

AUSTRALIAN

THE THREE BIRDS *Reimagining the renovation*

HOUSE & GARDEN

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Heart-melting moments

Built on Sydney's north-west outskirts, this luxe resort-style home is anchored by the Australian bush.

STORY Elizabeth Wilson | STYLING Three Birds Renovations | PHOTOGRAPHY Maree Homer & Chris Warnes



“THIS IS A FAMILY HOME THAT SHOWCASES ACREAGE LIVING WITH A SOPHISTICATED, STYLISH EDGE.”

Bonnie Hindmarsh, Three Birds Renovations



FRONT PATIO Stairs lead down from the driveway to the front door where a whole glamorous world awaits. Chequerboard terrazzo-look Paddington tiles in white and peach, TileCloud. Armchairs, coffee table, occasional table and planters, all Freedom. Exterior cladding, James Hardie. **FOYER** Entry doors and arched windows, Trend Windows & Doors. Porto Pablo dining table, Oz Design Furniture. Delfina pendant light, Enlightened Living. Reef bowl, Freedom. Pompeii bowl, Provincial Home Living. Byron sheer curtains, Luxaflex Window Fashions.

When Sydney homeowners Louisa Shield and her husband began building their house during lockdown last year, they had an understandable urge to make it a sanctuary with a holiday-at-home vibe. As it turns out, the extraordinary residence they have just completed on acreage on the city's outskirts doesn't merely conjure a holiday mood. It's their own dreamy, everything-they'd-ever-wished-for, five-star luxury resort.

The move to the city's outer north-west is a return to familiar territory for Louisa's husband, who grew up in the area and always dreamed of raising his own family here. For Louisa, who has lived on the Northern Beaches all her life, swapping the beach for the bush has been a huge but

happy shift. Plus, as a designer for home-makeover specialists Three Birds Renovations, she is now living much closer to work headquarters, which saves her from the cross-city commute.

The couple bought the 2.1-hectare bush block in 2018 with desires to nurture an outdoorsy, nature-connected lifestyle for themselves and their two sons, Spencer, eight, and Dasher, five. From the moment they saw the site, they envisioned how they wanted to position the home on the site in order to maximise the bushland views. Louisa also had a very clear idea of the layout: "I've always loved the idea of single-level living and here we had the space to make it happen - the house is literally sprawled across the width of the property." She says. "I wanted wide, generous hallways with one wing for bedrooms, and one wing for the living spaces." Installing a pool close to the ▶

FORMAL LIVING Bodhi armchairs and Parker drum side table, Oz Design Furniture. Organic nesting tables, Tigmi Trading. Cushla side table, Brosa. Kiaan rug, Provincial Home Living. Planter on coffee table, Freedom. Large plant pot, Mojay Pots. Arched windows and doors, Trend Windows & Doors. Byron sheer curtains, Luxaflex Window Fashions. Engineered European oak floorboards in Sea Salt, Woodcut (throughout). Fireplace, Lopi. Fireplace wall in Axent Trim, all James Hardie. Artwork by Kerrie Jeffs.





"I LIKE OPEN-PLAN LIVING, BUT I ALSO WANTED EACH ROOM TO TELL

ITS OWN STORY, SO SPACES ARE SLIGHTLY SEGREGATED." Louisa Shield, owner



CASUAL LIVING Above Noosa modular sofa, Romain rug and Hexy accent tables, all Freedom. Kijani wicker armchairs, St Barts. Fulani coffee table, Uniqwa Collections. Sinatra side table, Clo Studios. Limited-edition prints by Brittany Ferns. Byron sheer curtains, Luxaflex Window Fashions. Vantage decorative doors, AWS. **BAR/HALLWAY** Bar moulding, Intrim Mouldings. Table lamp, McMullin & Co. Bust, House of Orange. Shelf, The Society Inc. Timber bench, Provincial Home Living. Baskets on bench, Oz Design Furniture. Vintage Chinese basket (under bench), Few & Far. Artworks by Jai Vasicek (above bench) and Vynka Hallam (kitchen). **FIREPLACE** Opposite top Double-sided fireplace wall clad in Axon cladding, James Hardie. Fireplace, Lopi. TV, LG. **DINING ZONE** Custom dining table, The Wood Room. Porto Tanduk dining chairs and Munich swivel tub chairs, Oz Design Furniture. Daybed cushions from Florence Broadhurst Fabrics. White vase on table, McMullin & Co. Camilla rug, Miss Amara. Shutters, Luxaflex Window Fashions. ▶



