

# VOCAL LIVING AUSTRALIA



DESIGN'S  
BOLD NEW MODE

# A NEW NEW LEAF

Salvaging the PAST was an exacting *labour of love* for Hugh-Jones Mackintosh and AN+A, where *inspiration* has flourished within heritage parameters in the resurrection of a 1930s SYDNEY home.

By FREYA HERRING Photographed by PRUE RUSCOE Styled by OLGA LEWIS



*This page* in the living area of this Sydney home, Pacha chairs by Pierre Paulin for Gubi from Cult; vintage travertine coffee table; vide poche from Secondi; Giopato & Coombes Gem Cluster pendant light from District; Abaca rug from International Floorcoverings; artwork by Marisa Purcell from Olsen Gallery. *Details, last pages.*

*This page* in another view of the living area with the annex beyond, Tacchini Julep sofa from Stylecraft; Epic dining table by GamFratesi for Gubi from Cult; vintage wood and woven cane Chiavari chairs from The Window; Gufram Cactus sculpture from Living Edge; Apparatus Synapse pendant light from Criteria; custom Rilievo 04 rug from Tigmi. *Opposite page* in another view of the living area, Tactile sofa by Vincenzo de Cotiis for Baxter from Space Furniture; vintage French lounge chairs from Nicholas & Alistair; vintage coffee table; 1980s marble candle holders from East Wing Studio; velvet cushion from Hugh-Jones Mackintosh; cushion in Oxbow fabric from Kvadrat; *Wheel of Light* artwork by Eduardo Santos from Otomys.





*This page* in the formal dining room, **Matera Palladiana stone dining table** by Paola Navone for Baxter from Space Furniture; **Beetle velvet dining chairs** by GamFratesi for Gubi from Cult; **New York sideboard** from Grazia&Co; **Joyride #6 sculpture** (on sideboard) by Korban/Flaubert; Giopato & Coombes **Moonstone Linear chandelier 03** from District; **Mini Dome wall light** from Allied Maker; **artwork** from The DEA Store. *Opposite page* in the entry, vintage **Bonacina chairs**; **Bliss Ultimate rug** by Mae Engelgeer for Cc-tapis from Mobilia.

**T**here are heritage houses, and there are listed heritage houses. Rosetta in Sydney epitomises the latter, so converting its 1930s state into a five-bed, five-bath home befitting a modern family was never going to be easy — surely the red tape enveloping it would prove suffocatingly constrictive? But that's not the way architects Patrick Nicholas and Vanessa Edema from AN+A (Architects Nicholas + Associates) saw it. "It's one of those cases where you really need to see the heritage of the building as its greatest asset, not as a limiting factor," says Nicholas.

Set back from the road and giving major south-of-France vibes, the garden, lush with olive and citrus trees, was also protected. "The actual proportion of the garden compared to the house is quite expansive," says principal and interior designer Katrina Mackintosh of Hugh-Jones Mackintosh. "It feels like you're walking onto an estate, with grounds surrounding the whole house."

The property was built in 1925 and altered in 1932 in the interwar Mediterranean style with Georgian influences and, with only two previous owners, it had barely been touched by the time the new owners purchased it. With its blush-pink hue, "the house has always been one of my absolute favourite homes from the exterior," says principal and interior designer Justine Hugh-Jones. When she heard the client might buy it, she told them, "Oh, you have to buy that one! I don't even need to step inside; that house is one in a million."

The lower-ground level wasn't full height, so the two-year build included what Nicholas terms a "heart in our mouths" excavation. "We had to lift the whole building up on stilts," he says. "As much as it was a graceful and delicate heritage operation, there was also pretty serious construction typology and methodology." Opening onto a 50-year-old swimming pool that screams '70s Hollywood hedonism with its sinuous kidney-shaped form, the now full-height floor sports a fifth bedroom, as well as a bathroom, gym, rumpus and that ultimate of everyday aspirations: a spacious laundry.

