

A new lease on life for this historic Sydney terrace house involved the skilful melding of its traditional features with an idiosyncratic contemporary persona.

SECOND COMING

Words JUDY PASCOE Photography MICHAEL WEE
Styling OLGA LEWIS

These pages The living room has a 1950s Tabouret tripod chair from East Wing Studio. Moroccan pot from Watertiger. 'Huggy' armchairs in Agave velvet from Sarah Ellison. 'Roundezvous' coffee table in travertine from Instone Interiors. 'Rufus Block' asymmetrical side table in Spider Green marble from GlobeWest. Pedestal side table with beaded top and candleholders, all from The Merchants Warehouse. Vitra 'Akari 9A' floor lamp, stylist's own. Custom rug by Duet from International Floorcoverings Australia. On mantel, *Cloud II* sculpture from Rachel Donath, antique pottery urn by Kelly Brown Ceramics from Kil.n.it. On coffee table, handpainted vases from Martyn Thompson Studio, solid oak fruit bowl and red ceramic bowl (on stone table) both from 506070. On side table, red ceramic sculpture by Joseph Turrin from Kil.n.it. Artwork, *Last Light 2022* by Tim Summerton from Olsen Gallery. Aerin 'Fontaine' vertical chandelier in Plaster White from Bloomingdales Lighting. Custom joinery by Duet. Walls painted in Dulux 'Rice Crop'.

These pages Another view of the living room with a tapestry from Anthropologie hanging above an 'Aspen' sofa in Tan leather and 'Tao' leather floor lamp in Tan, both from Coco Republic. 1950s Tabouret tripod chair from East Wing Studio. 'Rondezvous' travertine coffee table from Instone Interiors. 'Rufus Block' asymmetrical side table in Spider Green marble from GlobeWest. On stone table, red ceramic bowl from 506070. On travertine coffee table, handpainted vases by Martyn Thompson, and solid oak fruit bowl from 506070. In the hallway, 'Trois' bench seat in Coffee from Worn Store. Window furnishings by Marlow & Finch. White wall sculptures commissioned by Duet.

To live in a home with tangible links to Sydney's history and its trajectory from penal colony to vibrant international city is a rare privilege. This grand heritage-listed terrace house built in the 1830s is located in Millers Point, an inner-city enclave, and is one of a row of terraces that boasts a colourful past including serving as public housing for several decades. When the NSW government relinquished these for private sale in 2014 it created a unique opportunity to restore and live in an historically significant property.

Having worked with Shannon Shlom and Dominique Brammah, directors of Sydney interior design studio Duet, on other projects owner Charles Daoud and family sought their expertise in reinventing the three-bedroom, four-storey house they bought in 2020. "This property needed a unique approach to celebrate its surviving heritage design and materiality and to reintroduce features that had been stripped away over decades of hard living prior to conservation protections," says Shannon. »





This page, clockwise from above The dining area has a 'Kin' oval table in Natural Ash, 'Galleria' chairs in Soap Wash Oak and 'Artie' buffet in Putty, all from GlobeWest. Custom rug by Duet from International Floorcoverings Australia. 'Etoile' chandelier from The Montauk Lighting Co. On table, 19th-century candlesticks from The Merchants Warehouse and 'Adra' vase from Rachel Donath. Mirror, clients' existing. Vintage plinth and vases on mantel, all from Lunatiques. On plinth, rattan amphora vase from Ferm Living. Sculpture (in foreground) by Kelly Brown Ceramics. Custom artworks by Duet. Window furnishings by Marlow & Finch. The pantry has an array of decorative items. Top shelf: 'Orb' vase by Tetsuya Ozawa and 'Squiggle Bear' vase by Hikari Masuda, both from The DEA Store, plate with cherries, vintage find. Second shelf: 'Zig Zag' dish by Hikari Masuda, and footed ceramic dish from The DEA Store, jug from Pigott's Store. Third shelf: plates and bowls from Pigott's Store, coffee dripper and pourer by Tetsuya Ozawa from The DEA Store. Fourth shelf: rattan amphora vase from Ferm Living, set of four 'Touch Accent' side plates from Pigott's Store, jug by Tetsuya Ozawa from The DEA Store. On floor, client's existing basket, French wooden twist leg stool from East Wing Studio. **Opposite page** The entry has a 'Trois' bench seat in Coffee from Worn Store. Custom white artworks on wall by Duet. Thomas O'Brien 'Piaf' two-light linear pendant light in Aged Iron from Bloomingdales Lighting. Fabric on console, stylist's own. 'Bohan' table lamp from Rachel Donath. Vintage jug from Rudi Rocket.



