



VIGNETTE {[opposite](#)} This beautiful display is a testament to homeowner Jane's love of vintage bric-a-brac and timeworn pieces, which fill the Sydney home she shares with her family. A pair of gilded wooden angel wings hangs above a pair of clock faces on a timber shelf – itself a prized piece, custom-made from wood salvaged from an old Sydney Harbour wharf. "I deliberately chose the timber pieces with knots and holes showing evidence of their previous life," says Jane.

FAMILY AREA {[this page](#)} Walls in Dulux Antique White USA showcase Jane's pre-loved finds, including this giant vintage clock – originally from a French church and later purchased in London – which takes centrestage above a Jordan 'Bosko' sofa. "We spend all our time here," says Jane. >

Jane's lovely Sydney home, with its curious mix of vintage treasures, is a reflection of her life. Classic pieces of furniture speak of her youth, growing up in an English house, which she recalls as, "full of dusty, old antiques and friendly, family things – not smart but nice." Other items, such as the oak dining table found in an interiors store in London, reflect Jane's extensive travels; she's lived and worked in the US, the Netherlands and England, as well as Australia, as part of her job as an executive for a global advertising agency. Other aspects of the house pick up on her hobbies – the gorgeous kitchen, for example, reveals her love of cooking. Full of warmth and character, every room in the house reflects her eye for stylish detail.

Stylish, however, was not the first word that came to Jane's mind when she, along with husband Christopher and children, Alex, now 15, and Kate, 13, first saw the property about eight years ago. "It was the location that attracted us, definitely not the house, which was a sort of bastardisation of Federation mixed with fake Italian," recalls Jane. "I like columns and things, but this had Italian columns shoved on a 1920s house – sort of 'Fediterranean'. It had been chewed up by lots of people renovating one room or another, and no one had actually taken a step back and looked at the whole place as a coherent entity."

Nevertheless, the family could see past the clutter to the property's fundamentally good bones, and they loved the area – leafy and quiet, and close to a pretty harbour beach. "It's very child-friendly, on a nice street, and the beach is just a minute-and-a-half away," enthuses Jane. They lived with their new home's foibles for five years before tackling what turned out to be a full-blown renovation, including repositioning and refurbishing rooms, replacing the roof, putting in a damp-proof course, rewiring and replumbing the whole property, and installing new floorboards and windows.

"It's a bit of a decorating cliché, but living here before we did it up actually did make a big difference," recalls Jane. "You see how you really live and where the light comes from; for example, the main bedroom was originally at the back of the house, overlooking the park, and then I thought, well, it's only used for going to sleep, not for sitting and reading, so it would be much more useful to have that room as a drawing room, where you can sit with friends."

In the new layout, the master bedroom is in the centre of the house, a calm white space complete with walk-in robe, while the new living room opens (via vast glazed doors) onto a wide, covered balcony that was created by demolishing an old sunroom. The balcony runs the width of the house, expanding the home's entertaining footprint and drawing light into both the living room and the bedroom alongside.

The back of the kitchen was knocked down and the old ornate kitchen cupboards were replaced with plain, white handle-free ones. "I think handles age a kitchen faster than anything else," says Jane. Now this comfortable space is a combined kitchen, dining and family room that opens up the entrance hall. "We made a sort of spine down the house from front to back, so you can see the trees at the back of the house from the front door," explains Jane.

A largely neutral scheme – "I love white! At the moment, anything that isn't nailed down is being painted white!" – acts as a backdrop for an eclectic range of furniture, striking artwork and whimsical collectables, which contribute to the home's unique appeal.

Although Jane has made the almost 100-year-old home uniquely hers, she's quite realistic about it. "At the end of the day, it's just bricks and mortar. Someone else owned it before us and someone else will own it after us. I will take the best elements of this and re-create it in the next house – having painted everything white!"