KITCHEN Lora pendant light, Enlightened Living. The island fascia and benchtops are Calacatta Luxe engineered stone from Talostone. Joinery by Carrera by Design. Sussex 'Scala' mixer tap in Tumbled Brass, Reece. Flexi Bridge induction cooktop, Electrolux. Arlo dining chairs, Oz Design Furniture. Coconuts painting by Vynka Hallam. Vantage doors and bifold servery windows, all AWS. Bart vessel (on floor, left), McMullin & Co. Pompeii pitcher (on floor, right), Provincial Home Living. **BUTLER'S PANTRY** Moisture-resistant Axon cladding from James Hardie is used for the splashback. Posh Canterbury hob kitchen set, Reece. Dish rack, The Society Inc. Tea towel, Crave Wares. Window, Trend Windows & Doors.



house - visible from the front door - was central to her plan. "My idea was that you'd open the front door and the first sight would be the blue water fringed by trees. I really wanted to celebrate the Australian landscape because it's magical and brings such peacefulness."

To help map out the layout and finesse the interiors, Louisa turned to her mentors at Three Birds Renovations, working closely with long-time friend and 'Birds' co-founder, Bonnie Hindmarsh. "We collaborate on a daily basis at work so this was a great project to work on together," says Bonnie. "Lou knew what she wanted and I was there to oversee the whole process and bounce ideas around."

Together, they formulated the home's configuration, all centred around Louisa's pool-meets-bush vision. The front door opens into a *Great Gatsby*-esque entry/foyer with a high raked ceiling and chequerboard floor in cream and blush terrazzo-look tiles. This leads to a formal white-on-white living room featuring a grand arched window that perfectly frames the pool and bush views. Visitors definitely know they have arrived - somewhere special - standing in this space.

From here, the home branches into the two wings. To the left are the entertaining spaces - casual living, formal dining and kitchen - plus powder room, laundry and mudroom. To the right is the main bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and glamorous ensuite, the boys' large shared room, a guestroom and an office. Capitalising on the abundant roof cavity ▶



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

THE PALETTE

- Dulux Lexicon (interior, throughout)
- Dulux Blue Metal (boys' room skirting)
- Dulux Stone Master (laundry)

MAIN ENSUITE Cayman Island chandelier, Gypset Cargo. Custom wall mirrors, Salt x Steel. Seta armchair and Cushla side table, both Brosa. Annangrove Star and Cross mosaic tiles (vanity wall) and Byron travertine-look wall and floor tiles, all TileCloud. Venice basins, Posh Canterbury tap sets and robe hooks, Laufen 'Val' freestanding bath and Sussex 'Scala' bath filler, all Reece. Custom vanity, Carrera by Design. Talostone Imperial Danby benchtop.

THIS IS THE LIFE

While the house oozes the sophistication of a luxury hotel, Louisa insists it is a family home where her two young boys can be themselves. She's unfazed by them (or the dog) rumbling on the white sofas – if they get grubby she can just throw the slip covers in the wash. "There's a lovely balance at play," says Bonnie Hindmarsh from Three Birds Renovations. "Everything has a luxe feel to it but it also feels relaxed and inviting. It's not precious, it's built for a family."



space, they created a loft/family room above the boys' bedroom and another above the garage. A few steps from the main home is a pool house containing two guestrooms and a bar/kitchenette.

The whole property is geared to entertaining, but rather than creating one vast open-plan gathering space, Louisa opted for separate-but-connected areas. "Although I like open-plan living, I wanted each room to tell its own story," says Louisa, "For instance, the kitchen is related to the living room and people can spill into each area, but they're segregated spaces."

This delineation occurs in subtle ways. The kitchen flooring, for example, is the same as that in the adjoining rooms (large-format engineered-oak boards) but laid in a herringbone pattern. "We had the space

to do it and it makes a feature of the kitchen," says Bonnie.

The centrepiece of the kitchen is a two-level, multifunctional island. "Lou wanted the island to be a casual dining space so she had a section of the bench lowered to table height to accommodate dining chairs rather than stools," says Bonnie. "It makes the whole kitchen feel so comfortable." The taller section of the island includes an induction cooktop to allow Louisa to cook without having her back to guests.