SPEED READ

» An historic c1830s terrace house in Millers Point in Sydney's inner city has been reinvented to showcase a dazzling new persona by interior design studio Duet. » While sensitively respecting the original features of the three-bedroom, four-storey house, directors Shannon Shlom and Dominique Brammah have introduced contemporary design flourishes and a rollcall of eclectic furniture, art and objects. » Constraints such as retaining the original small windows were turned to an advantage with the designers lavishing the openings with diaphanous gathered linen curtains that provide a romantic take on cosiness and privacy. » Elsewhere, a new living area was carved out of the sandstone alongside the basement kitchen which provides an indoor-outdoor flow and a new dimension for a modern lifestyle within a heritage property.



This page The kitchen has a 'Piper Bridge' table in New Oak from GlobeWest with a custom tablecloth by Duet. Custom chairs with linen slipcovers by Duet. 'Trois' bench seat from Worn Store. 'Alberto' large single-tier chandelier in Plaster White from Bloomingdales Lighting. Vintage glass vases (on table) and copper pots (on cooktop) from Parterre. Spanish olive oil pots on window ledge from The Vault Sydney. Chinese pot (with lavender) from Orient House. Moroccan vase (on bench) from Watertiger. Footed ceramic bowl (on bench) from The DEA Store. Parisi sink from Harvey Norman with Perrin & Rowe tapware from The English Tapware Company. Window furnishings by Marlow & Finch. **Opposite page from top** The casual living area has a 'Quadrant' sofa in Tan leather from Koskela. 'Cade' ottoman in Melon and Ethnicraft 'Oblic' side table in Black, both from GlobeWest. 'La Piscine' outdoor coffee table from Coco Republic. On side table, 50s vintage vase from Lunatiques. On ottoman, 'Pompidou' red vase in resin by Gaetano Pesce from 506070. On coffee table, 'Hot Orange' and 'Juicy Mango' vases by Ellen Bagge, and ceramic dish from The DEA Store. Yellow and pink artworks from Henryk.Studio. Nemo 'Applique À Volet Pivotant' wall lamps in Aluminium from Cult. Lace curtain on window, stylist's own. Vintage candlesticks and wire candleholders from Lunatiques. Naga dish from Orient House.



« Before any work began, the studio engaged architect and heritage consultant Russell Lee, principal of Robert Lee Architects along with his colleague Fang Zhou who “brought the history of the building to life for us”, says Dominique. Heritage requirements meant that original features had to be retained throughout, including the existing cooker in the basement sandstone kitchen, the copper laundry tub, as well as the ceilings, stairs and balustrades. As the integrity of the existing elements had to be respected, all joinery was treated as ‘furniture’ – independent of walls and floors and able to be removed if necessary – and even the ensuite in the main bedroom was designed as a box within the space. These constraints however did lead to some creative solutions for such contemporary additions as air-conditioning.

Despite the challenges of the renovation, owners and designers were united in their wish to forge an aesthetically pleasing blend of old and new. “The owners loved the design potential of marrying original features with contemporary living to write the next chapter for the home,” says Shannon.

The old stone floors and the moody ethereal light in the kitchen evoked a European aesthetic that became the starting point for the design. “We opted for a slightly creamy wall paint to create a powdery, tactile softness throughout,” says Dominique. “We didn’t want things to feel overly olde-worldly but also didn’t want them to feel too contemporary.”

While the fireplace surrounds weren’t original Duet opted to reintroduce stone that would have been used at the time. Other elements that could have been viewed as a negative were quickly turned into a positive thanks to their ingenuity. To wit, the small windows were the antithesis of contemporary sizing but, says Shannon, “We relished using bountiful gathers and drapes to celebrate the traditional and humble proportions. A mid-weight linen in all rooms allowed for soft, diaphanous silhouettes of the Sydney skyline to be enjoyed while also creating a sense of privacy and cosiness.”

