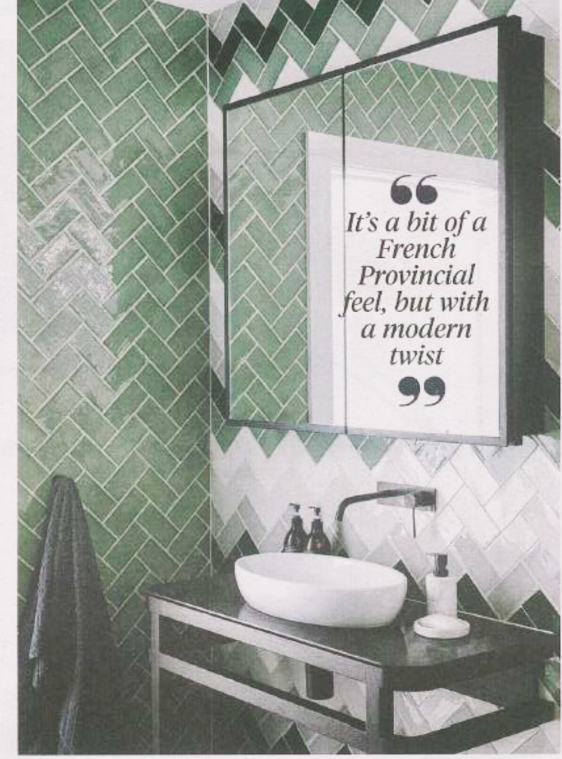




Soaring ceilings add to the sense of space.



“It’s a bit of a French Provincial feel, but with a modern twist”

An ugly duckling takes flight

A modest cottage at Baulkham Hills is reborn as a stylish contemporary residence, writes **Jennifer Veerhuis**



THE SOURCE

- New ceiling** Scyon Axon cladding from James Hardie, jameshardie.com.au
- Kitchen benchtop** Caesarstone white attica, caesarstone.com.au
- Kitchen appliances** Including RealLife XXL Fully integrated dishwasher and 60cm Multifunction 16 steam oven, FreshZone 524L french door fridge, 80cm five zone induction cooktop with FlexiBridge zone, all from Electrolux, electrolux.com.au
- Backyard deck** HardieDeck, hardiedeck.com.au
- Exterior Scyon Linea cladding** from James Hardie, jameshardie.com.au
- Exterior paint** Dulux Domino, from Dulux, dulux.com.au.
- Wall colour** Dulux White on White, dulux.com.au
- Living area floor** Artemis Goddess hybrid flooring from Godfrey Hirst, godfreyhirst.com
- Brass kitchen knobs** from Lo & Co, loandcointeriors.com.au

When the team from Three Birds Renovations first set sight on this house in Sydney’s northwest, it was in dire need of love. The owner had called in the renovating trio — Bonnie Hindmarsh, Erin Cayless and Lana Taylor — to extend the footprint and create a family home. While this was the ninth project for the renovating trio, it was their first attempt at working for a client. “We went back to our roots, with a quickie renovation of an old-school Aussie eyecore, located in our heartland — the Hills District of Sydney,” Bonnie says. “The house is in Baulkham Hills, backing on to a main road and overlooking a community carpark. If any little house needed some love, it was this one.” Bonnie even goes so far as to describe the 1960s house as “ugly”.

She says while the block was a good size at 670 sqm, the house wasn’t large and the owner was keen to make it more liveable. “This little house was your average suburban home but the floor area was only 114 sqm, which meant there just wasn’t enough house for modern-day living, with second living spaces and ensuites,” Bonnie says. “The brief was to open up and extend the existing footprint to create more space for easy living and entertaining.”

Expansion plans

Each of the team had a clear area of responsibility, with Bonnie leading the design decisions, Erin managing the builder and budget, and Lana looking after the suppliers. They decided to extend the home at the rear and were keen to ensure the backyard became a more usable space. “We blew out the back with a bold

extension to increase the liveable space indoors and made major changes to the backyard,” Bonnie says. The outdoor space at the rear of the property was practically unusable because it sloped away and had been let go. “We used HardieDeck to raise and level the backyard so that it flows seamlessly between inside and outside,” Bonnie says. “It’s no secret that we love great indoor/outdoor flow and this home is now much more suitable for entertaining with both the kitchen and bar opening on to the alfresco entertainment area. “We also extended the house a few metres sideways to add in the ensuite off the master bedroom and a bonus private little deck.”

Colourful character

With a view across the new sitting room, the kitchen features white cabinetry and a black glass display box, which contrast against the green cabinetry in the island bench. “The island bench makes a real statement in the kitchen,” Bonnie says. “The curved profile and green Dulux Loma colouring add charm and character to the room. “We complemented the kitchen with sleek Electrolux appliances. “To give the illusion of a bigger space, we opted for integrated appliances such as the fully integrated dishwasher which fits behind the cabinetry of the island bench. “And we even tucked a European-style laundry behind kitchen doors, too.” The facade of the home also required their attention. “At the front, we created stairs and an entrance patio, so it’s the first thing you see and walk on as you enter the home,” Bonnie says. “The guest bedroom at the front has

french doors opening on to the new deck, which has created a lovely area to sit in the sun with a coffee and a book.”

Totally floored

Getting the colour scheme and materials right was key. Hybrid flooring was selected for the living spaces to give the look and feel of natural timber, but with the durability of laminate and vinyl. Bold tile choices in the ensuite and main bathroom distinguish those spaces from the rest of the house, with the ensuite taking a feminine feel and the main bathroom appearing more masculine. Grooved panel cladding was introduced on the pitched ceiling in the new extension. The exterior also needed extensive work. “We were inspired by images of really homely looking black and white cottages,” Bonnie says. “It’s a bit of a French Provincial feel, but with a modern twist. “We wanted it to be dark and moody on the outside with a fresh, crisp interior.” Bonnie loves weatherboard exteriors so that was the look chosen for outside. “I just love the shadow lines and how they bring character to a home and add detail,” she says. “We used our favourite Scyon Linea cladding and painted it in Dulux Domino which is such a classic colour.” Privacy screens were also installed in the front and back of the house to create the feel of an outdoor room. Bonnie says addressing the front facade was the biggest challenge of the project. “It really had zero street appeal to start with,” she says. “We knew what we wanted but it took quite a few changes to make an impact. “The addition of the carport and front deck were crucial in giving the house new dimension, as were the white window and doors frames which created much-needed contrast. “The final piece of the puzzle was deciding on the black-and-white striped canopy awnings which were a bold choice but add so much to the street appeal of this house.”

PICTURES: CHRIS WARMES

Tones of soft green are the perfect partner for crisp white interiors. The Three Birds have created warmth using textured panelling in the kitchen and layers of tiles in neutral tones in the bathroom.

PROJECT

Owners
A woman wanting to create a more liveable family home

Renovation company
Bonnie Hindmarsh, Erin Cayless and Lana Taylor from Three Birds Renovations, threebirdsrenovations.com

The problem
A small house that was lacking street appeal

The site
A generous block of land in northwest Sydney

Design solution
To open up and extend the existing footprint and to create a charming family home

How long did it take?
12 weeks

