

SOUL CONNECTION

Having spotted potential beyond its rundown facade, the owners of this Adelaide villa have transformed it into the light and lovely family home it was destined to be.

STORY *Georgia Madden* | STYLING *Georgie Shepherd & Fiona Fleer*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Christopher Morrison*

KITCHEN "The August dining table from Jordan has a really beautiful, soft form," says interior designer Georgie Shepherd (pictured). "We didn't want anything too sharp-edged here." Thonet 'No.811 Hoffmann' chairs, 1000 Chairs. Snow stools by Agostino & Brown. Custom rangehood finished in Dulux Mount Buller. Oven and cooktop, Asko. Eve sink mixer, KWC. Atelier Arteti 'Mimosa' pendant light, Mobilia. Taj Mahal quartzite benchtops and splashback. Joinery by Kustom Joinery Manufacturers (throughout).



KITCHEN *Top left and above left* “We designed the cathedral glass pane doors to the mudroom and laundry so you can leave them open for framed views into these spaces,” says Georgie. Full-height joinery finished in Dulux Deep Bottlebrush, under-bench joinery in Dulux Mount Buller. Custom handles, Handmade & Found. Taj Mahal quartzite benchtop and splashback, CDK Stone. Engineered-oak flooring in Natural White, Royal Oak Floors. Large bowl, Michell Ceramics. **MUDROOM** *Above right* Moller #63’ bench, Great Dane. Basket, The Dharma Door. Leather cabinet pulls, MadeMeasure. **SITTING ROOM** *Opposite* Ligne Roset ‘Togo’ chair, Domo. Cumulus pendant light, Enoki. Rug, Armadillo. The cloud artwork was produced for a previous project of Fiona’s.



It’s hard to imagine the previous state of this beautifully renovated three-bedroom sandstone villa in Adelaide. “It was dark, tired and hadn’t been updated in probably 40 years,” says owner Fiona. “It wasn’t exactly a dream house.”

But with a design eye honed from her years working at a Melbourne decorating firm, Fiona could see past its shortcomings. “Yes, the house was dark and dreary, but it was in a gorgeous area, had loads of character, the right orientation and a good sense of flow,” she says. “I loved its ornate ceilings, established back garden and proximity to the local village.”

Fiona, her husband David, their daughters Harriet, 12, Annabel, six, and Burmese cat Mimi lived in the house for “18 long months” while the catalogue of issues grew. “The ceiling was collapsing, taps were leaking, handles were falling off doors and it was only a matter of time before the oven caught fire,” she says. The layout was frustrating, too, with the kitchen in the middle of the house so you had to walk through it to get to the living area at the back.

The couple decided to rework the rear extension containing the kitchen, dining and living areas, and update the original bedrooms and sitting room at the front of the house. “We wanted a light-filled home with a combined kitchen and living area that connected seamlessly to the outside,” says Fiona. “We pictured a soft, calm palette with some fun, quirky elements.”

Armed with a stack of inspiration images but unsure exactly which direction to take the house, Fiona reached out to Georgie Shepherd, an interior designer whose work she’d long admired in magazines and on social media. ▶

THE PALETTE

Dulux Deep Bottlebrush
(kitchen full-height joinery)

Dulux Mount Buller
(kitchen under-bench joinery)

Dulux Dollar
(front door)



“Fiona and David love colour, art and pattern, so we looked to create rooms that were a bit edgy yet still soft, warm and textural,” says Georgie. “Not many people would be brave enough to let you do a full burgundy powder room, for example, but it’s them to a tee.”

Georgie and her team replanned the rear extension, raising the ceiling height and adding floor-to-ceiling windows to bring in more light. They also added a new laundry, mudroom, powder room and an extra bedroom, plus an expansive deck. Turning their attention to the front of the house, they restored original features, added a huge skylight in the hallway and turned one of the bedrooms into a new ensuite and walk-in wardrobe for the main bedroom.

At the rear, the awkward original kitchen made way for an open-plan kitchen/dining area with a curved island dividing the two zones. “The kitchen was a priority,” says Georgie. “Fiona and David are keen cooks and wanted somewhere they could entertain or sit around casually as a family, so we designed the island almost like a piece of art, its curves balancing the crisp, rectilinear architecture in this part of the house. We topped it with Taj Mahal quartzite rather than marble, which stains easily.” There’s ample storage too, including dedicated cabinetry for small appliances.

Above the island, a striking Mimosa pendant echoes its rounded form. “Fiona and David were very smart about where they spent their money, investing in a few key pieces, such as feature lighting and the Jordan dining table, and saving money on simpler cabinet finishes and tiles,” says Georgie.

