



shared vision

TRUST IN AN INTERIOR DESIGNER WAS
AMPLY REPAID IN THIS RENOVATION.

WORDS CATHERINE McCORMACK PHOTOGRAPHY JASON BUSCH
STYLING SUZANNE GORMAN

In the dining area, a photograph by Greg Weight of Margaret Olley's painting *Silk Peonies* and a pendant light from Sydney's Ici et Là. **FACING PAGE** Horses near the dam on the steeply sloping Bowral property.



LAID-BACK AND EASY, with interiors that reflect the interests and lifestyle of its owners. This was the approach interior designer Suzanne Gorman, of Studio Gorman Design Project, took to renovating a four-bedroom farmhouse near Bowral in the NSW Southern Highlands.

Sydney-based owners Paul and Robin, who have three school-aged daughters, bought the property in 2013 as a weekend escape. “We were looking for a place that we could get away to, where the kids could run free and be kids,” Robin says. “The idea was that it would be a simple farmhouse and a place we could come to relax.”

The floorplan of the single-level, 1980s-era house “just made a lot of sense,” says Suzanne, who had worked on the couple’s Sydney home. “It has good proportions — the bedrooms are all a really good size — and the aspect through the living rooms, kitchen and master bedroom looks out to the most stunning valley.”

While solid and liveable, the house lacked soul, due largely to its outdated bathrooms and cheap, faux wood grain internal doors. “The initial brief was to reconfigure the bathrooms, but I convinced Robin and Paul to repaint and replace all the internal doors and door hardware as well,” says Suzanne, who went for hardwood doors in a Shaker-style design and painted everything with Dulux Sandfly Point NZ. “You notice when doors and handles are good quality. That really changes the bones and the feel of a house.”

Paul and Robin’s passion for yoga and healthy living led to the installation of a *hammam*, a Turkish bath-type steam room in the ensuite, and a soothing organic palette that includes limestone floors, timber-look porcelain wall tiles and an oiled, custom-made wooden vanity from Mark Tuckey.

“Robin had seen a basin that she liked — the ‘Lotus’ basin by Apaiser — and I got a sense for the room from that,” Suzanne says. “I tried to keep it minimal and muted, and a little bit textural.” Traditionally styled bronze tapware and a Moroccan pendant light, which throws pretty shadows on the wall at night, complete the look.

Suzanne’s approach to the family bathroom was similar, “only a bit more playful for the children”. Here, a traditional clawfoot bath (painted a matt, mid-grey colour) was teamed with grey-and-white Popham Design encaustic floor tiles.

“The tiles are handmade in Morocco and have a lovely, chalky texture,” Suzanne says. “They’re not supposed to be perfect. They’re supposed to show light and shade, and that gives a very pared-back, relaxed mood. I love playing around with textures — you can create such a beautiful feeling.”

The hallway outside the bathroom was widened to incorporate a second wash station. “We came up with this idea so that guests could clean their teeth or wash their faces if someone was in the bathroom,” says Suzanne, who “pinched” a bit of space from the walk-in wardrobe in the adjoining room, then dressed the area with another Tuckey vanity in brushed Oregon pine, Spanish wall tiles and another beloved ‘Lotus’ basin.

The doorway into the bathroom was also moved, creating a display space at the end of the hallway for Paul and Robin’s eye-catching collection of carvings.

In the rest of the house, Suzanne helped to manage the furniture and furnishings, using Paul and Robin’s existing pieces where possible. “They wanted to try and use as much of their furniture as they could and not be wasteful,” she says. “I stayed in the house for a few days at a time and, with the help of the builder, moved the different pieces around to come up with a floorplan of what I could keep.”

The main living space, which is two rooms converted into one, received a new leather sofa and retro-looking armchairs, while the fireplace was updated with a sandstone slab and raw timber mantel. The feature artwork — *Wholey Cow* by Sydney’s Alan Healy — was Robin’s pick. “I think art in a house should be personal,” Suzanne says. “I don’t think you need to buy art that is your designer’s taste and I don’t think you need to colour match it to your room — but you do need to get the proportions right.”

Elsewhere, Suzanne added layers of softness, including linen curtains, cushions and bedspreads in the bedrooms, an indigo kilim under the dining table and a rug custom made from Cavalier Bremworth carpet in the living area.

