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Spring chic

BREEZY HOMES TO
WELCOME SUNNY DAYS

INSTANT FIX!

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PRODUCT OF THE YEAR: 2007'S HOTTEST NEW HOMEWARES REVEALED



BRIGHT SPARK

A 'quick fix' renovation unexpectedly turns a simple seaside cottage into a light, creative and tranquil

DINING (this page) In the kitchen-cum-dining zone, Josephine, mum to two young daughters, has successfully blended a charming mix of artworks, favourite furniture pieces and kid-friendly accessories. The Artek table and cute but ever-so-functional Stokke highchairs – with adjustable footrests for when the children grow taller – take nothing away from the boisterous Mexican cotton cover on the built-in banquette seating. Around the room, bursts of colour are found in the Hella Jongerius vase for Droog Design (far left), filled with a vibrant Bird of Paradise bouquet; the turquoise milk bottle from Funkis Swedish Forms and the bright cushions from No Chintz. Not to be outdone, a variety of colourful and interesting artworks, including a gilt-framed painting of Narooma and an Ilma Totem by Roy Wiggan, keep the mood upbeat.



space, where a vibrant art collection and love of colour shines STORY & STYLING GEORGI WADDY PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON KENNY



Restful greens, shimmering blues and dollops of lollipop brights tell a colourful tale in this seaside Sydney home. The story is that of its owner Josephine and, just like the 1920s cottage she's renovated, it's steeped in history – with a modern twist. “I grew up in the ‘70s in a house full of Marimekko,” she says, “so I’m not scared of bright colours. It’s funny how the interiors you encounter as a child play out in later life.”

The circle of style shines through upon entering the newly renovated house, with a startling white kitchen broken up with chalky blue tiles, contrasting with a bright banquette in the adjoining dining area. The renovation was originally planned as a quick-fix solution, but as architect Tom Isaksson did such a great job, the family decided to shelve all plans for a major reno. Tom worked creatively with what was on site by opening up the back and front of the house with concertina doors, and maintained the flow by combining living areas without altering the building's footprint. An old sunroom and laundry were dismantled, a front deck rebuilt and the high ceilings and long sitting room windows retained to capitalise on the afternoon light and views.

With such a brilliant outlook and her colour philosophy in mind, Josephine kept the walls and floors neutral. All rooms, bar the bedrooms, are painted with Porter's Paints in Slate, with darkened wooden floorboards providing a rich base for the collection of colourful artwork. “There has to be a balance. I chose a neutral tone on the walls and floor to handle the strong colours in the art and fabrics,” she says.

Colour and design consultant Rikki Stubbs, who also happens to be a good friend, helped achieve the home's happy disposition through the use of organic colours. “It's really important to have restful spaces in a house and to build on a palette of colour so it's integrated throughout the home and not in just one section.”

Between Josephine, her expert friends, and the way the home has lent itself to transformation, it's achievements like this that ensure the home is in sync with the family, the great outdoors, and the rich tapestry of a childhood remembered in living colour.

Contact architect Tom Isaksson on (02) 9211 1903; and Rikki Stubbs of PureColour on (02) 9569 1177 or visit www.purecolour.com.au.





HALLWAY (above) In a hallway that could easily be dark and gloomy, bright walls in Porter's Paints in Slate, sleek dark-stained floorboards and a vibrant artwork by an unknown artist come together to create an easy, relaxed feel. Halfway down, an antique azure chandelier takes centre stage. Owner Josephine feels the chandelier was meant to be the 'visual nexus' of the house. "It sits in the centre of the home, separating the two main living areas. Somehow, it seems to draw you to the next part of the house," she explains.

KITCHEN (opposite) The kitchen's blue colour scheme was colour consultant Rikki Stubbs' idea. With neutral benchtops in glamorous terrazzo grounding the palette, the kitchen's showpiece is the Michael Riley photograph, which complements the blue tiled splashback. "Rosa (opposite below) loves to sit at the kitchen concertina windows and look out into the garden," says Josephine.



we love ...

the bright banquette seating

In this tight spot, the banquette seat is a fabulous space saver and transforms this little nook into a prime place for rest or entertaining – even Chica the dog occasionally sneaks onto it for a kip! Local joiner Tony Elias made the structure, while friend and interior designer Briony Fitzgerald recommended covering the seat cushions with a bold Mexican cotton from No Chintz. It's more than just pretty – lift the lid and you'll discover ample storage underneath for toys and games. Expect to pay from \$1500 for something similar, depending on materials. Call Tony Elias on 0418 460 827; Briony Fitzgerald Design on (02) 9389 4912.