KITCHEN & DINING AREA The open-plan kitchen, designed by DK Design Kitchens with all-white cabinetry and a Starphire glass splashback in clear blue, creates a clean canvas for the dining area, which is filled with characterful pieces. An oak table, from London's Tobias and the Angel, and an eclectic collection of mismatched chairs form the dining area's focal point, while a set of suspended Tovo lights with bucket-like shades from Ici et Là adds to the room's rustic vibe. >



LIVING ROOM {these pages}
 An inviting and comfortable space showcasing Jane's gorgeous finds, the living room features upholstered armchairs around a De Poortere rug, while a coffee table by London-based Studio Conran forms the centrepiece. The room opens onto the sun-drenched balcony with an inviting red chaise longue from Decorative Living in London's Fulham.

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antique finds {below}

Jane's varied collection of antique finds and pre-loved treasures gives the house a unique personality. A set of 1920s pond yachts, bought from London's Portobello Road Market, sits atop low bookshelves in the living room, giving the room a hint of nautical style and vintage charm. With an eye for the extraordinary, Jane draws on a range of sources for these amazing bits and pieces, including flea markets, junk shops, antiques stores and even op shops. "I'm very clear about what I like and what I don't like," says Jane. "I go into an antiques shop or flea market and within five minutes I've found the only thing there that I'll buy." >





BALCONY {top left} The nautical theme of the living room continues on the balcony, with one of Jane's 1920s pond yachts and a painted phrase inspired by the vintage sign outside a beachside kiosk.

GUEST BEDROOM {top right} A cluster of illustrations, prints and photographs, varying in size and displayed in plain black frames, makes a striking decorative feature in the guest room; find similar frames at Country Road. The flax wallcovering creates a textured backdrop for a simple ensemble of all-white bedlinen.

MASTER BEDROOM {left} Pretty floral cushions from No Chintz add a splash of colour against crisp bedlinen from The White Company and an antique French throw. "I just wanted to have a cleaner, simpler space," says Jane of the sparse decor, which is punctuated by a clutch of family photos.

BATHROOM {opposite} "I'm so glad I don't have a boring white bathroom," says Jane of the vivid emerald room designed by interior designer Briony Fitzgerald. Bisazza mosaic tiles from Pazotti bring this pamper zone to life, grounded by the Italian limestone vanity top, complete with twin drop-in sinks and traditional-style mixer sets, all from Candana. The handle-free storage units and mirrored cupboards, all designed by DK Design Kitchens, bounce light around the room, giving it a spacious feel. A bright artwork continues the vibrant theme. >

ARTWORK (OPPOSITE PAGE) KATE SMITH



Inside story

Who lives here? Jane (pictured right), an advertising executive, and her family.

Where do you find your collectables?

Jane: "They've come from all over the place. Whenever I go somewhere, either travelling abroad or here in Australia, I'm always ferreting about in junk shops and antiques shops – not antiques with a capital 'A', more sort of collectables shops. And Vinnies too – you can get some incredible things at Vinnies!"

What's the appeal of such items?

"They just make a house so much more interesting and personal. I go into big posh houses that just have a bowl of lemons in the middle of the table and think, 'Where's your stuff?'"

Why white? "I think it's the best colour to show off paintings. When I lived in America, I didn't have any money, and I'd just go to the junk shops and buy old wooden chairs that didn't match and paint them all white.

I have chairs that are a really beautiful shape, but the wood is nothing at all. Painted white, you really notice the shape – they look almost baroque."

Where does your inspiration come from? "Magazines, mainly. I keep scrapbooks and stick cuttings in them, but they're not sacrosanct – I look back at them often and say, 'What was I thinking?'"

Favourite rooms? "The kitchen and the green bathroom, especially when I'm lying in the bath and looking out the window. I'm so pleased I chose the green – it lifts my spirits every day."



BALCONY Jane and daughter Kate relax on the covered balcony, furnished with table and benches from Freedom. The American oak floorboards (**bottom left**) used throughout the home are from Harper Timber, with a black-tinted Synteco paste finish. "I love it because it doesn't show the dirt and it goes with old and new," says Jane.