The entire island is wrapped in Calacatta Luxe, a marble-look engineered stone by Talostone. "She wanted the timelessness of a white kitchen and a marble-like stone that wasn't too overpowering. The stone we've chosen is perfect because it has a soft vein in it," says Bonnie. "To bring warmth ►



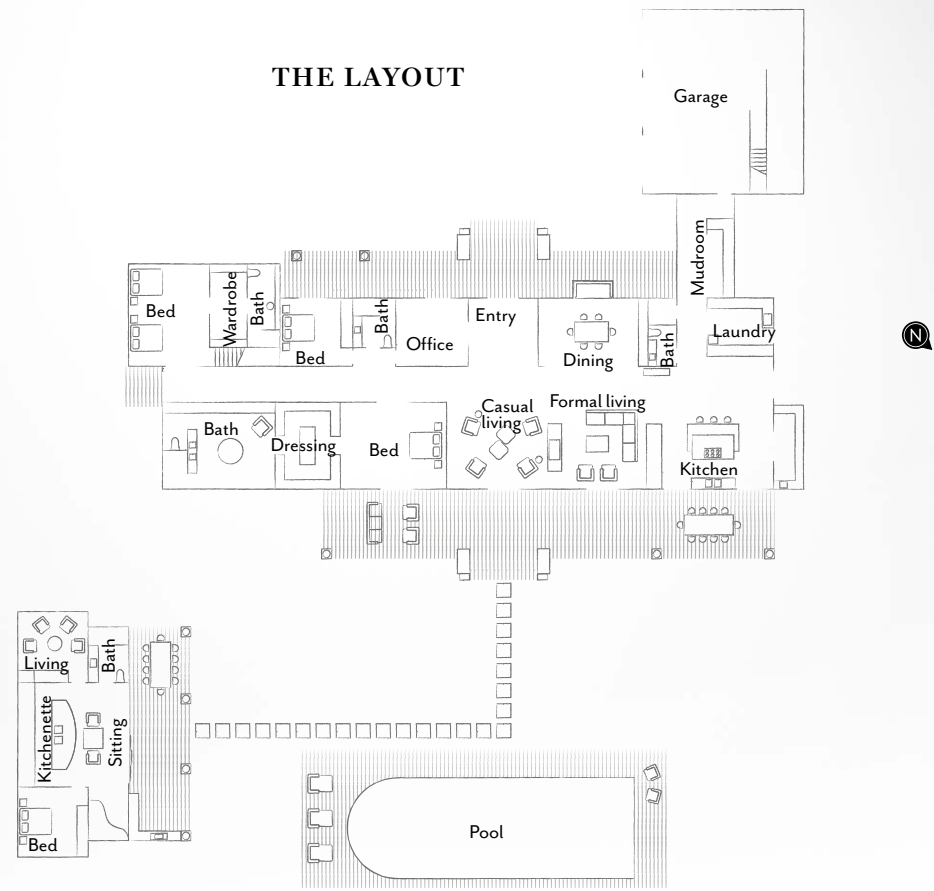
"I WANTED EVERY SPACE TO FEEL COMFY AND APPROACHABLE."

"NOTHING'S TOO PRECIOUS. EVERY ROOM INVITES YOU IN." Louisa

MAIN BEDROOM *Above* Retreat bed, Chloe drawers and Sunbury ottomans, all Oz Design Furniture. Bedlinen, Cultiver. Samos wall lights, The Montauk Lighting Co. Jenga console, Lounge Lovers. Kiaan rug, Provincial Home Living. **DRESSING ROOM** *This page bottom, left and right* Custom artwork by Fibrous Design. Custom bench seat cushion, The Foam Booth. Side table, House of Orange. Louvre doors, Parkwood Doors. Joinery, Carrera by Design. Benchtops in Talostone Imperial Danby. **BOYS' LOFT** *Opposite top* Bermuda rattan chairs, Arthur modular sofa in Forest Slate, Rita coffee table and seagrass stool, all Oz Design Furniture. Artwork by Libby Watkins. Long Beach corner sofa in Ivory, Lounge Lovers. Beanbag chair, Onyx & Smoke. Florence Broadhurst 'Waterfall Garden' wallpaper, Materialised. Shaka rug, Miss Amara. **BOYS' BEDROOM** Artwork by Kerrie Jeffs. Custom beds, Create Estate. Tide wall light, Beacon Lighting. Iceland bedside tables, Satara. Capri lounge chair, Provincial Home Living. Beni Ourain rug, Benisouk. Axon cladding, James Hardie. ▶



THE LAYOUT



into the room, we added the rattan dining chairs, a feature pendant light and gold-coloured tapware.”

