

belie

INTRODUCING
STEVE CORDONY'S
CHIC AGENDA

Inside Charlotte Coote's CREATIVE & CHARISMATIC HOME

Influencing Decus
WHAT'S INSPIRING
ALEXANDRA
DONOHUE CHURCH

Luxe in the
COUNTRY

BUCOLIC BOLTHOLES FROM BYRON TO BLAIRGOWRIE

Photography
PRUE RUSCOE
Styling
OLGA LEWIS

SLOWING DOWN

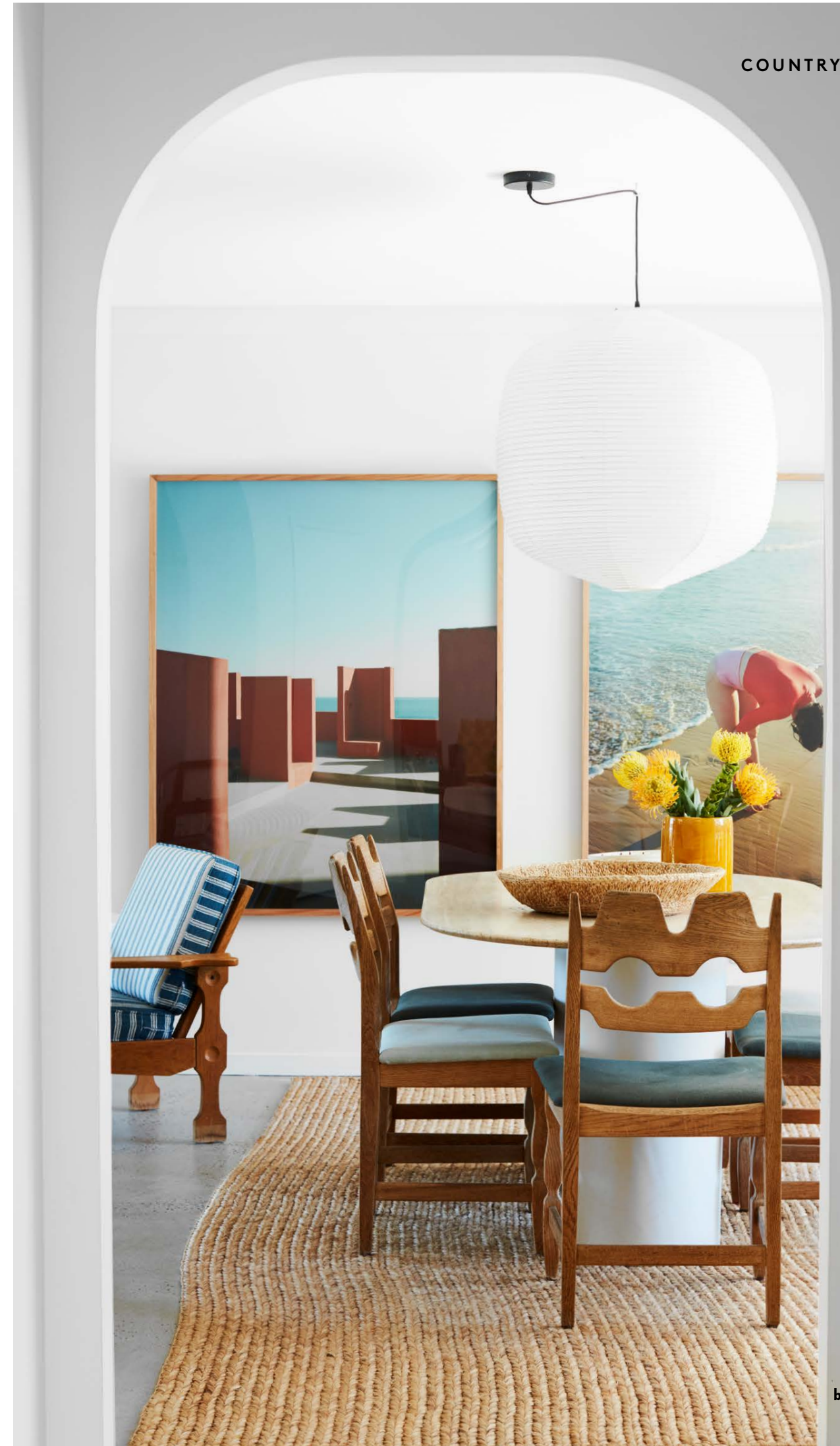
Tapping into the ethos of 'sustainable, local, organic and wholesome', this designer wrought a charming rural retreat for her own family that is mindful of the environment.