“Suzanne’s touch has made the house much more liveable and wonderfully comfortable,” Robin says. “We love how, from the minute you walk in the door, you feel at home.” *CG*
For more information, contact Suzanne Gorman at Studio Gorman. 0414 936 571; studiogorman.com



“I tried to keep it minimal and muted, and a little bit textural.”



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT The kitchen was given a coat of paint but is otherwise original; flowers from the garden in a pottery jug; interior designer Suzanne Gorman; a ‘before’ shot of the master bedroom; Suzanne added linen curtains and bedding to give the room a softer appearance; the flock of South Sussex sheep indicate the property is still a working farm. **FACING PAGE** The dining table and bench seats were inherited from Robin’s family, while the carved wooden vase was bought overseas.



BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHY SUZANNE GORMAN

about the house...

- * Interiors are painted with Dulux Sandfly Point NZ, a soft, warm white. 132 525; dulux.com.au
- * The ensuite was redesigned to include a *hammam*, a Turkish steam room, which was designed by Studio Gorman. The Helo Steam Generator was supplied by Finnleo. (03) 9587 4494; finnleo.com.au
- * The porcelain timber-look wall tiles in the ensuite and steam room are Cerdomus 'Barrique' timber plank series in Gris. (03) 9428 4326; cerdomustile.com.au
- * In the family bathroom, blush-toned Mule Matt wall tiles in Ivory are mixed with Popham Design grey-and-white cement floor tiles from Onsite Supply & Design. (02) 9360 3666; onsitestd.com.au
- * The clawfoot bath from Cast Iron Baths (1800 111 566; castironbaths.com) was painted with Dulux Franz Josef Double NZ, a deep mid-grey. 132 525; dulux.com.au
- * Apaiser's 'Lotus' basin features in both bathrooms and the wash station, and is available in a range of colours. (03) 9421 5722; apaiser.com
- * The vanity in the ensuite is made of oiled American oak and is a design by Studio Gorman and Mark Tuckey, based on Tuckey's 'Mardi' range. The 'Mardi' cabinet in the family bathroom is brushed Oregon. (02) 9997 4222, (03) 9419 3418; marktuckey.com.au
- * The ensuite walls were painted in Murobond Murowash in Old White. 1800 199 299; murobond.com.au
- * Suzanne specified Perrin & Rowe tapware from The English Tapware Company for the ensuite. 1300 016 181; englishtapware.com.au. Pewter tapware from Mother of Pearl & Sons Trading features in the other bathroom. (02) 8332 6999; motherofpearl.com
- * The vintage zinc pendant above the wash station is from Elements I Love. (02) 9560 3067; elementsilove.com
- * The cloth pendant in the family bathroom is the 'Pacman' from Pierre and Charlotte. (03) 9329 4414; pierreandcharlotte.com
- * A rug, custom made from Cavalier Bremworth 'Galet' loop-pile carpet in Cinder, helps define the sitting area in the large open-plan living room. (02) 9932 2600; cavbrem.com.au
- * Tribal baskets from LivedIn Coogee add drama and interest above the fireplace. The larger is called a Tsonga bowl. (02) 9665 5330; livedincoogee.com.au
- * To enliven the dining space, Suzanne chose an antique mohair kilim by Loom from Mark Tuckey. (02) 9997 4222, (03) 9419 3418; marktuckey.com.au. The brass pendants are from Ici et Là. (02) 8399 1173; icietla.com.au
- * 'Simple', 'honest' and 'farmhouse' were key words for Robin and Paul, and the Shaker-style chair in the master bedroom fits their brief perfectly. It's from Small Spaces. (02) 8399 3144; small-spaces.com.au



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE The garden leads down to a hot pool; this second-hand timber desk matches the Shaker-style chair from Small Spaces; a before shot of the family bathroom; a wash station was recessed into a wall in the hall outside the family bathroom.



BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER



BEFORE

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT The steam room in the ensuite has a Turkish inspiration; the clean lines of the bespoke Mark Tuckey American oak vanity are a vast improvement; the original ensuite; the open-plan living space has a new leather sofa and armchairs; a stone platform in the garden has deckchairs, a fire pit and a stunning view; the renovated family bathroom with Apaiser 'Lotus' basin and Mark Tuckey timber vanity.