The whole house is designed with statement pieces and “special moments” - as Louisa calls them - in mind. And some rooms, such as the main ensuite, take ‘special’ to another level. “It’s my favourite room in the whole house!” says Bonnie. Measuring 6x4 metres, it has a raked ceiling, two arched windows, a round bath in the centre of the room, more of that lovely brass tapware, a sculptural decorative pendant light and gorgeous tiles in muted earthy tones. It’s totally luxe and spectacular, but it’s also entirely

practical. In fact, Louisa has a bath here every weekend, soaking up the views while she enjoys a soak herself.

The colour scheme throughout the home reflects the white-on-white palette that has become Three Birds Renovations’ signature style, but Louisa has inserted recurring natural tones and materials to add a sense of warmth and rawness. There are some deliberate incursions of colour, too, such the dark blue skirting boards in the boys’ room; warm coffee colours in a guestroom, and a calming study with walls painted in a soft powdery green.

The recurring theme throughout is that every room is sun-drenched and interacts

with the outdoors. “The house is designed so every window frames an outlook, with feature gum trees seen from just about every window,” says Bonnie.

Louisa and her husband finished the build last November, and spent the entire summer enjoying their tropical resort-style pool on the bush fringes. They feel like they’re on holidays, even when they’re at home - and they love being greeted by those views every morning. “We’re extremely proud of all of it and we enjoy each space. It ticks every box for our family and we wouldn’t change a thing.”

See the full reveal of Louisa’s home at threebirdsrenovations.com.



POOL AREA Jardin umbrellas, Basil Bangs. Cannes sunloungers and Atra side tables, all Freedom. Leslung drinks cooler, Uniqwa Collections. Pool by Concept Pools. Broome travertine-look pavers, TileCloud. Pool fence, Australian Frameless Glass Installations. **POOL HOUSE** Softness art print by Francesca Owen. Sutton coffee table and Martini rattan sofa, both Oz Design Furniture. Hampton dining table and Bahama folding chairs, all La Maison. Portsea wall light and Tahitian ceiling fan, both Beacon Lighting. Linea Cladding, James Hardie. **BACKYARD** Concrete steppers, Turtle Nursery. Palm hooks, Pineapple Traders. Milli Pure shower and taps, Reece.

POOL HOUSE The Three Birds Renovations dynamos (from left) Lana Taylor, Erin Cayless and Bonnie Hindmarsh. As well as this bar/kitchenette, the pool house also includes two bedrooms, a bathroom and daybed (below right). Artwork by Francesca Owen. Sofas and coffee table, Oz Design Furniture. Orissa rug, Freedom. Dunne pendant light (above daybed), Beacon Lighting. Annangrove tiles (on servery) and Broome pavers, TileCloud. Malawi Tub bar chairs, Uniqlwa Collections. Ice bucket, Sunday Society.



“THIS POOL HOUSE IS THE ULTIMATE IN STYLISH ENTERTAINING.”

Bonnie Hindmarsh, Three Birds Renovations



THE SOURCE

Tactile, neutral pieces enhance poolside glam and create a feeling of laidback luxe.



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Produced by Kristina Harrison.



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1 Vivid Slimline floor-mounted bath filler, \$2418.35, Phoenix Tapware. 2 Benaco encaustic tile in Beige (200x200mm), \$95/m², Di Lorenzo Tiles. 3 Bodhi oversized armchair, \$2849, Oz Design Furniture. 4 Ginger ceiling lamp, \$150, Domo. 5 Frank armchair, \$899, McMullin & Co. 6 Jardin garden umbrella, \$659, Basil Bangs. 7 *St Moritz Chic* book by Dora Lardelli, \$152, and *Athens Riviera* book by Stephanie Artarit, \$152, Amara. 8 Crawford dining table by Tom Fereday, from \$4390, Living Edge. 10 Nest jute rug in Natural (2x3m), \$1450, Armadillo. 11 Maya indoor/outdoor bookcase, \$599, Lounge Lovers. 11 Wyatt stool, \$425, Coco Republic. For Where to Buy, see page 190. H&G

Water feeling

Calming tones and a touch of glam hit the perfect note for this pool-side guest bathroom.