Previous page Studio ReWild landscaped the grounds. **This page, clockwise from top left** On the front verandah, armchairs from Bastille and Sons offer an ebullient pop against the white-painted brick facade and timber deck. In the corner of the dining area, a vintage Italian wall light is positioned with ceramics sourced from Romania above a vintage torso that was previously used as a styling element at Coco Republic's Sydney showroom. In the living area adjoining the kitchen and dining zones, steel-framed armchairs from Hope & May with a custom cushion in Kvadrat fabric face a vintage tiled coffee table from Becker Minty and a vintage stool. Abaca rug from International Floorcoverings. Artworks by Jim Moody. Vintage armchair upholstered in fabric from Tigger Hall Design with a side table from Tigmi Trading topped with an India Mahdavi vessel. **Opposite page** Dining chairs by Henning Kjaernulf surround the vintage travertine table with a bowl from Dunlin and vase from Tigmi Trading. Twentytwentyone 'Hotaru Buoy' pendant light. Artworks by Tim Salisbury.



Dreaming of creating a slower, more meaningful pace of life in her own environmentally aware home in a beautiful rural setting, Justine Hugh-Jones, founding principal of interior design firm Hugh-Jones Mackintosh, unearthed this property in the hinterland after a three-year search. She dubbed it Hidden Byron for its tranquil hinterland Northern Rivers location, small acreage with beautiful green borrowed views, and proximity to the ocean and neighbouring towns of Byron Bay, Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby. "Hidden Byron was created with a vision that our family would spend more peaceful time immersed in nature and live responsibly in a way that was more aligned with our values," says Justine. *What were the requirements for your home and what initially appealed to you about the property?* Having holidayed frequently in the Northern Rivers region we loved the slow, relaxed vibe of the Byron hinterland. We had ideas of buying a large acreage and almost bought a coffee plantation and then a macadamia farm. Thankfully, those purchases fell through as we were still going to be living in Sydney and it just wasn't realistic. The house is available for holiday rentals so we didn't want it to be further than 15 to 20 minutes to the beach. My family are also mad surfers so they gave me a strict prerequisite. What appealed to me was to take this nondescript regional brick bungalow and create something really different. We had a blank canvas to renovate with minimal structural requirements. The location between the ocean and the hills also inspired me to infuse the place with a breezy, 'sand in the hair' spirit. I had also been madly



