



HEART & SOUL

AN INTERIOR DESIGNER'S CHARACTERFUL HOME HOLDS PRECIOUS FAMILY MEMORIES AFTER UNIMAGINABLE LOSS.

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Greater Sydney NSW HOME

Taxidermied deer, sourced from eBay and Yarra Valley Auctions, reside over the 'morning room' – owner Jodie Carter's favourite space. Stand-out features include a 1980s chandelier, a Malawi chair from Orient House, and a vintage Persian rug. **FACING PAGE** Cute pug Sunday poses in the foyer, which has an antique chair from Allbids Auctions, and a table from Raffan Kelaher & Thomas Auctioneers topped with a warthog skull and pot from Few & Far. Framed print from Designer Boys, with *Village en Flandres* by Roger Hebbelinck and *The Jolly Drinker* by V Maresca beyond. Artworks upstairs sourced from Designer Boys and Urban Road.



WHEN THE REAL ESTATE AGENT FIRST SHOWED Jodie Carter this home, located on a large, private pocket of Dharawal land in Sydney's leafy southern outskirts, five years ago, he knew it would take something a little bit different to hold her attention. "I get bored with things quickly and want to move on to the next project," Jodie, 54, says.

Jodie's interior designer eye saw beyond the overgrown, unloved exterior and the 1980s colour palette. "Everything was brown – all the timberwork, doors, windows, skirting, cabinetry and coffered ceilings," she recalls. "But I knew it had potential, with its generous proportions and strong architectural detail. It won a House of the Year award in 1984. It was built with love and craftsmanship, and you could tell no expense had been spared."

Jodie, who shares the home with her daughters Kamryn, 24, and Charli, 18, initially envisaged a top-to-bottom renovation knocking out walls, ripping out cabinetry and adding in modern features like a butler's pantry. However, a family tragedy derailed her vision. "I did have great plans >



"The window seat in the kitchen is Charli and Kamryn's favourite spot. They have breakfast there every day," says Jodie of her daughters. Etro Olive and Burton Oatmeal cushions from L&M Home add cosiness. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** Jodie relaxes outside with her pugs; the kitchen cabinetry is painted in Salvia by Dulux. An Alfred 1 pendant light from Lucci hangs overhead; a vintage table fits nicely in the kitchen; pugs Kylie and Sunday offer a warm welcome.

for it, but I had a 12-year-old son, Hamish, who sadly passed away in December 2022 after years of bullying and mental health illness,” says Jodie. “We were thrown into huge turmoil for a few years and just wanted to run away.”

“After we got ourselves back together a little bit, we thought, ‘Right, we’re selling. Let’s just give it a paint and a quick makeover.’ We painted out all the brown, laid new flooring, replaced window coverings and changed the lighting. I’d signed the contract with the agent to list it, but then my youngest daughter had a bit of a breakdown about the move. So, then we decided we were going to stay; we needed to make peace with the house and our lives. It’s kind of bizarre because once we made that decision early last year, I started to really embrace the house and realise how lucky we were to live here. It ended up being the best decision.”

Jodie then threw herself into the second phase of the home’s transformation, injecting it with her layered, timeworn style, all the while repurposing and preserving