In the living area, a chunky textured wall above the fireplace is one of Fiona’s favourite features and supplies a touch of edginess. “Rather than hanging art on the walls in this part of the house, we focused on using art-like finishes to create beautiful layers of texture and interest,” says Georgie.

A really great mudroom where the children could hang their coats and schoolbags was another of Fiona’s must-haves. An etched, forest-themed mural, artfully positioned so you can enjoy it from the kitchen, adds the magic she was after. “I saw this wallpaper used in a home years ago and filed it away, hoping to use it myself one day,” says Fiona.

Georgie and Fiona enjoyed working together on this project so much that the designer ended up offering her a job at the end of it. “Design-wise, we were in sync from the outset and when Georgie asked me to join her firm, it was the icing on the cake. Of course I said yes!” says Fiona.

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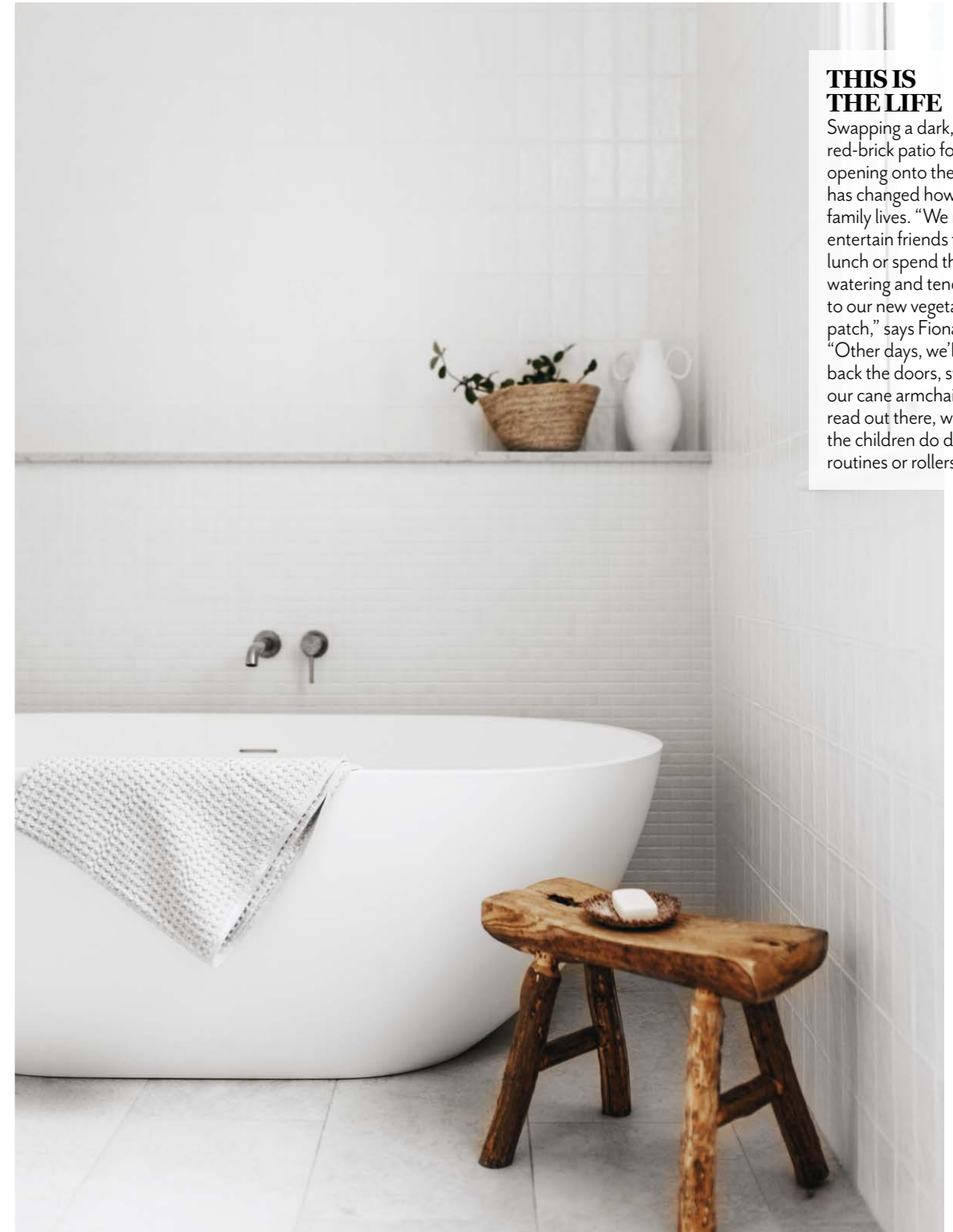
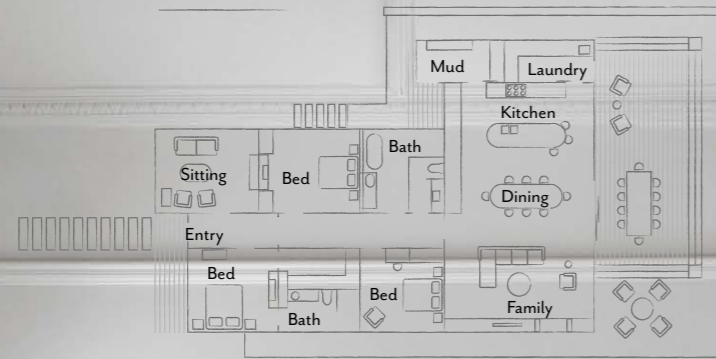