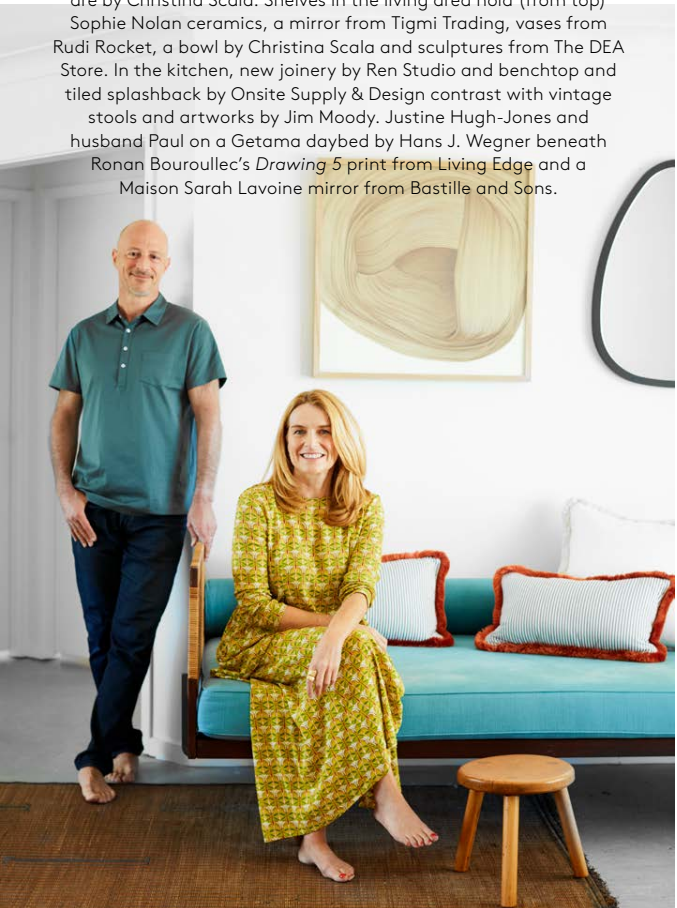
COUNTRY HOMES

imagining creating a wild and native garden that I could lose myself in after my busy work life. The land was suitable to create a beautiful garden with a pool and had future potential to plant orchards and organic kitchen harvest gardens. There is enough land private to the main house to design and build a separate eco cabin – the second phase of the design process. *What were the challenges of the site and how did you resolve them with your design scheme?* There were few challenges as the existing layout worked well but the house needed a third bathroom which we added by renovating a large laundry space. The main challenge was that the house lacked any redeeming architectural features and all the character needed to come from the landscaping and interior decoration. Luckily, we had a pretty perfect blank canvas to create what we wanted. Renovating at a distance from Sydney was also a tough call, as was working with trades through the pandemic, which made the project timeline longer than anticipated. Fortunately our excellent local builders, Berecon, a passionate company with an environmentally conscious approach to construction, relieved us of those challenges of distance. The local red volcanic soil and rainy conditions did prove tricky especially as we were painting everything white

before the landscaping was completed! We gutted the existing bathrooms and added terracotta and terrazzo finishes inspired by the red earth and the bark of the eucalyptus trees on the land. Our limited budget was spun out with the use of the talented Ren Studio which cleverly designs high-end doors and drawers for Ikea kitchen cabinetry. Our very talented landscape architect, Kirsty Kendall from Studio ReWild, worked her magic on the landscaping and pool and garden design. Her passion is creating native gardens that respect and reflect space and reinstate the wild. Collaborating with her was a total joy. The location of the pool and future second eco cabin were key decisions to get right. *Are there any particular considerations when designing a home in a rural setting such as this?* We all need to live more responsibly within our homes, remembering that our decisions will impact the environment now and tomorrow. Here, we are on tank water so we needed to carefully consider landscaping and planting designs. Access for trades and deliveries was tricky as we have a long, narrow tree-covered drive that drivers like to avoid. We wanted the property to be environmentally self-sustaining with solar panels and clever water catchment ideas. The local wildlife can be a challenge to a nervous British owner, too!

