Merry & BRIGHT

Sydney meets Scandinavia in this harmonious coastal home, thoughtfully renovated to suit a large blended family and all set to host a joyful celebration this Christmas.

STORY ***Jackie Brygel*** | STYLING ***Kerrie-Ann Jones*** | PHOTOGRAPHY ***Felix Forest***

REAR DECK The new merbau deck is central to summer fun for Simone Larmer, her husband Johan, and their children Jessica, Matilda and Lili, plus Fudge, the family labradoodle. "We're protected here and even on a wet night, we can sit out here and have dinner," says Simone. Paper decorations, Poppies for Grace.
ENTRANCE The bold-hued front door opens to reveal an aquatic photo by Joel Coleman. Wreath, The Woodsfolk. Gift sack, Taylor+Cloth. Landscape design by Green Elements Landscape. ***For Where to Buy, see page 218.***

FEATURE PLANTS

ENTRANCE
Bromeliad
(*Alcantarea imperialis*
'Silver Plum')

BACKYARD
Copper spoon
(*Kalanchoe orgyalis*)

Lilly pilly
(*Acmena smithii*
'Cherry Surprise')

This is the life

This family-friendly Australian home is infused with a laidback holiday vibe, yet carefully tailored to dovetail with the owners' preference for a sleek and contemporary design aesthetic. "Johan brings that Scandinavian approach of 'less is more'," says Simone of her Swedish husband. "The house isn't overly complicated or cluttered. It's just a home that works really well for everybody who lives here."

LIVING "The artwork, by Kudditji Kngwarreye, reflects the beachy theme of the house and sets the tone of this space," says Simone. Sofa, Fanuli. Coffee table, Globe West. Chair, Mr Fräg. Throw, Pony Rider. Star, Papier D'Amour. Gift wrap, Vandoros Fine Packaging. Engineered-timber flooring, Antique Floors. **Designer buy:** H series ceiling fan, $1295, Haiku by Big Ass Solutions. *For Where to Buy, see page 218.*

From its boldly coloured front door to a rear deck offering glimpses of the Pacific, there's something special about this renovated home on Sydney's Northern Beaches. This is a stylish yet understated house, where every room is filled with light. It functions as a happy haven for a blended family of seven, who infuse it with life and purpose every day, and it ensures the warmest of welcomes for visitors.

As far as the owners - Simone Larmer and her husband, Johan - are concerned, the mix of an Australian coastal vibe with a cool, serene Scandinavian aesthetic tells a very personal tale.

"Johan is from Stockholm, and the renovation was an opportunity for us to create one cohesive look combining our individual personalities and tastes," says Simone. "We wanted lots of white with light timber, a very fresh and simple look and a sense of calm."

Architect Kenneth Anderson and interior designer Fiona Shakespeare executed the masterful extension and refurbishment of the weatherboard cottage, completed in late 2015, and the result is exactly as Simone and Johan had envisaged. Chic and comfortable, it suits them and the five children they share "collectively" - Jacob, 24; Sophie, 21; Jessica, 17; Matilda and Lili, both 16 - down to the ground.

"Our home accommodates seven people who are all very busy, love to surf, and who sometimes want privacy as well as a sense of community in the house," says Simone, co-director of Double Edge PR. "The home gives us all of that, and it has a very positive feel."

A vivid blue front door opens to an entry foyer. Off to the left, a hall leads to the original part of the home with three bedrooms, bathroom, family room and sunroom. To the right of the entry lies the sunny new kitchen, living and dining space. There's a new main bedroom suite upstairs and a detached garage turned into accommodation with loft bedrooms for university students Jacob and Sophie. The generous rear deck makes for easy indoor-outdoor living.

As for the interiors, Fiona built sophistication and warmth by using variations in tone and finish. "I wanted to keep the look streamlined and well-considered, but also bring in colour and texture," she says. ▸

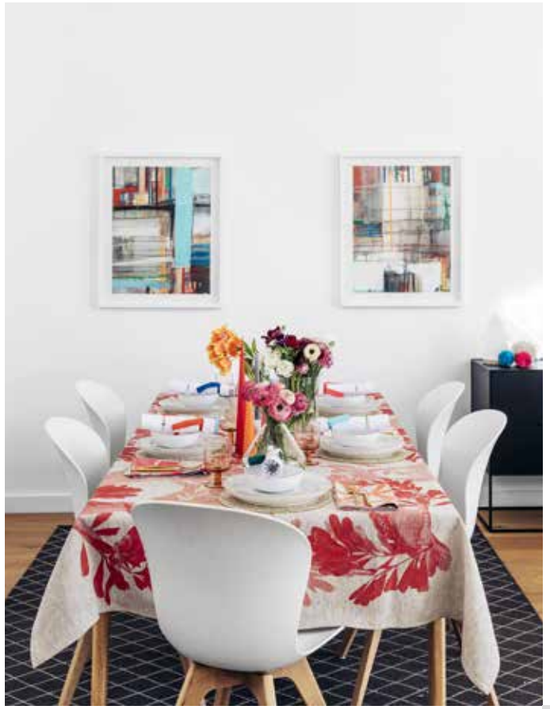
FESTIVE PALETTE

Printed linen

Decorative paper

Dulux Blue Vacation (front door)

