



10 steps SMALL WONDERS

In expert hands, even the trickiest spaces can deliver lovely, liveable results. Here's a case in point.

This Victorian Regency semi-detached home, facing a waterfront park on Sydney Harbour, had been subjected to a 2000s renovation that stripped much of the character from its interior.

The current owners called on interior designer Andrew Waller of Mr Waller (mrwaller.com) to reinstate period details, reconfigure the layout downstairs and up, and decorate the home.

1 MAKING SPACE

Andrew made clever use of this once awkwardly positioned nook, turning it into a character-filled, functional butler's pantry with country-cottage-style open shelving that allows everyday tableware and cookware items to become charming displays.

The pantry adjoins the windowless kitchen (see #2), so Andrew installed a glass pantry door for natural light. Above the cupboards in the kitchen proper (above, at right), glass-faced doors were added "to form a sense of depth and create an illusion of more windows", says Andrew. The joinery is painted in Dulux Natural White with a 'brushed' handpainted finish, and the flat cupboard knobs are from Tradco (tradco.com.au). ▶

2
NEW
PURPOSE

To create a better floor plan, the old dining area and kitchen swapped places. The existing fireplace recess was cleverly repurposed as a cooking alcove housing a Fisher & Paykel cooker, a neat idea given polish with Carrara marble detailing that echoes the island benchtop. The former chimney is now home to a rangehood, while the Franke gooseneck mixer and Zip filter tap make a graceful pairing on the island.



3 PERIOD DETAILS

Andrew flanked the cooking zone with cabinetry featuring Amsterdam pull handles from Tradco that nod to the home's heritage. Other deft period touches are the '19th Century English Openwork' pendants (this page and opposite), sourced from Restoration Hardware in the US (restorationhardware.com).

4 MORE IN STORE

Clever storage solutions throughout the home maximise space and usability. Wine racks built into the island bench and ample cabinetry ensure the kitchen is highly functional. Elsewhere, custom storage is used effectively to display books, house laundry appliances and generally add charm.

Artwork by Ingrid Christensen.



5

RECURRING THEMES

Flow is essential in a successful interior scheme, says Andrew, to create a narrative throughout the spaces. "I tend to design interiors with a subtle sense of structure," he says. "I like to anchor spaces with bespoke joinery and then layer with a curated selection of furniture and decorative elements." You can see this resolved effect here in the calming use of grey textiles, such as the custom cushions in Quercus & Co 'Halcyon' fabrics in Celeste and Mouse Grey, the 'Todd' sofa and 'Vittoria' chair from Contents International Design (contentsid.com), and custom curtains in a grey Carlucci 'Rosy' linen fabric from Unique Fabrics. A 'Nordic Solitaire' wool rug from The Rug Collection anchors the space.

6

MATERIAL CONNECTION

Making an appearance in several rooms is marble, selected to link the grey and white tones of the scheme. In the front living area, shown above, a restored antique Carrara marble fireplace was sourced from Chippendale Restorations and paired with the striking vintage fireplace insert from the original dining room. The jet-black iron links with other metal pieces in the home: curtain rails and fittings, Tradco door architecture, lantern-like pendant lights and 'Liaison' nested side tables with an antique brushed-gold finish from Boyd Blue (boydblue.com.au), and a 'Parish' lamp from Hampton Home and Co. Distressed timber pieces add earthy charm, balancing the sleeker inclusions. ▶

7

IN THE
FRAME

Drawing in and reflecting light in the dining zone are a new fixed-panel custom window by Steel Door (steeldoor.com.au) and a vintage window-frame mirror from Le Forge. They form a handsome backdrop and bring structure to this corner of the living space. The new banquette provides comfy, space-efficient seating (the fabric is 'Lausanne' indoor/outdoor material in Silver from Westbury Textiles; westburytextiles.com). The '20th Century Factory Filament' glass cloche sconce from Restoration Hardware was rotated 180 degrees and fitted upside down.



8

ON SHOW

On deep profile shelves, Andrew has curated the owners' pieces and some additional wares – notably from Water Tiger, a company that specialises in Asian and Turkish decorative items, including rustic urns, vessels, baskets and figurines. “We used a predominantly neutral selection with layered textures and materials to link both built details and furniture,” says Andrew. Indoor plants, two *Rhipsalis* from Garden Life, tumble from pots, loosening up the arrangement and providing a visual connection to the adjacent park. ▶





9

FINISHING TOUCHES

Books There is a trick to creating visually appealing book displays, says Andrew, who commissioned shelves to frame this window, forming a delightful dedicated reading zone on a landing. The book nook (top left) is a dedicated reading area, complete with a comfortable 'Charlie' armchair from Globe West. Colour-blocking books is a big styling no-no, he says. "We styled the bookshelves for the owners' everyday use, positioning the books around type, size and colour to get just the right balance. Select decorative pieces are displayed between the books – with the visual weight of the books balanced, not biased, to one side. It's an edited/curated look but not contrived – these spaces have to feel a little organic."

Artworks "Placement depends on the size, the number of artworks and the intention – how strong you want to present them within a space," says Andrew. The viewer's eye level is important, he adds. The painting at left, by Meredith Marstone, is beautifully matched with tonal decorative pieces and 'art for the floor', a vintage patchwork overdyed rug.

Joinery A utilities area (above), located in an outbuilding, shares the subtle colour scheme of the main house. Here, too, bespoke joinery comes into play, framing a small but fully functional laundry. Bifold doors close to conceal it when not in use. In the connected home-office area is a bar fridge, convenient when the owner is in work mode or wants to serve drinks in the garden area beyond.

10

DREAMY ELEMENTS

Loved, lived-in and not too staged is the way to serenity, says Andrew. In the main bedroom, the grey curtains found downstairs are repeated, while he fitted the bed with Sheridan linens – a mix of plains and pinstripe – and a herringbone throw from Inartisan. Cushions in a rich, warm rust-coloured velvet with a linen reverse ground the look. A curvaceous lamp base catches the eye while the Impressionist-style artwork by Joanna Logue provides another 'window' to the outdoors. H&G