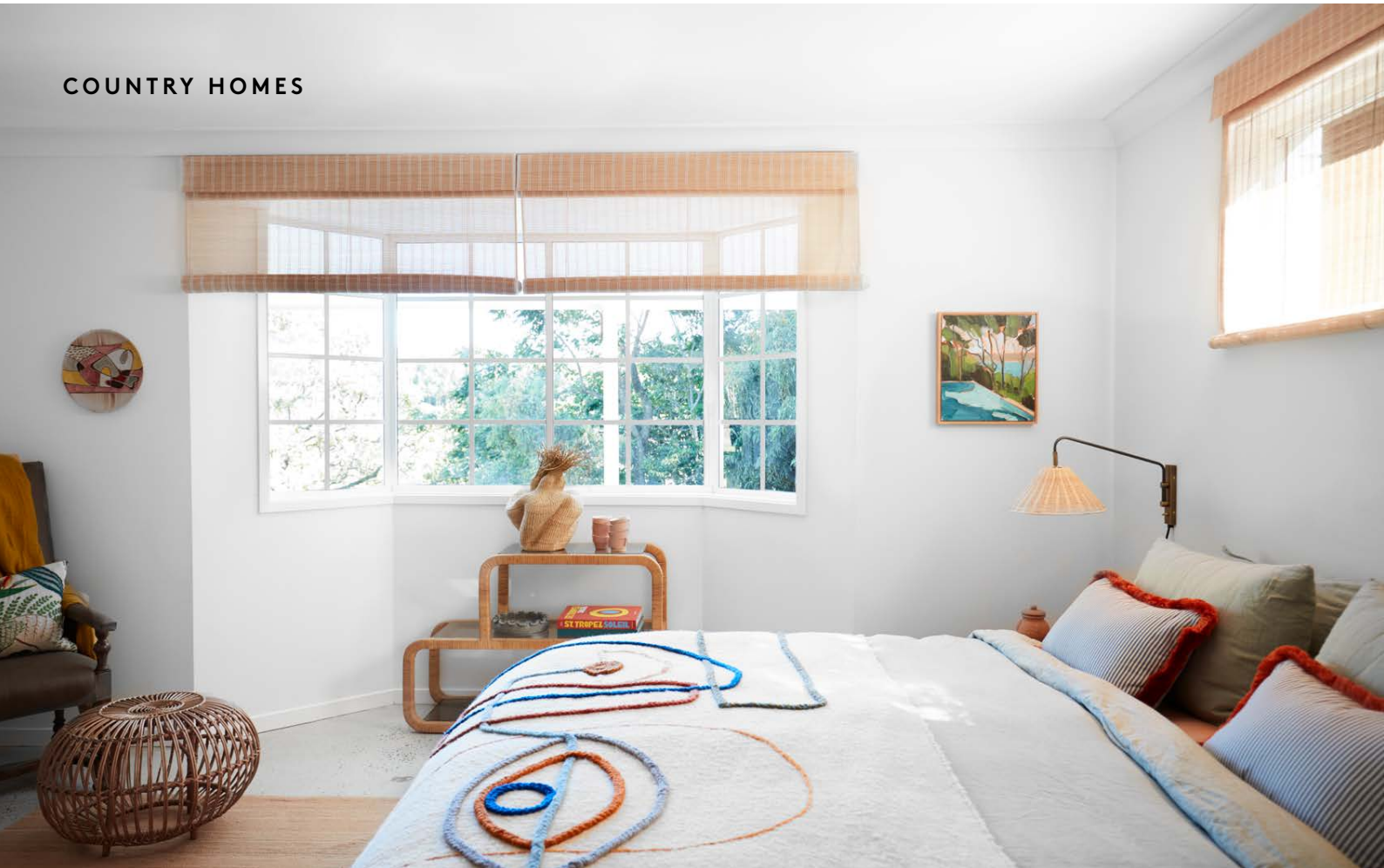


These pages, clockwise from left A vintage Scandinavian chair sits to one side of the doorway leading to the entry, where the front door is painted in Dulux 'Sloane'. To the right, a sconce from Angelucci 20th Century hangs above a console displaying objects from Tigmi Trading. The Moroccan photographic print on the floor is from Kulchi. A 'Safari' chair by Arne Norell, vintage sofa and Douglas Snelling lounge chair surround a coffee table by Hugh-Jones Mackintosh on a Tuareg matt from Kulchi. The mirror next to the fireplace is from The Vault Sydney and the ceramics on the table are by Christina Scala. Shelves in the living area hold (from top) Sophie Nolan ceramics, a mirror from Tigmi Trading, vases from Rudi Rocket, a bowl by Christina Scala and sculptures from The DEA Store. In the kitchen, new joinery by Ren Studio and benchtop and tiled splashback by Onsite Supply & Design contrast with vintage stools and artworks by Jim Moody. Justine Hugh-Jones and husband Paul on a Getama daybed by Hans J. Wegner beneath Ronan Bouroullec's *Drawing 5* print from Living Edge and a Maison Sarah Lavoine mirror from Bastille and Sons.





