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THE GREAT ESCAPE

A BEAUTIFUL ART DECO HOME CLOSE TO
THE BEACH IN NEWCASTLE, NSW, COMES
ALIVE WITH LASHINGS OF BOLD COLOUR
BALANCED WITH CALM, CONSIDERED SPACES

Story LYNNE TESTONI *Styling* STEWART HORTON
Photography MAREE HOMER





SPACE & GRACE This family home in Newcastle, NSW, had lost many of its period features, so homeowners Justin and Janet worked with interior designer Stewart Horton of Horton & Co to restore its charm. Justin says the home that the couple share with their children, Josie, 12, and (pictured top right) Jada, 13, and Jimmy, 9, always had an element of grandeur about it and this has been recaptured by using an elegant palette. "When we met with Stewart, he asked me what colours I liked and I mentioned aqua, and he ran with that," explains Janet. "So now we have lots of shades of aqua and turquoise and teal. It is beautiful." The colours of the sea are reflected in the stunning 'Targa' lounge armchair from Space Furniture (top left), a custom-made banquette and cushions upholstered with Wortley fabric in Seagrass (top right), and the elegant 'Melrose' dining chairs from Casa Mia in the dining room (bottom right), as well as a vintage print, sourced by Stewart, which sits above a gorgeous second-hand bar cart, also found by Stewart (bottom left). >



With sunny blue skies above and the changing hues of the sea just across the road, it's no surprise that azure plays a part in the luxe leanings of this grand home in Newcastle, NSW. From the walls that mimic the horizon, to the opulent grey-blue velvets of the grown-ups' lounge and smatterings of pattern in the home's beautifully designed kitchen, blue became the colour of choice when Justin and Janet decided to revamp the home they share with their children Jada, Josie and Jimmy, along with Jack, the cavoodle.

Yet the sea was not the only influence to guide the couple as they renovated the home they'd lived in for four years: its 1920s Art Deco heritage and features, hidden and lost during renovations across the years, also inspired the couple to create a home that would grow with this family of five. "It really needed someone to take it on and just create what it could have been," says Justin. With interior designer Stewart Horton of Horton & Co, Justin and Janet worked to inject character and charm back into the expansive four-bedroom abode, adding beautiful timber wainscoting, parquet floors, decorative ceilings and marble fireplaces, with a soft, classic colour palette.

Every element of the old house was touched upon – a new kitchen straight out of the American design lookbook was designed to elevate the space to masterpiece status and sumptuous new bathrooms, as well as a spectacular walk-in robe in the couple's suite, were included. "It was a much smaller house, and so we extended it quite a bit and added another whole building," explains Stewart. "So it's now got a guest house with a big double garage underneath."

Colour plays a key role in the home, with Stewart introducing the couple to a range of aquas and blues that take their cues from the coast but sit beautifully to capture a classic aesthetic. Sometimes his choices took a little convincing. "Justin and Janet were very nervous about the rich colour in the study [page 82]," recalls Stewart. "It's just off the dining room, and it's visible from everywhere in the main part of the house. They were like, 'Oh, whoa, that's a big, bold colour'. But I thought everything else is so soft it would be almost like a little jewel box sitting in the middle of the house. It sort of sparkles."

The couple combined Stewart's key furniture choices with their own. "We loved the furnishings that Stewart had chosen for us," says Janet. "We had some old pieces – pieces that were actually Justin's grandma's – deco pieces that we wanted to work with." It's a mix that truly makes the newly renovated house a home for both Justin and Janet and their three children. "They love it as much as we do," remarks Janet.



FORMAL LIVING ROOM The renovation included replacing the brick fireplace surround in the formal living area with marble. "There was a fireplace here, but the actual marble surround was designed and added by Stewart," explains Justin. "The size and scale of the fireplace represents the original fireplace; this is a much lovelier version." The children have their own informal living area upstairs, so this room is usually a retreat for Justin and Janet (pictured opposite with Jack). The beautiful 'Targa' lounge armchair, from Space, is now known as Justin's chair - it's the place where he likes to relax at the end of the day. With its white trim, the 'Millennium' sofa from H & J Furniture, upholstered with Wortley fabric in Seagrass, lends a vintage feel, with the Tasmanian blackwood timber coffee table from Francis Furniture bringing a certain gravitas to the room. >





DINING ROOM

Located in the middle of the home, the dining room (above) is almost a thoroughfare for the family as it connects to several of the downstairs rooms. "We use the space a lot," says Justin. "It serves a lot of purposes, and it's really on display - we've had quite a few dinner parties around that table. We discovered that the best way to use the space was just as a big grand room." The pendant light - the 'Windsor' by Visual Comfort from Laura Kincade - mirrors the vastness of the space.

ENTRY

Josie strolls down the staircase (right), which displays the only real feature left from the original home - the timber panelling in the entrance hall. "They took quite a bit of time to restore that," says Justin. "All the panelling was replicated consistent with that," adds Janet. It was Janet's idea to install the parquet flooring, but Stewart persuaded them to have the basketweave pattern instead of a directional pattern such as herringbone. "Given that you enter the house from the side, it'd be hard to pick a direction

to take with herringbone," says Justin. "So the basketweave served a lot of purposes. And it's also more era-appropriate."

