

This room houses an oversized bookshelf and piano, and creates a feeling of space when you walk into the house.

Honouring HISTORY

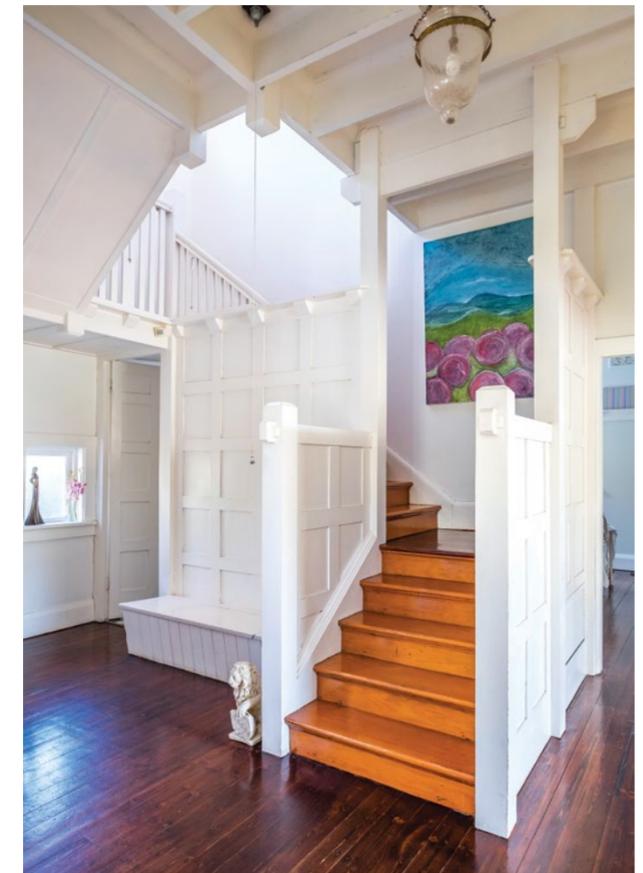
When renovating a house steeped in history, it pays to hold onto its elegant heritage, as this Manly homeowner discovered.

Story by Madelin Tomelty
Photography by Tony Potter
Styling by Greg Sukendro



ABOVE: The window in the kitchen behind the sink drops down so it lets in lots of light and sea breeze from Manly. The Marilyn painting is by Peter Mars, an American Pop-Artist, and bought from Victor Harvey Galleries, Balgowlah.

TOP RIGHT: The wooden panelling was all painted white when Jacquie renovated the house, dramatically increasing the sense of brightness and modernity in the home.



In an era of countless home renovation shows, it's not unusual for house hunters to buy run-down dwellings with romantic visions of making them shiny and new once again. But the owner of this beautiful abode on Sydney's sandy North Shore was trailblazing the 'reno rescue' mentality long before it was in vogue.

Fifteen years ago this airy, vibrant house looked a little different. "It was a dump and a bit of a hotchpotch house but it had graceful bones!" Jacquie Wharton says. "The previous owners had done an erratic and unique initial renovation; there was no kitchen or kitchen sink but there were heated tiles – none of which matched – in the bathroom."

But the mismatched interior wasn't the only thing unusual about the house when she purchased it – it also came with an interesting piece of Sydney's history. "It was originally three apartments built in the 1880s, and rumour has it that our house – The Gables – was built to house the priests while the seminary on the hill, now the international hospitality school, was being built," she reveals.

While Jacquie knew she wanted to overhaul the house, she also felt it was important to do so in a way that acknowledged the heritage of the property, and allowed its history to remain intact. "We were aware that the history of the house meant that it was much bigger than us and we tried to respect and show compassion for that history when planning our renovation."

The "huge renovation" was executed in four separate stages over three years, but today, there is no doubt in Jacquie's mind that it was worth it. The house is modern, bright and airy, but also traditional with a country feel. Jacquie herself connects with the German word, "gemütlich" when describing her house, meaning 'snug' and 'warm', but she is just as quick to appreciate the home's sense of joy and



lightheartedness. "It's fun, sentimental and quirky!" she says, explaining that the interior style was inspired by a desire to make inhabitants and guests feel welcome, free and relaxed.

