

AUSTRALIAN

Contemporary Australian style: *elegant, natural and modern*

HOUSE & GARDEN

APRIL 2022 RENOVATION SENSATION

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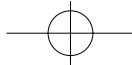
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AUSTRALIAN HOUSE & GARDEN



Life on DISPLAY

Thanks to a soulful renovation, a once-underwhelming 1980s house in an incredible location lets its owners showcase their creative personalities.

STORY *Georgia Madden* | STYLING *Williams Burton Leopardi* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Caroline Cameron*



FOYER Wedge breezeblocks in Porcelain from Austral Masonry are used inside and out. "The breezeblock walls are one of my favourite features," says owner Louise. Stool, Jon Goulder. *Euphorbia* and planters from a wholesale nursery. Vivid engineered-oak floorboards, First Choice Flooring (throughout). **STREET ENTRANCE** Amber Glow crazy paving, Allstone. The feature tree is an ash species.

Before its recent transformation, this late 1980s house didn't have a lot going for it: drab exterior, poor flow and harsh, almost commercial, interior finishes. But since it was perched high in the Adelaide Hills, it enjoyed 180-degree views of the Adelaide Plains from the front and similarly expansive mountain and gully views from the back - vistas that immediately captivated owners Louise and Ken.

"We were looking to downsize from a large, quite traditional bungalow and our first impulse was to move closer to the city, but we soon realised that being near nature was more important to us," says Louise. "I wanted a house where my collection of Mid-Century furniture could sit comfortably, and there was something in the structure that I thought had the potential for this. Once inside, the home's light and views won me over."

The couple approached architect David Burton and interior designer Sophia Leopardi of Williams Burton

Leopardi to help them resolve the home's spatial issues and to give the interior what it was lacking: warmth, emotional connection and a sense of place.

"They didn't want extra space, just better flow and to improve the home's connection with their beautiful surrounds," says David. "With a moderate budget, they chose to spend their money on those areas that would most enhance their enjoyment of the home - the kitchen, living and dining areas on the ground floor, a new deck and a guestroom downstairs."

David set about "stripping away the extraneous" and focusing the house around its views. He squared up the floor plan, removing an awkward angled partition between the entry and sunken living area, and opening up and extending the closed-off kitchen so that it flows into the open-plan living/dining space. Throughout, the existing windows were replaced with more efficient double-glazed ones - a must for a home in one of the hottest, coldest and windiest spots in Adelaide. ▶

"I DIDN'T WANT A MODERNIST REPLICA. I WANTED A HOME THAT FELT FRESH, ELEGANT AND PLAYFUL." Louise, owner



KITCHEN The large artwork is a digital reproduction of *Hilda Welcomed* by Stanley Spencer; the smaller pieces are family photos and travel souvenirs. Lightblocks resin benchtop in Dry Ice (white), Baresque. Hem Drifted stool, Aura Objects. Main benches are concrete by Adelaide Outdoor Kitchens. Square RH mixer tap, Voda Tapware. The open shelf is a custom design. Vase and carafe, both Ferm Living. **FOYER** *Knowing the Interior, Heartland 2013* painting by Paul Sloan from Hugo Michell Gallery. Vintage Rodd sideboard and Bitossi lamp. Louise bought the runner in Iran.

KITCHEN/DINING Oven and cooktop, Fisher & Paykel. Ay Illuminate pendant lights, Spence & Lyda. Vintage Danish dining table. Louise restored the vintage TH Brown dining chairs herself. Square RH mixer tap, Voda Tapware. Box under-mount sink, Franke.

At the rear, a “fairly useless” verandah made way for an expansive new deck that overlooks the gully, positioned to the southeast of the house so the kitchen and dining rooms can enjoy unobstructed views. “We only extended the footprint by about 5 square metres, but just those few gentle moves were enough to make it feel more spacious,” says David.

Out the front, a new wall of decorative breezeblocks softens the monolithic shape of the exterior. The feature carries through to the home’s entryway like a room divider, bringing with it texture and a sense of Mid-Century playfulness.

A reproduction of one of Louise’s favourite paintings - *Hilda Welcomed* by Stanley Spencer - hanging in the kitchen inspired the interior colour palette. “This is one of the few projects where the owners asked us to dull down the light rather than bring it in,” says Sophia. “The house faces west, so the light and heat can get very intense in the afternoon. The complex palette of bush greens and greys mellow the light and create a wonderful backdrop for Louise’s collection of art and furniture. The kitchen joinery is crafted from solid timber painted in muted sage (“Louise was aghast at the idea of a white kitchen,” says Sophia), teamed with concrete benchtops and a

concrete upstand that conceals cooking mess from the adjoining living area. The one concession to white is on the island, where one end is topped with Lightblocks (a resin product) to demarcate the meals zone.

