

INHALE, EXHALE

The successful transformation of this Rozelle house has resulted in a dwelling that almost seems to be a living, breathing thing

Words Lauren Clarke Photography Prue Ruscoe





The sunken living room sets the scene for relaxation as you walk through the front door



Dreamy pastel tones and old-world charm unite in Soft Serve, a gorgeous heritage-listed home in Sydney's Rozelle. Thanks to a recent renovation with Yasmine Ghoniem from YSG Studio at the helm, this house is the perfect marriage of harmony and history.

The project started with a four-bedroom, one-bathroom dwelling, with closed-in spaces making the footprint feel smaller than it actually is. As a part of the design brief, the client required a second bathroom to be added and a general opening up of some of the living spaces to make the house more conducive to a modern open-plan-style design. But because of the house's historical roots, this transformation was never going to be easy.

"Soft Serve was originally a heritage 19th-century Victorian Georgian corner shop (The Balmain Supply Store)," Yasmine says, adding that the entire project took three years to complete, due largely to council permissions that were required for one of the more dramatic changes. "One key challenge was getting permission to remove the sandstone wall that existed between what is now the kitchen and dining area," says Yasmine. "It was imperative to



ed's fave

THE BOLD COLOUR AND
DETAIL OF THE FRONT
DOOR ARE SIMPLY PERFECT
FOR THIS HOME



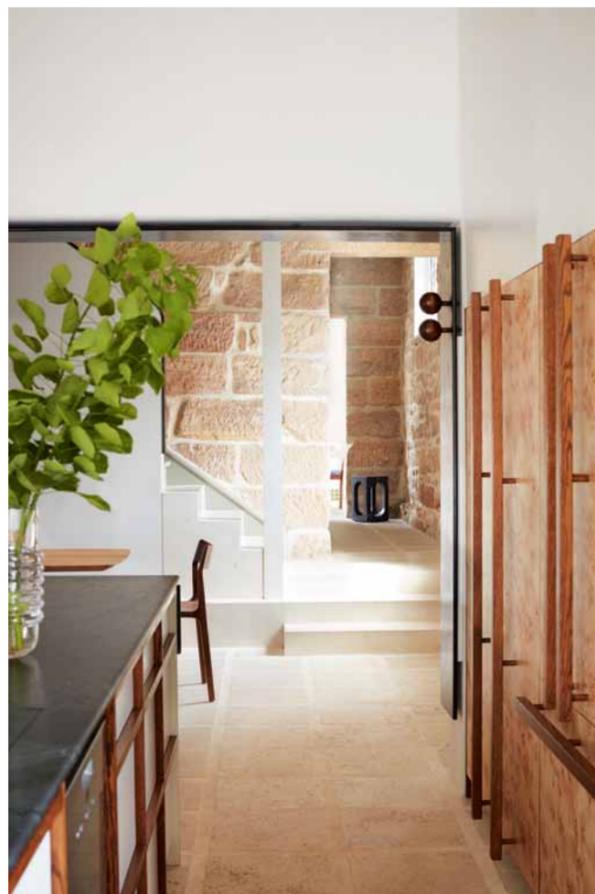
This custom chandelier can be enjoyed from both above and below

we love
 THE WARMTH OF
 THE HERITAGE
 SANDSTONE WALLS

give the whole downstairs living area a sense of open connection. It took a lot of perseverance and patience to get approval!"

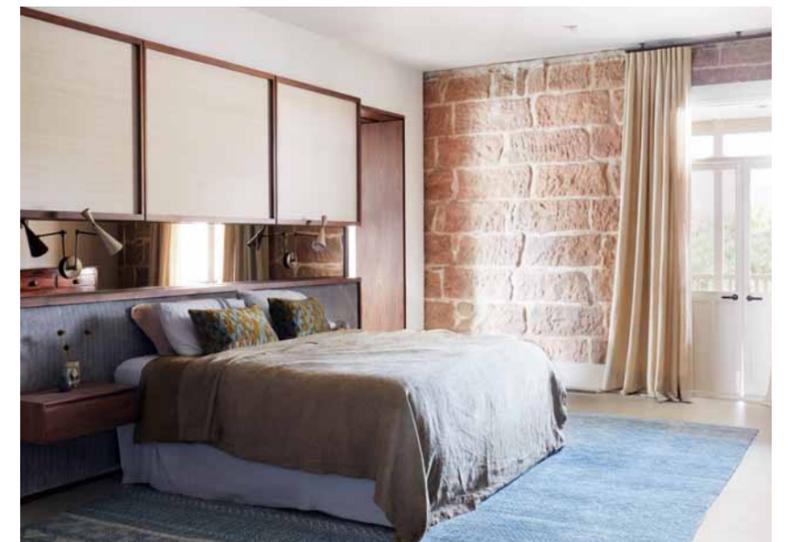
Finally, the approval came through and the transformation was well and truly worth it. Today, walk through the doors of this home and a true sense of personality will greet you, almost as if the house was a living, breathing entity. To the right, the kitchen is a beacon of natural materials, from the quartzite benchtops to the timber veneer and solid timber American ash door. Yet the external cabinetry and benchtop treatments weren't the only changes to this section of the home. "For seamless connectivity, the existing kitchen was raised to meet the height of what is now the dining room, and the face of the island bench creates an entry corridor wall leading to the dining area without enclosing the space and trapping natural light from the front door and windows," explains Yasmine.

