edge. Oluce 'Pascal' floor lamp, Euroluce. Winter Night Sky rug, Robyn Cosgrave. Artwork by Marisa Purcell, Olsen Gallery. **ENTRY** Opposite, top and bottom Chinese Art-Deco rug, 1stDibs. CW cork stool, Robert Plumb. Vintage mirror, Conley & Co. Walls painted Porter's Paints Coconut Milk. Stair runner, Halcyon Lake Rugs & Carpets. Artwork by Guy Maestri, Olsen Gallery.

In the formal living room, a carefully considered palette and comfortable furnishings counter the scale of what could be an intimidating space. "We played with the height and brought in lots of colour to make it feel dynamic and fun," says Sarah-Jane. Strikingly, they painted the lofty ceiling in a soft sage, Dulux Irish Moor, to draw it downwards, the effect heightened by a cloud-like pendant, "one of many playful, yet sophisticated, lights that bring the home into the 21st century," she says. Creamy-white walls, that sage ceiling, cloud-like chairs and a cork coffee table provide a delightfully soft contrast to the original timber doors and architraves, which, together with the kauri pine floorboards, were stripped back for a lighter look. Linen curtains pool on the floor, fostering a relaxed ambience.

The playroom, meanwhile, includes a colourful joinery unit that is almost as much an artwork as a storage solution, set off a treat by a gleeful technicolour rug and wallpaper with animal motifs. In the open-plan zone, the designers played up the indoor-outdoor connection. A generous marble table in the dining area is paired with a monumental terrazzo one on the patio just beyond - both bespoke - making catering for large numbers a breeze.

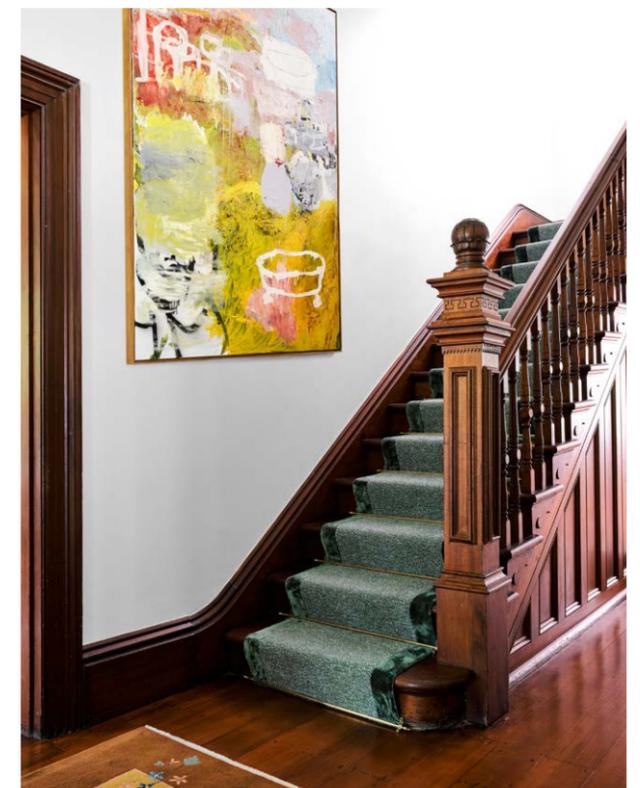
Upstairs, painted doors and architraves signal a more serene ambience. In the main bedroom, grasscloth-fronted joinery is teamed with polished stucco behind the bed for texture and interest. "Texture talks to the heritage home in all its elegance and stateliness, while adding a sense of calm," says Sarah-Jane. "In such big volumes, it also creates human scale, making a grand space feel comfortable and intimate."

Similarly, furnishings meld the vintage and modern, chic designer with the handcrafted. "We brought in different eras and styles, with reissued design classics, contemporary Australian, international designer pieces and the bespoke." But for her the standout is the terrazzo outdoor table.

The palette reflects the homeowners' love of blues and greens, colours that complement the sandstone and timber beautifully. In the informal living, a grass-green sofa is the ideal counterpoint to a wall of sandstone, while travertine in the family bathroom is a smart, modern match.

"I love the entry and the arrival moment, with the Chinese silk rug, which creates a richness and the feeling you have arrived somewhere special," says Sarah-Jane. "And the powder room is glorious, with its timber panelling and patterned mosaics, stucco and marble. It's an alchemy of different finishes." And periods, skilfully blended with precision and passion, to create a whole that's much more than the sum of its stylish parts.

