

COUNTRY *comforts*

For a much-travelled homewares manufacturer, this alluring weekender in the NSW Southern Highlands is her own special place.

STORY *Chris Pearson* | STYLING *Olga Lewis* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Anson Smart*



EXTERIOR The home is approached from the south, where a remodelled patio provides a cool place to linger on a summer's day. Walls painted Dulux Prestige Blue. Trim painted Dulux Vivid White. Roof in Colorbond Surfmist. Wall clad in Shackleton Quartz Natural Lay, Gather & Co. 'Palais' pedestal and urn planter in hand-braided wicker, Alba Atelier. Square planter, Lydie Du Bray Antiques. 'Vaseria' terracotta square planter, Bunnings. Table and chairs, client's own. Landscaping by Michael Bligh & Associates.

The affable Alex Liddy helms homewares company Ciroa, with sales all over the globe. When *H&G* spoke to her, she had just returned from four unrelenting weeks on the move in the US and Europe. Little wonder, she finds this weekender in the NSW Southern Highlands, where she can unwind and feel grounded, a welcome escape. Set among rolling green paddocks, it combines country warmth with handcrafted furnishings, inviting a gentler pace. When she discovered the seventies bungalow in 2020, she was drawn to its cottage charms and two-hectare grounds. "I wanted a lifestyle change, with a bit of land," says Alex. "This was perfect, with grazing cattle nearby and established trees." But the home's layout was awkward, with a huge open-plan sitting and dining space at one end, down a couple of steps, dubbed "the great room", disjointed from the rest of the ▶



KITCHEN Joinery painted Porter's Paints Bachiotta Grey. Grigio matt floor tiles and Superwhite quartzite honed splashback tiles, Di Lorenzo Tiles. Joinery by Festoni. 'City Plus' pot filler and mixer, Brodware. 'Caribbean' bar stools, Xavier Furniture. Vintage vase, Rudi Rocket. Cast-iron casserole, in Satin Black, Le Creuset. Chopping boards, Ciroa Home. White speckled jug by Arnaud Barrage, The DEA Store. 'RG x Field Day' blue jug, Robert Gordon. Smeg 90cm Portofino pyrolytic freestanding cooker, Winning Appliances. 'Opera' Natural benchtop, Dekton. Roman blinds, in Christopher Farr Cloth 'Meander Smoke' fabric, Ascraft, made by Lizzie Yuill & Co. **SOUTHERN PATIO** From its elevated position, the remodelled front porch soaks up views of the rolling countryside. Lava floor tiles, Academy Tiles. Wall dad in Shackleton Quartz Natural Lay, Gather & Co. Ceiling painted Dulux Vivid White. Emac & Lawton 'Sandhurst' wall lamp, Urban Lighting. Pendant designed by Lynne Bradley Interiors, made by Plank and Trestle. 'Safi Old Lace' armchairs and 'Deco Pillow Grace Bay' cushions, Cotswold InOut Furniture. Patterned cushion, Tigger Hall. 'Ossa Block' coffee table, GlobeWest. Throw, Pigott's Store. Landscape bowl, by Suvira McDonald, The DEA Store.



“I was after something a bit country, but also individual and eclectic.” ALEX LIDDY, OWNER



KITCHEN VJ cladding on the ceiling brings a homely country touch to the kitchen. Grigio matt floor tiles, Di Lorenzo Tiles. 'Opera Natura' benchtop, Dekton. Joinery painted Porter's Paints Bachiotto Grey. 'Caribbean' bar stools, Xavier Furniture. Vintage vase, Rudi Rocket. Curtains in Christopher Farr Cloth 'Meander Smoke' fabric, Ascraft, made by Lizzie Yuill & Co. 6 Lamp Lined Up pendant, Anna Charlesworth. 'Stamford' dining table, Coco Republic. Custom dining chairs, in Christopher Farr Cloth/Kit Kemp 'Lost & Found' fabric, Ascraft, made by Anthony Kennedy Upholstery. Agra Juniper rug, Armadillo. Vase on dining table, Mercer & Lewis. 'Armato' table lamp, by Kelly Wearstler, Bloomingdales Lighting. Bakers bowl (with vegetables), Parterre. Terracotta jug, white and green plate and fruit bowl, all Alex and Trahanas. Ceramic jelly mould (on books), Dirty Janes. 'Serax' glasses, Spence & Lyda. **NORTHERN FACADE** Lynne added a pavilion at the back to mimic the new gable on the so-called 'great room', to the right. Emac & Lawton 'Sandhurst' wall lamp, Urban Lighting. Lava floor tiles, Academy Tiles. Fairweather outdoor sofa, lounge chair and side table, and Filetti Pacific Bluestone pavers on floor and fireplace, all Eco Outdoor. Custom pendant made by Plank and Trestle. 'Hamptons' hanging chair, Cartia Collective.



house and often idle. The middle section, with separate living room and meals area, was clumsy, especially the undercooked kitchen, its pokiness anathema to keen entertainer Alex. The only part of the house that functioned adequately was the far wing with its four bedrooms, but its family bathroom was too small. Rather strangely, the outdoor areas to the north consisted of a rudimentary porch, with outdoor entertaining focused on a southern patio. Again, strangely for this location, it was devoid of insulation.

Through a mutual friend, Alex discovered interior designer Lynne Bradley of Lynne Bradley Interiors and, when sharing Pinterest images, the pair found they were on the same page.