KITCHEN {right} Sandwiched between the rustic timber table setting and the modern surfaces of the kitchen are simple bar stools from Ikea, which Jane customised by painting in her favourite colour, white.

HALLWAY {below right} The hallway allows visitors to see right through to the back garden. An original piece from France dating back to 1910, the front door is older than the house itself.

"I like mixing PRECIOUS ANTIQUES WITH QUIRKY THINGS I PICK UP FOR A SONG FROM FLEA MARKETS"

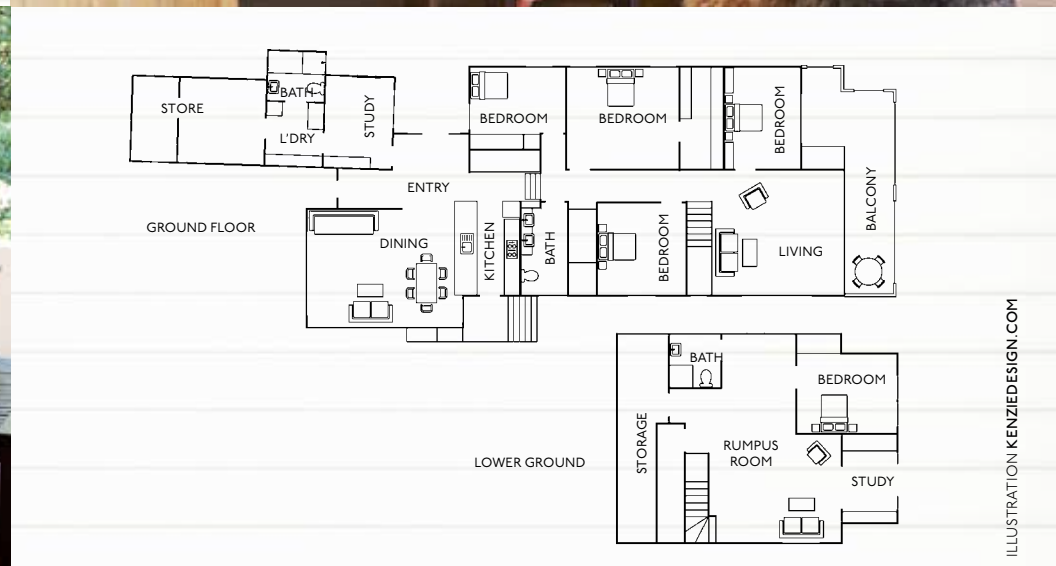
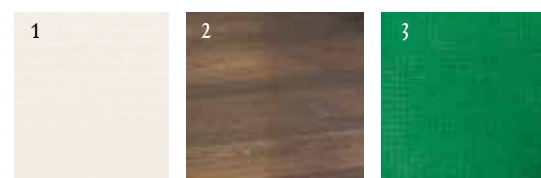


ILLUSTRATION KENZIEDSIGN.COM



KATE'S BEDROOM {above} Light and airy, Kate's bedroom is a study in decorative panache. The tones of the vibrant feature wall are matched by curtains made by Decorating Recycled in Rose Bay. The turned leg desk with shelf is from Siroccohome, while the chest of drawers – formerly an old linen chest that belonged to Jane's father – has been given a new lease of life with escutcheons bought from Mother of Pearl & Sons.

ARTWORK {left} A larger-than-life charcoal drawing of a kangaroo, *Silver Shadow* by Nicola Hicks, dwarfs the room's furniture.

colour & materials

1 Interior walls Wash & Wear 101 Advanced Flat paint in Antique White USA, \$36.71/litre, Dulux.
2 Flooring American oak floorboards, from \$85/sqm, Harper Timber.
3 Bathroom wall tiles Bisazza glass mosaic tiles in Colour 20.57, \$115.55/sqm, Pazotti Tiles. [Stockists, page 221](#)
Due to the printing process, actual colours may vary.
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