

AUSTRALIAN

Our Top 50 Rooms *winners revealed*

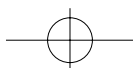
# HOUSE & GARDEN

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GARDEN IMMERSION  
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Welcome  
to *the house of*  
FUN



# The right move



A century-old cottage presented some tantalising possibilities for an Adelaide couple: the opportunity to downsize and upgrade at the same time.

STORY *Chris Pearson* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Caroline Cameron*

**STREET ENTRANCE** *This page* The sandstone facade is original; the feature brickwork was repainted Resene Half Thorndon Cream. Fence painted Dulux Domino. Bluestone crazy paving, Eco Outdoor. Landscaping by Jo Connolly of The Edge Design and Gethyn Singleton Landscaping. **COURTYARD ENTRY** *Opposite* Door painted Dulux Domino. Bluestone paving slabs, Eco Outdoor.

For Jane and Michael, the owners of this home in Adelaide's inner east, downsizing opened up a whole new world. They shifted from a rambling traditional family home, where they had lived for 23 years raising three children, to this light and airy retreat, its luminous spaces symbolising a fresh start. "We had no misgivings about the move," says Jane. "It was time. We felt right at home here, comfortable and familiar from the beginning."

Perhaps not quite from the beginning. When they discovered the 100-year-old sandstone villa in 2017, it was a warren of rooms with an ill-matched 1970s rear extension sporting aluminium windows, together with the floral carpet and wallpaper typical of that era. And, because its informal living areas faced south, they were

sun-starved. But the original building, which had many of its architraves and cornices intact, had seduced the couple. They could see its promise.

Jane and Michael turned to multidisciplinary design firm Williams Burton Leopardi (WBL) to achieve the dramatic transformation they desired. "I liked the WBL aesthetic. It's sharp and graphic, with lots of black steel windows and doors, yet soft at the same time," says Jane. "For this house, I wanted smart and minimal, with no clutter, blending old and new in an interesting way."

While the front had to reflect its former glory, at the back Jane wanted "a lovely big kitchen with generous bench space, a walk-in pantry behind and an eating area. And a pool." She presented WBL principal architect David Burton and interior designer Sophia Leopardi ▶

**KITCHEN/DINING** Jane and Michael have owned the antique dining table for many years. Thonet 'No.18' bentwood chairs, 1000 Chairs. Artwork by Amy McGregor. City Stik mixer, Brodware. Super White Dolomite benchtop, CDK Stone. Splashback, Dulux Arcatex concrete render. The rangehood is clad in Hida tiles from Academy Tiles+Surfaces. Garonne limestone floor tiles, Eco Outdoor.



*“I LOVE THE AMBIGUITY OF WHAT IS INSIDE AND OUT AND THE WAY THE COURTYARDS LINK OLD AND NEW.”* David Burton, architect

**COURTYARD/HALLWAY** Concrete flooring in Stylecrete Ash/Thunder, Premix Concrete. Garonne limestone tiles, Eco Outdoor. Black-framed steel windows and doors by Salisbury Wrought Iron Works (throughout). **LIVING** Custom shelving designed by WBL and made by Admor Dimensions. Elanda side table and Artego stool, MRD Home. Agra rug in Pearl, Armadillo. Gas fireplace, Escea.

with the trickiest part of the brief: it faces south, but Jane wanted lots of light. Eagerly, she showed them a scrapbook of inspiration featuring white, uncluttered homes from around the world. “Jane was looking for a light-filled, calm and classic space,” says David, “where the garden and greenery are brought into focus and an interior she could overlay with a collection of objects and art that evolved over time.”

In the renovation, the home’s stuffy formality went out the window. Its three bedrooms were retained by adding one and dispensing with another. In the original section of the house, David transformed the formal dining room into a dressing room and ensuite for the main bedroom, which was included in an extension, while an existing bedroom became a light-filled bathroom and separate powder room. Meanwhile, the formal living room at the front was converted into a more practical study/sitting room. Much of the heritage architectural detailing was refreshed and restored.

Most strikingly, David replaced the clumsy old addition with a crisp modern extension at the rear. With its open-plan layout, including living room, dining and kitchen, it would become the hub of the home.

David cleverly solved his biggest challenge - the southern orientation - by inserting a courtyard each side of a walkway separating the old and the new. “The courtyards enable a northern orientation to the new extension and became pivotal to the success of the living and bedroom spaces,” he says. And walls of glazing integrate the living areas and the garden at the back. ▶



*“WE FELT RIGHT AT HOME HERE. IT WAS COMFORTABLE AND FAMILIAR FROM THE BEGINNING.” Jane, owner*

“Jane and Michael were downsizing from a substantial garden, so we needed to maintain a feeling of being immersed in the outdoors.”

Inside, Sophia layered a restrained palette through the two sections. “We wanted a cohesive and purposeful connection between them, with the materials and colour palette unifying elements,” she says. Texture adds another dimension to a crisp white palette with accents of black. “Texture brings nuance to a room, which is especially important within such a restrained palette,” she says. “Here, there are lots of softer details when you look closely: the grain in the timber joinery, painted brick, handmade tiles, and crafted porcelain elements, such as the drawer pulls in the kitchen.”