Thoughtfully considered touches create a sense of honesty and intimacy. In the living area, for example, the existing slow-combustion fire was elevated to a feature piece with a simple tiled hearth, while a cork panel beside it offers a soft landing for casually arranged artworks. “Early in the design process Ken and I had taken a wonderful holiday to Scandinavia,” says Louise. “In retrospect, I can see how that experience informed my desire to have the indoor spaces sit seamlessly within its setting. The house sits on top of a ridge and is subject to extreme weather conditions. The darker, complex colours contribute to a feeling of safety and shelter.”

“I’ve never been happier in a house or felt that it reflected us as well as this one,” says Louise. “The outcome far exceeded our expectations - I still pinch myself that we could be so lucky.” ▶

Williams Burton Leopardi, Adelaide, SA;

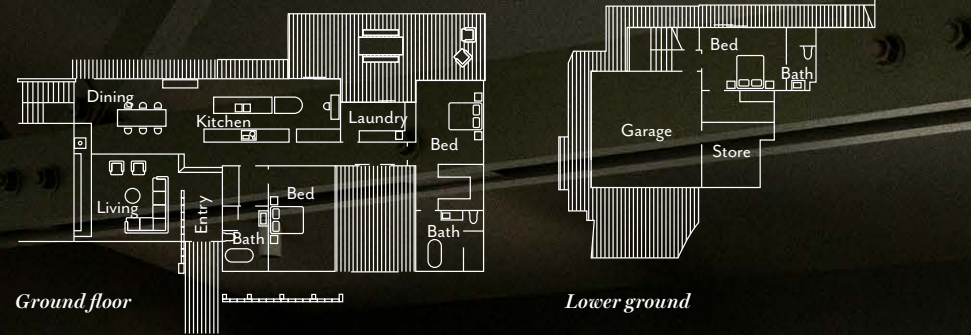
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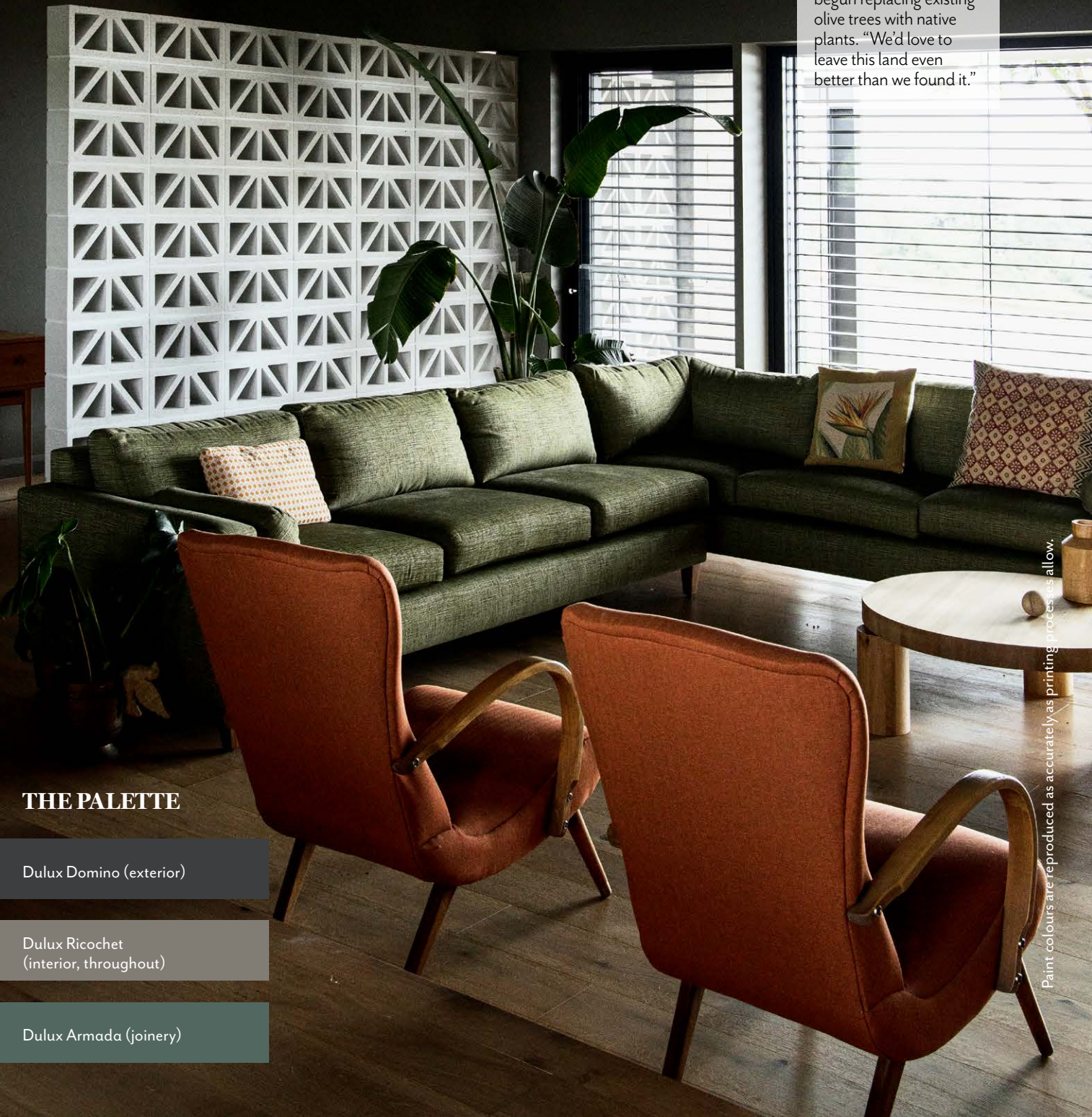