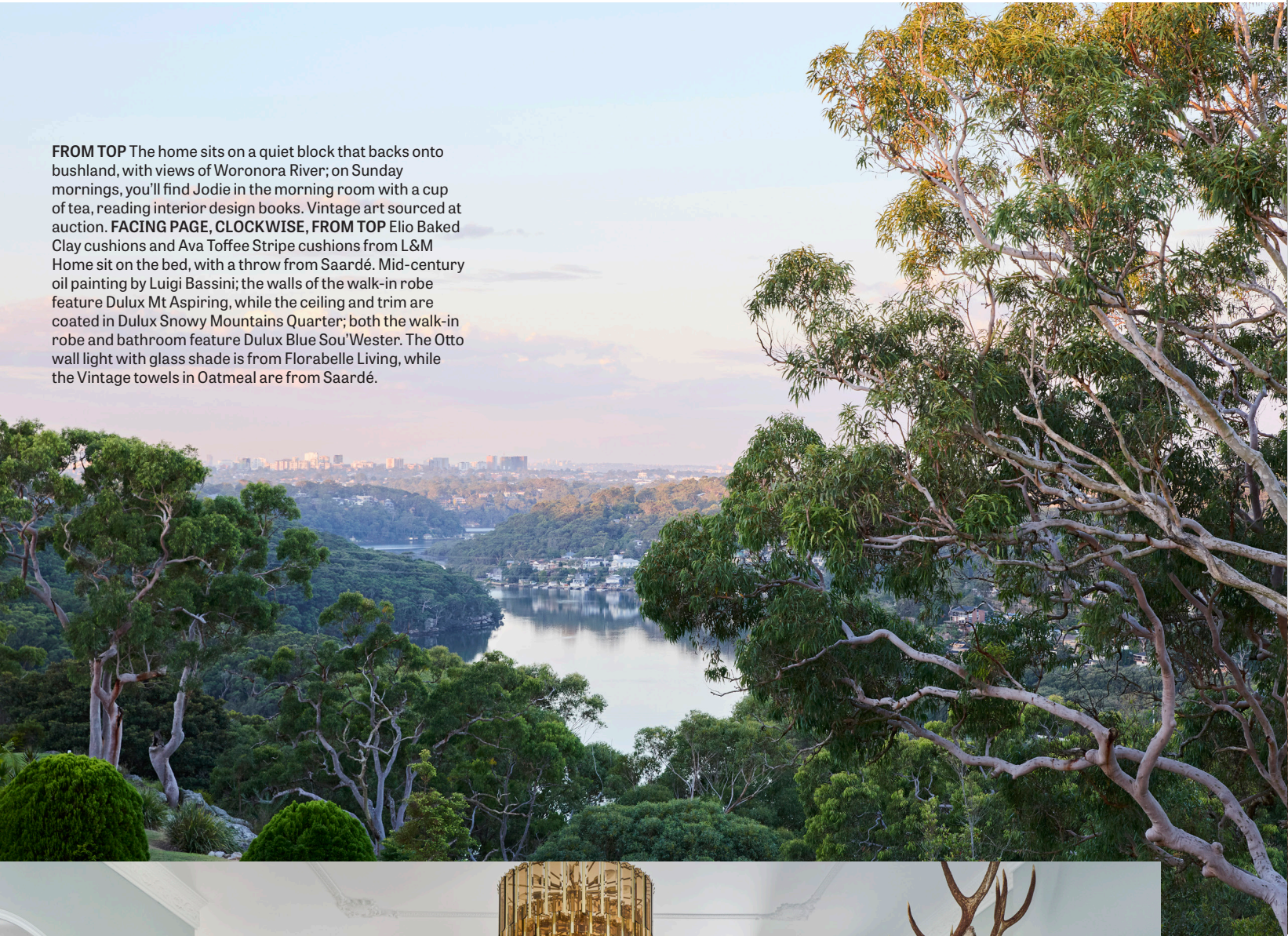
original character. She painted the cabinetry in bold colours and kept the original tapware and hardware. “It’s a sprawling, three-level home with very high ceilings downstairs,” Jodie says. “It has a conservatory, and there’s a wine cellar in the basement. It’s got funny little hallways and it’s a bit like a rabbit warren. People get lost in here all the time.”

The home’s interesting layout provides plenty of nooks and crannies for Jodie’s antiques and vintage finds, and her collections of taxidermy and storied artefacts. “I’ve always loved old things,” she explains. “I had a grandmother who took me to museums and historic homes. Years ago, a Canadian friend sent over some antlers, turkey feathers and a bear claw. It piqued my fascination with taxidermy. I only had a couple of pieces when we first moved here, but last year I went a bit mad – I’ve got about 35 pieces now. My first piece was a badger, named Ray. He’s on the table in what we call the Ornithology Room. It was actually the dining room, but we never really sit at the dining table. >