TEXT BY Elizabeth Wilson | PHOTOGRAPHY Maree Homer



THE DETAILS

Newport square **tiles** in Sky Blue, \$103/m², and Annangrove tumbled Carrara-look **floor tiles**, \$90/m², all TileCloud.

Kado 'Neue All Door' 1200mm **wall-hung vanity** in Cherry Pie, \$2240, Kado 'Lussi' **above-counter basin**, \$574, Kado 'Era' **bath tap set** in Brass Gold, \$639, and **shower set**, \$1408, all Reece.

Dunne I antique brass and shell **wall light**, \$299, Beacon Lighting.

Empire **wall mirror**, St Barts.

Soap holder, The Society Inc.

Axon V-groove **cladding**, James Hardie.

THE BRIEF A relaxed holiday vibe was the desired goal for homeowner Louisa Shield when she designed this guest bathroom. "I wanted to have a little bit of fun in this space because it's near the pool and contributes to creating a summery, holiday experience for visiting family and friends," she says.

THE DESIGN APPROACH Louisa, a designer with Three Birds Renovations, worked with her mentor and Three Birds co-founder Bonnie Hindmarsh to produce the desired result. Colour was key to evoking the mood: Louisa and Bonnie chose blue-green wall tiles, marble-look floor tiles and white V-groove panelling to create a coastal feel. Layout-wise, this bathroom follows the Three Birds approach: "We always aim to make the guest bathroom a special experience," says Bonnie. "We make sure a vanity or tiled feature wall is the first thing you see, and that the toilet is hidden behind the door." Lighting is important too. "Aim for soft lighting - it's an opportunity to use a pretty pendant or wall light," says Bonnie. Louisa chose a sconce with shell details for this pool-side parlour.

THE RESULT "It's hard to go wrong with this colour palette," says Bonnie. "The blue-green tiles are muted and calming while the gold-finish tapware and trims, such as the edging on the mirror and niche, add glamour. The overall effect is balanced and harmonious." ▶ *Three Birds Renovations; threebirdsrenovations.com.*

Neutral territory

Soothing shades of taupe and ivory sit pretty alongside elevated basics in this ergonomically designed laundry in Sydney.

TEXT BY *Laura Barry* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Maree Homer*



Thanks to the luxury of space, catering to the functional needs of this Sydney laundry could be achieved without compromising on its aesthetics. Three Birds Renovations' co-founder Bonnie Hindmarsh and homeowner Louisa Shield, a designer with the company, chose to wall-mount the appliances, thereby eliminating the need for bending to load the machines. This also created space for a sorting bench and loads of storage in the process.

"A laundry is one of those rooms that needs to be incredibly practical and functional, but we never give up on the dream of making it look and feel wonderful," says Bonnie. "Having the appliances up off the floor is a game-changer," says Louisa. "When clothes come out of the dryer, they get put straight onto the bench and can be folded and sorted straight away."

What makes this room such a success is the warmth created by the floor tiles, which are the clear hero of the room. Indeed, the cross-shaped tiles in a beautiful palette of taupe and biscuit are an unexpected visual element within the otherwise restrained space. The Shaker-style cabinetry is topped with Talostone Calacatta Gold, a stone-composite product with a marble-look finish. The warm-brown veining effortlessly ties in with the hues in the flooring. Shutters, V-groove panelling and a woven pendant light bring texture to this generous laundry, while touches of brass deliver the desired sense of luxury. "It has become one of my favourite rooms in the house," says Louisa. ▶

Three Birds Renovations; threebirdsrenovations.com.

THE DETAILS

Axon **wall cladding**, 133mm profile, POA, James Hardie.

Polished 50mm engineered stone **benchtop surface** in Calacatta Gold, \$469/m², Talostone.

Cabinetry in Dulux Stone Master, installed by Carrera by Design.

Electrolux SensorWash 10kg front-loader **washing machine**, \$1199, and Electrolux Ultimate Care 9kg **heat-pump dryer**, \$1599, Harvey Norman.

Polysatin plantation **shutters**, POA, Luxaflex Window Fashions.

Annangrove Mixed Cross **tiles** in Stone/Tan/Natural, \$320/m², TileCloud.

Hamimi Design 'Joosh' **pendant light**, \$626, Clo Studios.

Posh 'Canterbury' gooseneck **sink mixer** in Brass Gold, \$545, and Franke 'Impact' granite **double-bowl sink** in Polar White, \$1180, Reece.

For Where to Buy, see page 190.