LIVING The roughly textured plaster wall above the fireplace is one of Fiona’s favourite features. “We played around with quite a few different finishes, but we all loved this chunky texture,” says Georgie. Lopi ‘3615 HO GS2’ gas fireplace. Hem ‘Puffy’ chair, Aura Objects. Hourglass wall light, Anna Charlesworth. Joinery designed by Georgie Shepherd. Items on shelves (from top): vases by Handmade & Found and Meg Michell; brass vase by Anna Varendorff at ACV Studio; basket from The Dharma Door and Vitra ‘Nuage’ vases from Aura Objects; Meg Michell ‘Ball’ vase, Kevala Ceramics dish.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

“We looked to create rooms that were a bit edgy yet still soft, warm and textural.” **GEORGIE SHEPHERD, INTERIOR DESIGNER**

THE LAYOUT



THIS IS THE LIFE

Swapping a dark, gloomy red-brick patio for a deck opening onto the garden has changed how the family lives. "We may entertain friends for lunch or spend the day watering and tending to our new vegetable patch," says Fiona. "Other days, we'll push back the doors, swing our cane armchairs and read out there, while the children do dance routines or rollerskate."

FAMILY BATHROOM Budget-savvy tiling in the bathrooms meant extra funds could be used for feature lighting and furniture elsewhere in the home. Stone-look floor tiles, Cerbis Ceramics. Satinato subway tiles and mosaic wall tiles, Academy Tiles+Surfaces. Ledge in Caesarstone Bianco Drift. Fienza 'Nero' stone freestanding bath and Axus bath mixer, Routleys Bathroom Kitchen Laundry. Vintage stool. **MAIN BEDROOM** The original ceiling, fireplace and surround and Baltic pine flooring were restored, then painted or stained. Custom bedhead. Bedlinen, Cultiver and Country Road. Kartell 'Componibili' bedside table, Space. Lampe De Marseille 'Nemo' wall lamp, Cult Design. Rug, Armadillo. ▶



HALLWAY *Top left* “We extended the original hallway as it’s part of the old kitchen,” says Georgie. “Cone pendant lights from Laal, being contemporary and minimalist, add an edge.” **ENSUITE** *Top right and above left* Custom vanity in Laminex Seed and mirrored cabinet both made by Kustom Joinery Manufacturers. Taj Mahal quartzite benchtop and shower niche, CDK Stone. Latis round basin, Omvivo. Axus wall mixer and Arcisan shower arm and rose, Routleys Bathroom Kitchen Laundry. Pool Mosaics floor tiles, Ceramica Tile+Design. TL4 subway tiles and TL6 mosaic wall tiles, both Academy Tiles+Surfaces. Orb wall lights, The Light Impact. **ENTRY** *Above right* “The exterior wasn’t in bad shape and just needed a bit of paint and restoration,” says Georgie. “The green on the front door, Dulux Dollar, speaks to the green used inside.”



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THE SOURCE

Tones taken from the Australian landscape look right at home in this revitalised heritage abode.



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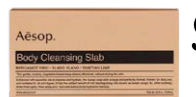
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Produced by Nina Dorn.

1 Ligne Roset ‘Calicot’ suspended ceiling light in Beton, \$975, Domo. 2 Hackfall Green wallpaper mural, from \$77/m², Hovia. 3 Elho ‘Vibes’ flowerpot, \$19, Bunnings. 4 Bliss armchair in Native Ivory, \$1299, Lounge Lovers. 5 Wash & Wear paint in Colorbond Pale Eucalypt, \$108.50/4L, Dulux. 6 Arcisan Vierra wall-mounted basin set in Brushed Brass, \$449, Harvey Norman. 7 Libra dining table, from \$13,950, Fanuli. 8 Belmont dining chair, \$219, Oz Design Furniture. 9 Body Cleansing Slab soap with Bergamot Rind, Ylang Ylang and Tahitian Lime, \$29, Aesop. 10 Mali basket in White Wash, \$12.95, Provincial Home Living. *For Where to Buy, see page 190. H&G*