A HAPPY HOUSE

While it was important for Jacquie to pay homage to the house's history in the renovation, she also wanted to ensure the finished product made sense in its relaxed beachside environment. "We wanted to make a family home that was warm and inviting, keeping the country craft feel of its original era but also recognising that we were situated in Manly, so we were keen to make use of the light and bring a more beachy feel to the house," she adds.

TOP: The vibrant painting in the kids' room was bought 10 years ago in Western Australia and was painted by Ginger Wikilyiri. "I love its vibrancy and colour," says Jacquie.

OPPOSITE PAGE

TOP: The windows in the dining room go right up to the ceiling, which brings the outside inside. The painting was done by Jacquie's daughter and is a portrait of the family.

BOTTOM LEFT: The repurposed stained glass window sits alongside an old butler's lift, which was converted to house wine. The chair was Jacquie's grandmother's and was reupholstered by Christensen Upholstery in Manly Vale.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The entry hall features the stained glass from the original bay window. "The painting is by my partner's oldest son Seb – he was around eight at the time and I loved the painting and bought it off him for \$15!" Jacquie says.



The work-station is next to the dining room. "I found each of the chairs at different times in my life – they are all slightly different sizes reminding me of the three little bears and Goldilocks!" says Jacquie.



This meant that the inside/outside architectural idea so loved by Australians was incorporated into the new design. “We were about bringing the outside in and trying to modernise without destroying our home’s historical bones,” Jacquie says. “I love its space – as soon as you walk in there is a definite feeling of space and of the outside!”

The ample size of the house meant she could create multiple themes inside in small pockets, without the end product feeling cluttered or confused. “So, while I love the kids’ study with its ocean feel, the kitchen with windows that slide up into the ceiling so we can celebrate the greenery of Manly,” Jacquie says, “I also love the sitting room with the cosiness of the old leather couch and the big, comfy sofa, the old railway wooden lockers but then also the pop-art Andy Warhol print! It’s a bit piecemeal but it seems to work.”

Her decision to opt for dark floorboards and white walls in the house – a combination not terribly popular when Jacquie renovated – was strategic. “That gave us a blank cheque to go hard with colour. Our previous apartment was all colour but we wanted to pull back on that given the vastness of the house and its large walls,” Jacquie explains. “I don’t like to follow trends.”

And it’s a good thing she didn’t follow the trends of the early noughties, because while many a household is now desperate to inject some warmth and colour into the stark and minimal interiors that were so popular at that time, Jacquie’s house exudes homeiness, style and timelessness – something that isn’t lost on the homeowner. “I hope the house now represents me and the kids – a mix of past and present!”



TOP LEFT: This leather armchair creates a cosy accent in the airy room. Jacquie’s creative use of scrabble letters on the front of the tallboy allow her to use it as a filing cabinet.

ABOVE: “I remember books by their colour so it helps when lending them to friends,” Jacquie says. This beautiful room also features a photo of the house in its original state in the early 1900s.



COLOURS OF CHOICE

One of the most beautiful motifs in the house is the stained glass, which came from an original beautiful bay window that once held a position in the middle of the house. Re-purposing seems to be another thing Jacquie was ahead of the curve in – and the result is a welcome splash of colour that pops against a crisp white backdrop.

Soft furnishings, artworks and decorations in vibrant green, purple, pink and red reference the nostalgic stained glass and create a sense of fun. “Each room seems to have its own dominant colour themes but these are blended between the rooms using accessories in different tones of grey and green.”

Jacquie’s is a house that welcomes you in with arms wide open. It is old-meets-new, heritage-meets-progress and 15 years living there is simply not enough. “It’s a place with a past, present and future,” she says, and the rest is history. ■

TOP LEFT: “I love this room – clearly my vision for it was a room for a princess!” Jacquie says. “The princess painting is by Martina Penning and bought in Broulee on the south coast of NSW – a childhood haunt of mine.”

TOP RIGHT: The large windows in the main bedroom give Jacquie a beautiful view of sunrise right up the north coast. The curtains are from No Chintz in Willoughby and the Cabinet from Leura in the Blue Mountains.

RIGHT: Jacquie restored the house’s original bathtub in the bathroom, while the Tiles By Kate tiles were chosen to keep the old-world feel of the room.

OPPOSITE PAGE

TOP: The tiles around the fireplace, from Tiles by Kate in Manly Vale, were chosen to modernise the spare room.