In a continuation of this celebration of natural materials, a unique custom chandelier takes pride of place in the dining room. "It's a rectangular halo of Australian red cedar with blunted corners that hovers from the void above





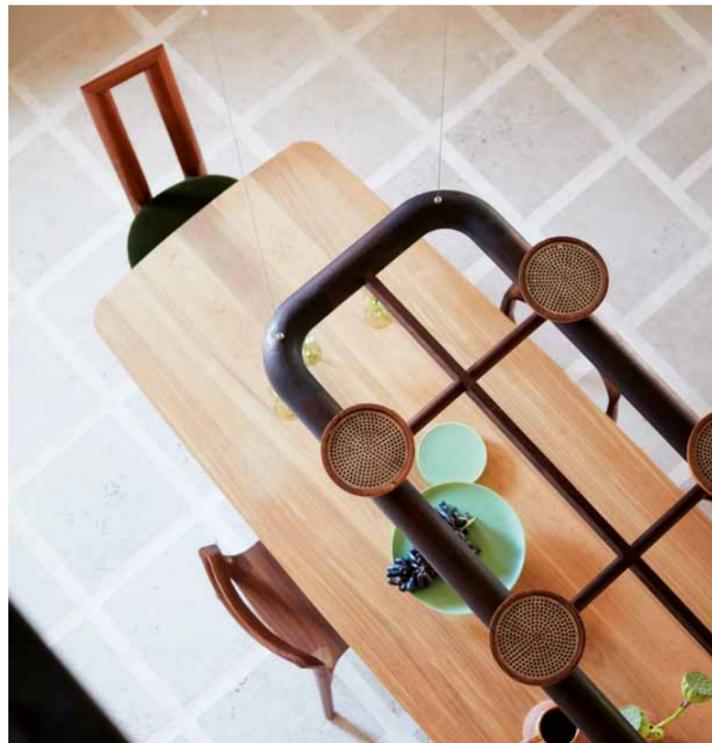
Gentle colours, romantic curtains and natural materials make the transition from the home's interior to its exterior feel seamless



the table, which can be appreciated in detail when descending the stairway," reveals Yasmine. "LEDs articulate its underside while carved Poplar Burl cups (inspired by Venetian Barovier and Toso chandeliers) ignite interest in the upper level."

The dining area itself sees those historical sandstone walls creating a real sense of warmth. Descend into the sunken living room and you'll be flanked by a delicate oak handrail designed by YSG. Here, the moulded Marmorino seating anchors the space like an original fixture.

Overhead, the entry space's original false plaster ceiling had to be removed, revealing original V-groove timber struts that were painted in a gorgeous blushing peach that speaks to the delicate pink blush that emanates from the sandstone in the walls. Mullions were



“The home really conveys this sense of a living entity that gently inhales and exhales”

— Yasmine Ghoniem

reintroduced on the original shopfront glass windows beside the front door — a door which is, quite fittingly, a striking shade of terracotta pink that sets the tone for the warmth in the home beyond.

Upstairs, the transformation continues. One of the most important elements in the renovation was the addition of a second bathroom. “We relocated an existing bathroom upstairs (the only one in the house), providing the young adult daughters with a private lounge near their bedrooms, and created their new shared ensuite within the original master bedroom,” says Yasmine. “The former living room above the kitchen was converted into a spacious master bedroom with ensuite bathroom facilities and a seating area.”

Once again, these bathrooms possess a considered mix of natural materials and varied textures. In the master ensuite, mother-of-pearl square mosaic tiles are a glittering complement to the stained-glass window opposite them. This square shape is repeated throughout the home, from the square macro outlines of the custom-cut oversized travertine floor pavers with thick exaggerated grouting, to the salon’s lilac open-weave linen curtains and even the chunky square indentations on the Tufty Time sofa in the salon overlooking the courtyard. Thoughtful details like this create a sense of unity and make it feel as if this is a selection of rooms that are separate, yet together.

This transformation has resulted in pure joy for the homeowners. Yasmine says the whole family enjoys the house even more these days, with certain spots clear favourites. “They say the nook by the front windows is occupied all day — by the parents in the mornings over a coffee and during the day by their daughters, who love studying in the natural light,” says Yasmine. “Originally, this area was avoided as it felt too exposed to the street. Linen curtains resolved that, while the custom travertine table and recessed shelves filled with beautiful pieces make it a magnet.” **HD** *ysg.studio*



Lighting creates a sense of gentle flow thanks to the use of curves, as seen in the arched wall light illuminating the piano and the half-sphere pendant over the table