These pages At the rear of the house, under a roof structure built by Berecon, the verandah offers verdant views over the Myocum Valley.



This page, from top In this bedroom, vintage items such as the Italian wall plate and curvy rattan console from Rudi Rocket, armchair from The Country Trader and Bonacina ottoman mesh with contemporary items such as the bed linen from Cultiver, a custom cushion in Jim Thompson Fabrics and a Serena & Lily wall lamp. Artwork by Melanie Waugh from Michael Reid Northern Beaches. Mirror from Composition by Office Elias. Rug from Halcyon Lake.

The fertile volcanic soil is such a benefit in creating a lush, abundant garden where plants and flowers will pour forth from the ground. *What were some of the ideas and influences that shaped your design?* The idea was to create a fun rural holiday home for those seeking warmth, relaxation and a retreat from life's busy pace. I wanted a European mid-century ambience akin to a colourful and relaxed southern Portuguese *finca* similar to the homes found scattered in the hills of the Alentejo region, as in Comporta. These rustic homes tend to be one level and very casual with polished concrete floors, whitewashed interiors, colourful mid-century vintage furniture and lots of wood and wicker. Another influence is the Flamingo Estate in LA where Australian owner Richard Christiansen has created a home for “radical pleasure – a place to bathe, eat and bask in nature's most precious ingredients”. *How would you describe the completed home and what are some of your favourite design elements?* It encapsulates all the principles of slow living: sustainable, local, organic and wholesome. Living in this style of rural home forces you to live in the moment. The design is quite simplistic and the real success lies in having worked some interior and exterior magic on a simple regional building. Symbolically, this home has shown me that we don't need a lot. My favourite element is that I feel whole just by spending time here. Hidden Byron has been a real lifestyle shift for my family. I feel centred and calm here in my rural sanctuary. *How does the project respond to the surrounding landscape?* All the rooms benefit from views on both sides of the house as it is located on top of a sunny, north-facing ridge. The covered front and back verandahs provide welcome shade and there is always a breeze



from the ocean. Where to locate the pool was critical so our views weren't spoiled by a fence. We chose to locate it handy to the house and nestled it in a new garden comprising mixed tropical planting such as palms, elephant ears, gingers and tractor-seat plants. Kirsty cleverly designed a round concrete pool that was beautifully minimal, then abundantly planted lush and native greenery around the perimeter of the pinkish, terracotta-toned fence. The curved, sculpted seats add an amazing dimension to the enjoyment of sitting in the pool and taking in one of the best views of the property. *What informed the selection of furniture, art, fittings and finishes?* Portuguese country beach house style was the language for furniture, art, fittings and finishes. I recycled furniture from my previous homes and incorporated finds such as vintage European upholstered timber furniture, wicker pieces, Moroccan rugs and great contemporary photography to inject that much-needed colour and personality. *What do you enjoy about living here and how do you use the space?* Hidden Byron encourages full use of the rural landscape, location and tranquil views while enjoying a well-designed interior with plenty of space for inter-generational families to socialise and relax. There is such a friendly vibe to the Northern Rivers area that attracts like-minded people who care about each other and the environment. As a keen cook I love the abundance of local produce and farmers markets. @hiddenbyron; bughjonesmackintosh.com; @studiorewild; berecon.space



This page, clockwise from top In the main bathroom, tiles and terrazzo benchtop from Onsite Supply & Design crown the joinery by Berecon. Yokato 'Roma' taps in bronze from Brodware. Wall light from Marz Designs. The main bedroom features bed linen from Cultiver and custom cushions in Pierre Frey fabric. In a corner of the bedroom is a vintage chair, mirror from Composition by Office Elias, lampshade by Hugh-Jones Mackintosh and artwork by Pamela French.