*Arent & Pyke, Surry Hills, NSW; (02) 9331 2802 or arentpyke.com.*



THE PALETTE

Dulux Irish Moor  
(formal living room ceiling)

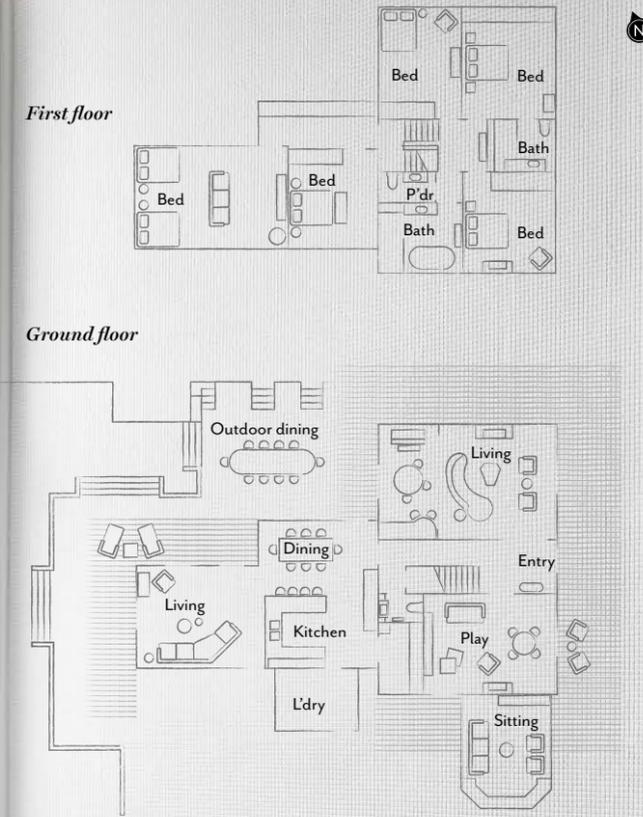
Dulux Grey Pail (main bedroom  
walls, main bathroom joinery)

Dulux Vintage Green (bar area)



**MAIN ENSUITE** *Top right* Texture is a constant theme throughout, as evident in the fluted vanity and tiles of the main ensuite. Custom mirror by Arent & Pyke. Domenico Mori wall tiles, Boffi Studio. Calacatta Viola mosaic floor tiles and benchtop, Surface Gallery. Custom American-oak joinery. Brodware showerhead and tapware, Candana. **MAIN BEDROOM** *Above* Vintage Cappellini 'S' chair. Society Limonta bedlinen, Ondene. Kelly Wearstler 'Staccato' rug, The Green Room. Wall finished in microcement render in Dulux Grey Pail. Float wall light (in ensuite), Articolo Lighting. **MAIN BATHROOM** *Opposite and right* Oak and travertine make perfect partners here. Vanity custom designed by Arent & Pyke. Benchtop and bath surround in silver travertine from Teranova. Brodware tapware, Candana. Alabaster Trimless Mini Orb wall lights, Allied Maker. Popham floor tiles, I Frammenti mosaic tiles (nib wall) and Casa handmade Moroccan tiles (rear), all Onsite Supply+Design. ▶

THE LAYOUT



**SON'S BEDROOM** Custom bedhead upholstered in Kvadrat 'Sonar' fabric. Montana Furniture bedside table and Louis Poulsen 'Panthella' table lamp, both Cult Design. Quilt, Society of Wanderers. Sandberg 'Wilton Confetti' wallpaper, Ascraft. Existing chair. Rose In April shelving, Smallable. Rug, Tappeti.



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## THE SOURCE

*Balance out a home's more elegant elements with accessories that offer a touch of whimsy.*



Produced by Shayne Burton.

1 Vivid Slimline gooseneck sink mixer in Brushed Gold, \$449, Phoenix Tapware. 2 Cloud 37 pendant light, POA, Criteria. 3 Flare mixed media on canvas artwork by Marisa Purcell (100x100cm, unframed), \$6500, Olsen Gallery. 4 Tom Dixon 'Eclectic Orientalist' diffuser, \$195, Libertine Parfumerie. 5 Arflex 'Botolo' armchair, \$5925, Space. 6 Lido ceramic pinch vase, \$260, Alex and Trahanas. 7 Como marble and brass side table, \$1395, Coco Republic. 8 Salt & Pepper 'Salut' white wine glasses, \$59/set of 6, Domayne. 9 Ligne Roset 'Uncover' large fabric settee in Appa Poncho, \$9875, Domo. 10 Australian House & Garden 'Gower' striped cotton cushion in Brown (50x50cm), \$59.95, Myer. For Where to Buy, see page 217. H&G