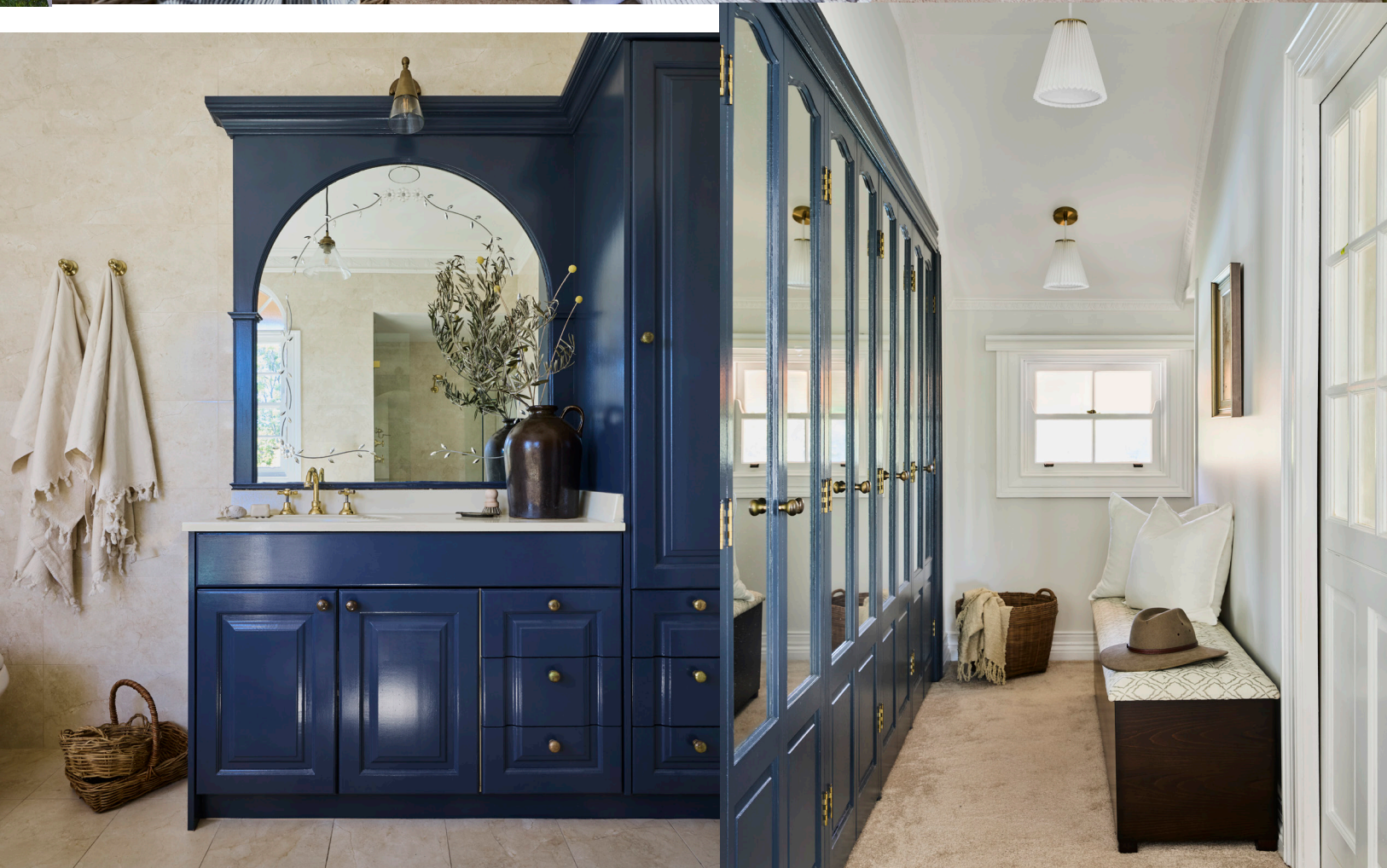


The ‘ornithology room’ holds fascinating finds, with various taxidermy sourced from eBay, Lawsons Auctioneers and Raffan Kelaher & Thomas Auctioneers. Farmhouse dining table from La Maison. Artworks include *African Grey Parrot 1* by Lillian August and a Pope vintage artwork from Raffan Kelaher & Thomas Auctioneers. In the corner, a Baxter planter from Florabelle Living holds umbrellas, while baskets from Inartisan, eBay and auctions contain treasures.

FROM TOP The home sits on a quiet block that backs onto bushland, with views of Woronora River; on Sunday mornings, you'll find Jodie in the morning room with a cup of tea, reading interior design books. Vintage art sourced at auction. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP** Elio Baked Clay cushions and Ava Toffee Stripe cushions from L&M Home sit on the bed, with a throw from Saardé. Mid-century oil painting by Luigi Bassini; the walls of the walk-in robe feature Dulux Mt Aspiring, while the ceiling and trim are coated in Dulux Snowy Mountains Quarter; both the walk-in robe and bathroom feature Dulux Blue Sou'Wester. The Otto wall light with glass shade is from Florabelle Living, while the Vintage towels in Oatmeal are from Saardé.



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CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT Crystals, shells and collectables on display; Hamish's lovingly furnished room has a Loft Graphite duvet cover set from L&M Home and a Grey/Green throw from Ikea; Jodie's studio has a bentwood chair and storage baskets from Ikea; Dulux Kakadu Trail adds a soft wash of colour in the bathroom, which boasts 1980s Parisi brass tapware, vintage brass knobs and a vintage French urn. Turkish towel in Olive from Saardé. **FACING PAGE** The wall art includes a watercolour landscape by William Leithwood Appleton and a vintage etching by Austrian printmaker Luigi Kasimir.



“I also collect skulls and insects. I visit antique shops and go on auction sites, but a lot of it is things I’ve found in nature, like shells and sea sponges collected from the beach after storms, and skulls and bones that friends have picked up around the countryside. I’ve got all sorts of things from all sorts of places. I’m a crazy collector. I love it.”

Jodie, who grew up in New Zealand, has worked as an interior designer for over two decades. What was originally the library in the house is now the studio of her design practice where she works on complete renovations and new builds of prestige properties. “Everyone has quirky things about themselves that need to be taken into consideration when I design a house for them,” she says. “I want them to feel like coming home is the best part of their day.”

When Jodie looks to the future, she hopes to one day realise a long-held dream to move to the country. But for now, her home with her daughters and curious collections is her sanctuary. “After Hamish died, I felt like I couldn’t live my life again until I was living somewhere else,” she explains. “I had this massive list of things I wanted in a country house, but then I realised I already had all those things here, so I was just going to have my country house right here.”

“I felt we had Hamish’s blessing to stay and that we’d be leaving him behind because there were memories of him living here. I do still dream about it though, and absolutely will live in the country one day. I’m still getting used to saying there are just three of us living here. But I know he’s here – we feel his presence all the time.” *Ch*

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