“I love the ambiguity of what is inside and out, and the way the courtyards become a gentle link between old and new,” says David. “It’s a light-filled space achieved on a south-facing block.” Jane’s favourite features are the expansive folding doors at the rear, making inside and out flow into one, emphasised by floor tiles reprised outdoors as well as inside.

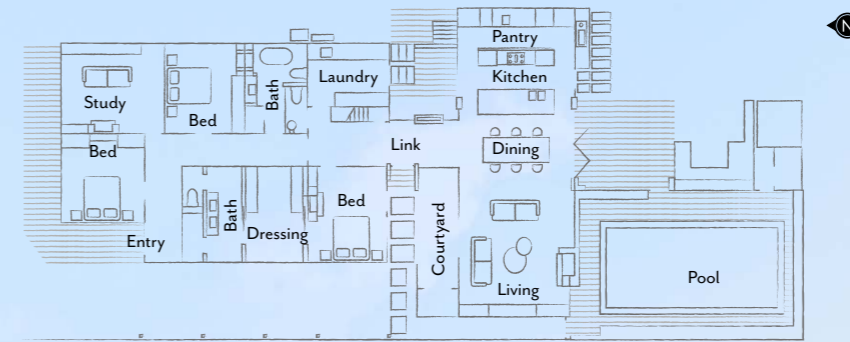
While their children, who regularly visit, found it harder to say goodbye to the family residence than Jane and Michael, the couple brought across some existing furniture to make everyone feel at home, including two Jordan sofas, and a generous antique French-oak dining table with bentwood chairs. “The table fits in beautifully. It was something familiar that immediately made it feel like our house,” she says.

But Jane and Michael never looked back. “When you are the ones doing the hard work, you think about the possibilities ahead,” she says. “We are fortunate to have moved to a house we love, in such a lovely spot.”

► *Williams Burton Leopardi, Adelaide, SA; (08) 8223 1177 or designbyrebl.com.au.*

**POOL/PATIO** The pool provides a refreshing outlook from the main living areas. Garonne limestone paving, Eco Outdoor. Sea Mist mosaic pool tiles, Tiles on Bradman Drive. Steel windows and doors, Salisbury Wrought Iron Works.

THE LAYOUT



**THIS IS THE LIFE**

Unsurprisingly, Jane and Michael spend most of their time in the light-soaked new wing and the kitchen bench has become a social focal point. But the home is a chameleon – while it’s a comfortable fit for the couple, with its three bedrooms it also readily accommodates their adult children when they come to stay. The clever addition of a glass door separating the front and back sections of the house ensures they can retain their privacy.

THE PALETTE

Dulux  
Lexicon Quarter  
(interior,  
throughout)

Dulux Domino  
(entry doors)

Resene Half  
Thorndon  
Cream (exterior  
brickwork)



*“WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE MOVED TO A HOUSE WE LOVE IN SUCH A LOVELY SPOT.”* Jane, owner

**FAMILY BATHROOM** Above Turi Turi side table, La Cividina. Byron bath, Abey. New Savior marble (vanity benchtop, wall and floor tiles), CDK Stone. Plantation shutters, Tailored Windows. Custom vanity. **POWDER ROOM** Above right Icon tapware, Astra Walker. Halo basin, United Products. Reeded-glass cabinet with steel frame, Salisbury Wrought Iron Works. Soft Grey 79700 wall tiles, Academy Tiles+Surfaces. **ENSUITE** Right Custom light, Ebony Heidendrich in association with JamFactory. Custom vanity, Concrete House. Icon tapware, Astra Walker. New Savior marble wall tiles, CDK Stone. Soft Grey 79700 floor tiles (in shower alcove) Academy Tiles+Surfaces.



THE SOURCE

*When awkward orientation puts rooms in the shade, a cool neutral palette makes the most of the light.*



Produced by Sophie Wilson. Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

1 Grace Collection by Ann Demeulemeester crystal red-wine glass (left), \$160/set of 4, Champagne flute, \$150/set of 4, water glass, \$100/set of 4, and Champagne coupe, \$170/set of 4, Becker Minty. 2 Baxter 'Jove' side table, \$2050, Space. 3 Classic jug, \$69, Zakkia. 4 Malmo serving bowl, \$129, Papaya. 5 White On White - Abstract Study 2 wall art, from \$2595, Coco Republic. 6 Medea wool rug in Ivory & Opal (240x300cm), \$6000, Armadillo. 7 Speckle plate (26cm), \$93, Zakkia. 8 Paros bath towel, \$129, Polite Society. 9 SP01 'Smith' dining table, \$6590, Space. 10 Le Corbusier armchair, from \$341, Thonet. 11 Watering can, \$69, Zakkia. 12 Ocean Beach tiles, \$93/m<sup>2</sup>, TileCloud. For Where to Buy, see page 190. H&G