KITCHEN

The kitchen's design surprisingly became an obsession for Justin throughout the renovation. And it all started with the Wolf cooker and East Coast American style. "We worked backwards from the appliances to make everything fit and to work out where the window placement was," says Justin of the kitchen (opposite), designed by Stewart. "Those Wolf cookers are a certain width, and to get it to work, the windows are perfectly placed equidistant to the rangehood. Quite a bit of thought went into that - we had a limited amount of room but it all seemed to work out. Everything has fitted in very efficiently." A much-used kitchen island is painted in Dulux Domino, while the custom-made blinds with a trim of Schumacher's 'Octavius Tape' in aqua add the requisite blue to the scheme. An 'Edgerly' pendant light by Visual Comfort from Bloomingdales ticks the American style box. >

FLOOR PLAN

FIRST FLOOR



GUEST HOUSE



GROUND FLOOR





"WE WANTED THAT *grand* AMERICAN
LOOK... THEY HAVE A LOT MORE
KITCHENS THAT ARE MORE LIKE
ROOMS OVER THERE, RATHER THAN
WHAT WE SEE IN AUSTRALIA"

~ JUSTIN

WE LOVE...
a serene escape

The key to taking this swoon-worthy dressing room from super-functional to full-on fabulous? The choice of chic blue paint on the custom-built walk-in robe - Dulux Antarctica Lake Quarter. Visit dulux.com.au.

"I LIKE GIVING PEOPLE *the confidence* TO USE
COLOUR... SOMETHING APPROPRIATE
ARCHITECTURALLY"

- STEWART HORTON, INTERIOR DESIGNER



DRESSING ROOM

This luxurious custom-made space that looks like it's straight out of a Hollywood classic (opposite) was designed by Stewart and is a firm favourite of Janet's, who had listed storage high on her wish list. And while the room looks substantial on first viewing, it's actually even bigger – because it includes double doors that open out into a hidden shoe cupboard. "Everything has been quite well thought-out," says Justin. "There's almost a walk-in cupboard within the robe."

MAIN BATHROOM

Janet and Justin had always wanted marble for both their family bathroom (above left) and ensuite (right), choosing Carrara tiles for the walls and floors. "You can't really go wrong with marble in terms of a classic style," explains Justin. "It's a bit of a timeless stone, it doesn't really go out of fashion." The couple opted to go big on the sumptuous 300mm x 600mm Carrara marble wall tiles from Earp Bros, and they chose a Carrara marble herringbone mosaic for the floors, also from Earp Bros. The Perrin & Rowe taps from English Tapware are classic.

MAIN BEDROOM

The bed in Justin and Janet's bedroom (above right) was bought before the renovation and, as a consequence, became the focal point of the design. "Stewart had it reupholstered for us, and then chose the furniture to work with that," says Janet. The bedside table from Regency Distribution and the 'Castorano' table lamp from Uttermost proved to be chic matches for the bed, which Jack finds appealing. The tones in the bedroom were also a hit. "Both our bedroom and the dressing room are a really nice shade," says Janet. "It's a very calming, very relaxing colour."

ENSUITE

The couple's impressive ensuite (right) has a full-sized 'Amiata' bath by Victoria & Albert, available at Domayne. "We decided on a bath, and Stewart changed it to a more stylish one," says Janet. "We're very happy with it. The double shower came about when we realised how much space we had. There was this big wall of marble and it needed something." The opulent finishes here mirror those in the main bathroom. >



STUDY With its wide, sun-soaking window and custom-made seat, the study is a beautiful place to be. At first, Janet and Justin were not sure of using the strong colour that Stewart chose – Dulux Imagine – but are glad they did. “It is a beautiful room because the kids can sit and do their homework, or they can lie on the day bed and read a book,” says Janet. “It probably is the most used space in the house.” The Josef Hoffmann side chair from Space Furniture provides a comfortable landing spot for both adults and kids and the black metal desk lamp was picked up from Bloomingdales.



CONTACTS

Interior Designer

Stewart Horton, Horton & Co.
Design, hortonandco.com.au.

Builder

Adrian Yazbeck of Yazbeck
Builders, yazbeckbuilders.com.

COASTAL CLASSIC



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2



3



4

INSIDE STORY JUSTIN & JANET'S HOME

Who lives here?

Janet, a teacher; her husband Justin, an accountant; their children, Jada, 13, Josie, 12, Jimmy, 9; and Jack, the cavoodle.

Favourite room in the house?

Janet: "The kitchen! Justin was very involved in designing that. He doesn't cook, but he said he would learn."

What's the biggest surprise in the new house?

"Storage. That's been one of the wonderful things about this house - there's plenty of storage to be able to put things away."

Any surprises with the build?

Justin: "It just took way longer than any of us thought. Probably because I was just so picky on some things. But the result was worth it."

Any advice you'd give to would-be renovators?

"We lived in the house for several years and in that time, put a lot of thought into the layout of it. I'd advise anyone to do that."



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1. 'Midnight Blossoms' by Rebecca Pierce picks up the blues in the formal lounge.
2. Jimmy, Jada, Janet and Josie enjoy afternoon tea together.
3. Jack the pup looks right at home in the study, which is the former side porch.
4. The main bedroom has a palette of soft blues that includes walls painted in Dulux Antarctica Lake Quarter.
5. A dining table with 'Babylon' chairs from Satara looks out on to the pool and blue skies beyond.
6. 'Melrose' dining chairs from Casa Mia continue the deep-blue hues scattered throughout the home.
7. The American-style kitchen includes a huge Acquello fireclay butler's sink from the English Tapware Company.