Certainly, the views from the home and proximity to city life were as much a drawcard for the owners as the period features. “The property has a front row seat to view the jewels of Sydney Harbour, and is just minutes from the CBD,” says Dominique. “It offers a European-style cosmopolitan lifestyle »



« with galleries, theatres, fine dining and nightlife moments away, there is a quiet village atmosphere to enjoy too.” Charles, the owner, adds, “From the front porch the Opera House and Fort Denison appear as if in a postcard. From the rear balcony we can see the Harbour and North Sydney skyline.”

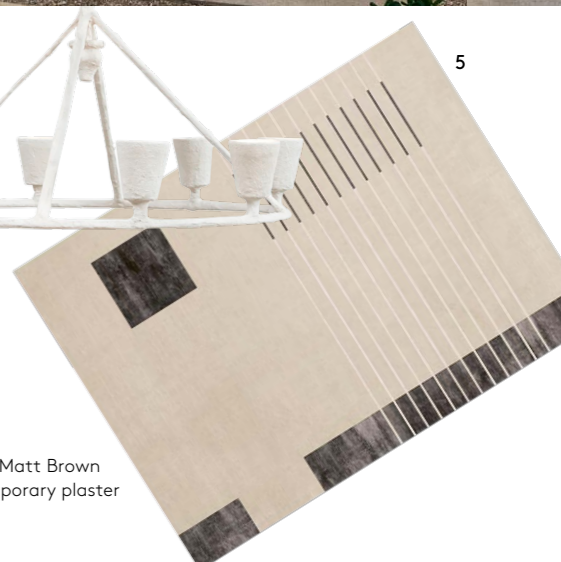
Within, modern luxuries are seamless inclusions, while heritage detailing is preserved and celebrated. Warmth and texture come from eclectic objects, art and furnishings that help to create a unique atmosphere. For the owner, the scale of the home is a favourite feature and he points to the 7.5m width and tall ceiling heights that give significant volume and grandeur to all the spaces.

Carving out a second living area in the basement adjacent to the kitchen was the greatest challenge, say the designers, “and arguably the most transformative”. Dominique explains, “The painted walls of the subterranean storeroom were painstakingly stripped back to reveal the magical natural sandstone. We workshoped this space considerably and there were a lot of technical constraints, but we love how it embraces its semi-outdoor sensibility while also accommodating the contemporary gathering patterns of a family living space alongside the kitchen.”

As a city retreat the home offers a great deal for the young family, not least of which is the educational aspect of their children being exposed to so much art, culture and community on their doorstep. “There is so much to admire and celebrate in the home,” says Charles, “and every day we notice something new and interesting.” weareduet.com.au



This page, from left On the front verandah, Hay ‘Palissade’ low lounge chair in Silk Grey from Cult. The courtyard has a vintage iron table and chairs from Mercer & Lewis. Chinese pot (with lavender) from Orient House. Moroccan pot from Watertiger. ‘Lille’ wall lanterns and ‘Toulon’ ceiling lanterns in Black Bronze from Magins Classical Lighting. Landscaping is by Kirsty Kendall of Studio Rewild. **Opposite page** In a bedroom, custom bedhead in ‘Performance Linen’ in Eggshell from Land Home. ‘Flax’ linen bedcover in Moss and tablecloth from The Bespoke Linen Co. Bedside lamp by Ben Mazey. Dish from The DEA Store. Custom rug by Duet from International Floorcoverings Australia. Window furnishings by Marlow & Finch.



SIGNATURE STYLE
KEY PIECES

1 ‘Huggy’ swivel armchair in Malibu Caramel, \$1699, from Sarah Ellison. 2 Atlas ‘Decagon’ coffee table in Matt Brown vein marble, \$4145, from GlobeWest. 3 ‘Fleur’ marble and stone vase, \$1400, from Rachel Donath. 4 Contemporary plaster chandelier, \$11,850, from Tigmi Trading. 5 ‘Tratto’ rug, POA, from Poliform.