KITCHEN Simone loves the handsome 3m-long island bench, "the real anchor of the house". Trend Surfaces benchtop in Bianco Real, Granite Transformations. KWC mixer. Splashback tiles, Purcell Tiles. Stools, Mr Fräg. Pendant light bought in Sweden.
DINING Every member of the household cooks dinner once a week, so there'll be plenty of hands to help with the Christmas feast. Chairs, BoConcept. Dinnerware, West Elm. Cutlery, Country Road. Candles, Kmart (grey) and Top3 by Design. Placemats, Freedom. Crackers, Papier D'Amour. Rug (top left), Armadillo&Co. Mirror, MCM House. Artworks by Morton Lassen. Flowers from Ambrose Flora.
Designer buy: Kookaburra large cotton tablecloth in Pink, $315, Bonnie and Neil. *For Where to Buy, see page 218.*



'The renovation was an opportunity to create one cohesive look combining our tastes and personalities.' *Simone Larmer*

◀ "It's a robust house, which it needs to be, although it can feel elegant, too," says Simone. "We didn't choose furniture that was too delicate or precious. We went for items that we loved and that were very comfortable. Everything was well considered and that's where it was fantastic to work with Kenneth and Fiona, as they brought the dream alive."

Simone especially cherishes the fact that while the house can effortlessly transform from cosy to glamorous, there is always plenty of space for all. "It's a very easy home for us to entertain in," she says. "We really enjoy having friends and family over, and the house now seems made for it."

This Christmas will be the family's first in their renovated property and an occasion for entertaining the extended clan, with some 30 people on the guest list for lunch. In this bright, happy family home, there'll be much to celebrate and be thankful for. ▶

***Kenneth Anderson Architect**, Kirribilli, NSW; 0402 424 995. **Shakespeare Design**, Balmain, NSW; (02) 8060 5788 or www.shakespeare-design.com.au.*

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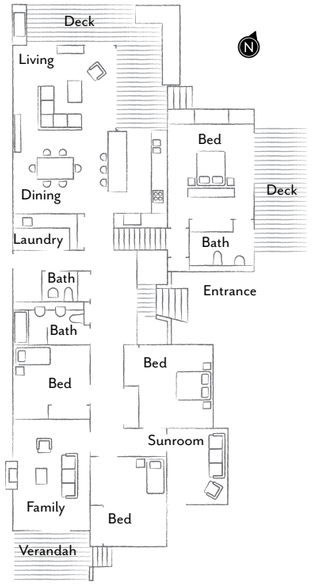
THE LAYOUT



'The upstairs bedroom, with a balcony that runs its entire length, is a lovely retreat. It feels like a real hideway.' *Simone*

CHILDREN'S BATHROOM Natural light from the window and skylight is enhanced by the mirror placement. Basins, Studio Bagno. City Stik tapware, Brodware Industries. Wall tiles, Rocks On. Towels, Loom Towels. Starburst ornament, West Elm.
HALLWAY Custom cabinetry, so helpful for containing clutter, offers extra surfaces to decorate for the festive season. Timber tree, Kikki.K. Joy ornament, Kmart. Christmas stocking, West Elm. Gift wrap, Vandoros Fine Packaging. Paper ornaments, Poppies for Grace. Planter, Jamie Durie Design.
MAIN BEDROOM "The bedhead wall with built-in shelf is such a great idea. It's a perfect spot to keep books or photos," says Simone. Bedlinen, In Bed Store. Cushions, West Elm (navy) and Castle. Throw, candle and feather garland (on door handle), Freedom. Eggcup table/stool, Mark Tuckey. Marble vessel, Marble Basics. Flowers from Ambrose Flora.
Smart buy: Merry & Bright Christmas message garland, $20, Papier D'Amour. *For Where to Buy, see page 218.* H&G

Christmas at home

This fortunate family has enjoyed memorable Christmas experiences in both hemispheres. "Last year we were in Sweden, so we had a white Christmas, but this year it will be a very Sydney beach Christmas," says Simone. Preparing a special feast for a crowd of 30-plus will be lots of fun in this household, as everyone pitches in to help in the kitchen, even the youngest. "I'm looking forward to it!"