It was on this floor that Nicholas sought to re-create one of the building's most extraordinary features: its arched windows. He had them crafted in steel, a move that sensitively acknowledges their new fabrication against the original wooden ones, painted white, on the upper floors. "All the sitting and living areas have sets of arched doorways that open out into that incredible garden," notes Hugh-Jones. Creating vitrines of the garden to be enjoyed from within, the windows are an elegant and refreshing alternative away from cold expanses of soulless glass.

On the ground level, there are two living rooms, two dining rooms and a verdant olive-toned kitchen that reflect the bucolic oasis outside. The natural theme extends to the cosy, grassy-toned sunroom, where the combination of beeswax-finished terracotta floors with 1950s wicker armchairs and a 1970s deep-green lacquer coffee table sourced from Los Angeles further evokes the Old Hollywood mood. One imagines Katharine Hepburn swinging open the door and sipping her morning coffee on the banquette, feet up on the table after a dip in the pool. "You feel like you're in a black-and-white movie come to life in colour," says Nicholas.

Just off the kitchen in the casual dining area, a sculptural dining table from Ke-zu feels equally spotlight-worthy with its mustard-toned legs like giant upturned cones. Just behind on the back staircase is one of Rosetta's most romantic features: ornate Josef Frank floral wallpaper. "That wallpaper was always in the house," says Hugh-Jones, who sourced a fresh batch from the manufacturer in Sweden to accurately replace what had been on this very wall for a century — another subtle but meaningful nod to Rosetta's history.

Terrazzo found onsite inspired numerous features, such as Paola Navone's Matera dining table that stretches almost three metres in the formal dining room. Lighting the table, and everywhere else, proved challenging; the house's protected status meant downlights, other than in the bathrooms, were a no-go. "We had to rely purely on our decorative lights to cast enough light," says Mackintosh. Doing so, however, allowed moments of illuminative delight — the Giopato & Coombes Gem chandelier in the lounge, for instance, which on first glance presents like a globular ceiling fan before a double take reveals its true function. Or the conspicuous copper Artichoke light by Poul Henningsen sandwiched between the bedrooms on the first-floor landing, which overlooks a baby-pink rug with a tiger printed on it. "We like to create that whimsy and unexpected feeling in our homes," says Mackintosh.

"It's not too serious," continues Hugh-Jones, and perhaps that's what makes this home work. Renovating a listed dwelling demands a sober outlook — standards must be upheld, history and heritage protected — but that doesn't mean it has to be joyless. Bringing Rosetta into the 21st century has brought new life to its folds — that means children running the halls, pools being splashed into, and even tigers on the landing. [hughjonesmackintosh.com](http://hughjonesmackintosh.com) [anplusa.com](http://anplusa.com)

*Opposite page* in the family room, Camaleonda sofa by Mario Bellini for B&B Italia from Space Furniture; Pietro Russo Design SAT coffee table from Criteria; Pietro Franceschini Un Beso En El Mar Paonazzo marble side table from Origine; custom Tubby console from Fform; white stoneware jug, and blue stoneware vessel by Bettina Willner from Saint Cloche; Cassina Ficupala table lamp, enquiries to Mobilia; Apparatus Trapeze 4 ceiling light from Criteria; vintage Tuareg rug from Kulchi; artwork by Jonny Niesche from Sarah Cottier Gallery.



*These pages* in the main bedroom, Buonanotte Valentina **bed** from Ceccotti Collezioni; Society Limonta **bed linen** from Ondene; Stay **sofa** by Space Copenhagen for Gubi from Cult; vintage **floor lamp** from CCSS; vintage Poliedri **pendant light** by Carlo Scarpa for Venini; Reuber Henning Karaoke silk and wool **rug** from Halcyon Lake; **artwork** by Marisa Purcell from Olsen Gallery.



*This page* in the landing, CH07 Shell chair by Hans J Wegner for Carl Hansen & Son from Cult; Enzo sideboard from Criteria; vessels (on sideboard) by Ella Bendrup from Saint Cloche; Tiger 8 rug from Tim Roodenrys; artwork (above sideboard) by Samantha Everton from Arthouse Gallery; in the main bedroom beyond, Miniforms Soda side table from James Richardson Furniture; ceramic mirror from Tigmi. *Opposite page* the pool area. *Details, last pages.*

