

IN DETAIL

paper trail

Choosing a wallpaper to frame its French doors was the starting point for the redesign of this living space in Sydney

Hidden behind a timber facade in Sydney's metropolitan Bondi Junction, this house is in a laneway that is often used as a canvas for neighbourhood kids to graffiti. It's an unusual mix of styles, and was ripe for renovation when the Budge family of five and various pets moved in. As the property has three living areas, they focused on light updates for two of them, leaving the one adjacent to the garden out of the picture.

"It's the largest of our living spaces," says owner Jinan Budge, "so it should have been our primary living room because it has the best outlook – with sun, a pond and a giant staghorn in the yard – but it was so poorly furnished that we never used it. Once we had the makeover, not only did it become our primary living room, it became the family's happy place."

Key to the transformation was interior designer Lara Ette, who is Jinan's sister. Lara embraced Jinan's brief for lots of colour ("bright to match the house and my style") and tackled the room's spatial and design issues. She took a more subtle approach to Jinan's colour choices and introduced her company's signature detailing in the form of beautiful handmade pieces.

design process

Jinan had no experience of working with a designer, so was very new to the process. "My input was pretty annoying, to be honest, and I questioned everything," she admits. "We just didn't want to spend time or money on a room we weren't using. It had an ugly Chesterfield in there, which was too wide and deep for the space and had a special massive hole created by our dog. That faced a horrible white TV cabinet and floating shelves."

Once she was signed up, Lara got to work on making the room look and feel larger. "Jinan wanted a plan that worked well for the family and opened up the dining and living," she says. "As the staircase is in a fairly inconvenient location, this was crucial. The interior also needed to work well with the exterior because when you open up the French doors, it's an oasis out there."

CLEVER COLOUR Owner Jinan loves the room's new hues. "Now it has a great mix of colours; for example, the light blush of the sofa with bright yellow [in the stool] and green [the media unit]. We also copied a style element from the previous owner, fashion designer Fleur Wood, and mounted a series of old artworks from Vinnies on the walls with more modern ones." Kelly Wearstler wallpaper, Elliott Clarke. Sofa, Curious Grace. Cushions, Gorman. Lounge chair and matching ottoman, Trit House. Light over dining table, pre-existing.





GALLERY STYLE

The white walls and white and grey furniture in the dining area complement the internal staircase and make the wall art stand out. The flooring has an ebony stain. Masters dining chairs, Kartell. Art by Anna Blatman.

To minimise bulk in the room, Lara designed a low and small but considered media unit with a rattan inlay. “The family wanted to do yoga here, so we measured yoga mats and props, as well as blankets, the chord for the gas heater – everything that had to be hidden away,” says the designer, who then tackled colour, texture, shape, proportion and so on. “I tried to incorporate every colour into the scheme, making sure that every new addition was complementary and added something,” she explains. “I like to incorporate handmade elements into my designs as much as possible. In this case, we asked a local joiner to fabricate an integrated handle on the upper cupboard [not shown] in the shape of an arch, which was a great outcome. The basket, floor lamp and sculpture are also handmade.”

hero piece

The decision to use the stunning Kelly Wearstler wallpaper was made very early on by Lara and the family. “Putting the wallpaper around the French doors worked out well as it was the one wall without the panelling detail,” says Lara. “It also added an ‘urban’ element – perfect for the context of this home.” From the wallpaper came many of the furniture and accessory choices, to chime in with the pre-existing bright white walls. “Being able to use colour and pattern without hesitation was great,” says Lara. “Especially with things like the pendant light; its fluted blue-glass shade is really striking.”

the result

Jinan and her family are delighted with their exciting ‘new’ living area. “My husband and I were both skeptics about the process,” she says, “and now I can’t imagine renovating anything in future without Lara and her creative yet calm and methodical approach. The unexpected benefit of this renovation is that it goes beyond good looks – it has brought our family together.”

See more of Lara’s work at laraettedesign.com or [@lara_ette_design](https://www.instagram.com/lara_ette_design)

GET THE LOOK



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT Kartell ‘Masters’ chair, \$325, Space. Kelly Wearstler ‘Graffito’ wallpaper in Salmon/Cream, POA, Elliott Clarke. Rakumba ‘Bailey’ optic-glass pendant light in Steel Blue by Tom Fereday, \$1760, Design Nation. My Tribe cotton cushion in Mustard (50cm x 50cm), \$49.95, Kas Australia. Wendelbo ‘Mango’ velvet lounge chair in Maroon, \$2130, Trit House. Surface Sconce bronze light, \$1840, Studio Henry Wilson. Baba Tree ‘Special Bowl 1’ woven basket, \$225, Koskela.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON

FRESH ENERGY

Post-makeover, the room is the top spot for Jinan’s yoga and morning-coffee sessions. “It’s actually become the hub of our family life,” she says. Media unit, FAF Woodwork. Vintage Kartell Nesting Tables, No Replica Furniture. Rug, West Elm.



“I love the combination of calm and energy that the space brings me, and that my family can gather so comfortably and luxuriously in such a small area”

JINAN BUDGE, HOMEOWNER