THE LAYOUT



THIS IS THE LIFE

“The location is just remarkable,” says Louise. “To the west, you can see all of Adelaide and the sea beyond. The view to the east is across a gully to Mt Skye with an Adelaide Hills panorama.” On part of the property that slopes into the gully, Louise and Ken have begun replacing existing olive trees with native plants. “We’d love to leave this land even better than we found it.”



THE PALETTE

Dulux Domino (exterior)

Dulux Ricochet (interior, throughout)

Dulux Armada (joinery)

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



“OUR PRIORITIES REVOLVED AROUND COMFORT, FOOD AND COMPANY.” Louise

LIVING *This page and opposite* Owner Louise relaxes on a sofa from Jardan the family has owned for 20 years. The armchairs are reupholstered vintage pieces. Resident Offset coffee table, Aura Objects. The wall and substructure surrounding the existing combustion fireplace were tiled in Minokoyo mosaics from Academy Tiles+Surfaces “so the fire doesn’t look like a blob in the corner”, says interior designer Sophia Leopardi. Wall hanging by Kangaroo Island artist, Kenita Williamson. The artworks on the floor are prints by Evert Ploeg (left) and Modigliani; the artwork above the corkboard is an antique. Autumn Veneer cork sheeting, Portugal Cork. Junit Record pendant light, Schneid Studio. Billie bench, Jardan. ▶



FRONT ENTRANCE *Top left and above* Landscaping by Lee Gray Landscape Design. The decorative breezeblocks from Austral Masonry screen the house from the street and create dappled shade inside. **REAR ELEVATION** *Top right* Pre-renovation, vast expanses of concrete made the house feel dull and heavy. The decorative breezeblocks out the front and black-framed windows and support structures out the back provide just the right amount of contrast. **DECK** The dining table is a second-hand piece. The benches were made to match by Remington Matters. The armchairs were a roadside find; Louise painted them green and had the cushions custom made in a Tommy Bahama fabric. Compressed fibre-cement decking, James Hardie.



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THE SOURCE

Mid-Century forms and landscape-driven colours combine in playful yet elegant ways.



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Produced by Saffron Sylvester. Currency conversion correct at time of writing.

1 Ferm Living 'Tala' platter, \$209, Designstuff. 2 Strikha pendant light, \$4220, Tigmi Trading. 3 Screen in Laminex Danish Walnut, shelves in Laminex Pillarbox and wall in Laminex Porcelain Blush laminate, all from \$113.20/m², Laminex. 4 Vintage Suzani cushion, \$325, Spiro Store. 5 Dua Relax lounge chair by Läufer & Keichel, \$10,780 (leather upholstery), Fanuli. 6 *When Thoughts Turn To Praxis* artwork by Paul Sloan, POA, Hugo Michell Gallery. 7 Lorne 'Totem' vase, \$70, Globe West. 8 Scalloped lampshade with cream trim, from about \$215.15, Matilda Goad. 9 Islets Series coffee table, \$7790, Cult Design. *For Where to Buy, see page 188.* H&G