ARTWORK (BEDROOM, NEXT TO CLIPBOARD) PRINT BY GUAN WEI, (CABINET) MARY-ANN NARANCA



"I grew up IN THE '70S. IT'S FUNNY HOW THE INTERIORS YOU ENCOUNTER AS A CHILD PLAY OUT IN LATER LIFE"

LIVING ROOM (top) A sky blue sofa from Jordan covered in Designer's Guild chenille fabric beautifully frames the vista and is just the spot to relax and look out at the deep blue sea. "The cushions are covered in Marimekko fabric, the same fabric that my aunt had in her house when I was growing up. When I saw it, I immediately knew it was the right choice for the house," says Josephine. The Aboriginal fishtrap, by Judy Bayungala of Ramingining, Central Arnhem Land, was bought from the Hogarth Galleries, (02) 9360 6839, its flowing sculptural form fitting seamlessly into a distinctly coastal-meets-urban space.

BATHROOM (left) Taking inspiration from the beach, the bathroom has a scattering of blue, green and yellow mosaic floor tiles, which run up the side of the bath like a huge wave. Josephine put this small space to work, selecting a wall-hung sink, clipboards and mirror to enhance the available floor area. In the corner, a cute blue stool was sourced from The Conran Shop in Amsterdam; check out www.conranshop.co.uk.

MASTER BEDROOM (opposite) Tapping into another colour memory for the bedrooms, Josephine chose a restful green, Dulux's Silver Dollar, for the walls. "I once stayed with a friend whose house was all light greens, with coral tones picked up in the furniture and paintings," recalls Josephine. "I really loved that space and it's influenced my colour choices ever since." The bed is dressed simply with bedlinen from Household Linens, contributing to the serenity of the minimally furnished room. A Victorian chair that once belonged to Josephine's great aunt adds character to the space, as does an art collection which includes an installation by Gary Carsley.





HOME OFFICE (left) "This was just a dead space in the house, but it has great light, so I decided to close the old entrance off and use it," says Josephine. "I enjoy working here." The Bombo stool, \$829, (from ECC Lighting + Living, call (02) 9380 7922) stands out against the dark floors. Some of Josephine's favourite pieces of artwork are in this room. "Maria Fernanda Cardoso made these artworks in plexiglass (bottom, right of display) for Rosa and Luna. They were given to us when they were born and I adore them."

PORTRAIT (below) Rosa and her mother Josephine enjoy a giggly moment on the banquette seating in the kitchen.



INSIDE STORY

What's your favourite room in the house?

"The soft-green bedroom. I find it peaceful and soothing, and the colour reminds me of the sea."

What's your best bargain buy? "A vase in the kitchen (page 86) made by Hella Jongerius for Droog Design, which I bought in Amsterdam about eight years ago – today, her work is quite valuable. It pays to buy work by young artists and designers."

What is your best decorating tip?

"Decorating is a creative process; take your inspiration from good interiors books and magazines. I found it invaluable! Also, consult with professionals – luckily, I have two friends, Briony Fitzgerald and Rikki Stubbs, who work as interior designers and colour consultants – they are the best!"

What are your tips for surviving a renovation? "Move out! Prepare for lots of dust and keep sane. Try to go to the weekly site meetings and stay on top of the project."

What would you have changed if you could and why? "This was built as a five-year project, so if I started now, I would put in solar energy and water tanks. If only I had known that it was going to be so necessary! Now I'm working on installing solar energy and water-efficiency systems, but it is always better to do it when you build."

What would you save in a fire? "The children and Chica the dog, and then my handwritten notebooks and some photos."



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CHANDELIER (above) "It's probably a French 1930s piece," says Josephine of this distinctive chandelier. She picked it up from an antiques shop years ago. Try your luck at Antiques Eliza Jane Lighting in Annandale to find something similar; call (02) 9518 6168.

LIVING ROOM (top right) This unique wooden chest is an installation by designer Piet Hein Eek from the Netherlands. Check out www.pietheineek.nl for more information about his products.

EXTERIOR (right) The circular outdoor table is positioned to take in the coastal views and fresh air. The teak table is covered in Cloth's 'Stripe' fabric in jade on natural jute; call (02) 9699 2266 or visit www.clothfabric.com.au to see their range.