“I was after something a bit country, but also individual and eclectic,” says Alex. One of her muses was UK designer Kit Kemp, with her playful use of pattern and colour, artisanal pieces combined with antiques. “Because I deal in mass-produced items, I wanted this house to be more personal. And I did not want to lose the intimacy, but I also wanted spaciousness for entertaining.”

Lynne gutted the house and installed insulation up, down and everywhere between. Strikingly, she turned the “great room” into a massive open plan with dining area and kitchen, making the floor level with the rest of the house and installing a soaring cathedral ceiling. “We used the gable to create ▶





serious scale and enlarged the northern patio at the opposite end, adding a pergola to make it symmetrical with the gable and accentuate it." Now a generous six metres deep, the patio boasts a fireplace, a hub for entertaining. Meanwhile, by moving the kitchen, she opened up the central section for a larger sitting room, complete with a coffered ceiling for gravitas. And Lynne placed another gable over the southern patio, with windows at each end to give it year-round usability. An orangery beside the kitchen garden, with kitchen and dining facilities, brings the indoor-outdoor entertaining spaces to three.

In the bedroom wing, Lynne enlarged the family bathroom, by combining the WC with the wet zone. Meanwhile, all the aluminium windows were replaced with timber frames, double glazed for insulation.

Scale is reprised in the over-sized furnishings, such as large bedheads "to give them lift", while the calming blue and green palette "with navy as a neutral", says Lynne, is combined with generous pattern and texture. Grasscloth wallpapers and marble mosaics mingle with natural fabrics, such as linens, cottons and chunky weaves, with fringing, studding and braiding lending the personal touch. VJ cladding, stacked-stone walling and painted Shaker joinery allude to the rural setting. "It's not strictly country, just the inference," stresses Lynne.

Lovingly handcrafted items abound. "A fabulous local blacksmith created the bespoke chandeliers and handrails," she says. "And we used a local upholsterer and cabinetmaker, emphasising local talent." With that sense of community, no wonder Alex feels at home in her haven in the hills.

Lynne Bradley Interiors: lynnebradleyinteriors.com.au.

Bowral Creative Constructions: bowralcc.com.au.

NORTHERN PATIO Steel framing painted Dulux Vivid White, echoing the home's roofline, adds gravitas and a sense of presence to the northern patio. Lava tiles, Academy Tiles. Filetti Pacific Bluestone pavers, in Herringbone, on floor and fireplace, Eco Outdoor. Custom fire grate and custom pendant both made by Plank and Trestle. Fireplace painted Dulux Prestige Blue. 'Hamptons' hanging chair, Cartia Collective. 'Fairweather' sofa, lounge chairs and side table, all Eco Outdoor. Antique bowl on side table, Watertiger. Woven baskets, Orient House. Cushions, Cadrys. **FIRE PIT/ORANGERY** Stone cladding and benchtop in Shackleton Quartz Natural Lay, Gather & Co. Semi-circular seats in Dulux Prestige Blue. Pacific Bluestone pavers, Eco Outdoor. Kilim cushions, Cadrys. 'Molly (Mel) Drum' fire pit, Robert Plumb. Table and chairs in orangery, Lydie Du Bray Antiques. Table and chairs on right, client's own. **LAUNDRY** Walls painted Dulux Unforgettable. Lava floor tiles, Academy Tiles. White bowl fireclay sink, Abey Australia. 'City Plus' pullout mixer, in Swiss Brushed Brass, Brodware. Green vase, Jordan. 'Heritage' soap holder in Ash Wood, by Andrée Jardin, Oliver Thom. Large resin 'Rock' jug, Dinosaur Designs. Striped raffia table lamp, East Wing Studio. Joinery painted Porter's Paints Bachiotta Grey. 'Opera Natural' benchtop, Dekton. Sydney handles, in burnished brass, Hepburn Hardware. Roman blind, in Andrew Martin 'Furrow Denim' fabric, Unique Fabrics, made by Lizzie Yuill & Co.





THE PALETTE

Dulux Oxford Half
(main bathroom walls)

Dulux Unforgettable
(internal walls)

Porter's Paints Bachiotta Grey
(powder room vanity)



MAIN BATHROOM 'Opera Natural' benchtop, Dekton. 'Sydney' handles, in brass, Hepburn Hardware. 'Maia' floor tiles and white Carrara subway skirting tiles, all Di Lorenzo Tiles. Nagoya Mosaic Tile Co. Malakh wall tiles, Academy Tiles. Arch Fluted gloss white ceramic basin, ADP. 'Kado Lux' solid-surface freestanding bath, Reece. TF Designs bath tray and 'Købn Mist' towels, all Oliver Thom. 'City Plus' wall mixer, shower rose, hand shower and towel rail, in Swiss Brushed Brass, all Brodware. Luumo Design 'FA 33' mirror, in Brass, Gubi. Vintage timber stool, Watertiger. Small vintage amphora vase, East Wing Studio. Timna Taylor Cylinder Vase #4, The DEA Store. Missoni 'Rex 21' towels, Spence & Lyda. Austin Austin soap and soap dish, Oliver Thom. **MAIN BEDROOM** Cayman bedside tables, Xavier Furniture. Kelly Wearstler Tiglia table lamps, in Plaster White, Bloomingdales Lighting. Vintage bowl on bedside, Watertiger. Red vase, Spence & Lyda. Custom 'Grande' bedhead, in Nine Muses Textiles 'Primula Medallion Eastlake' fabric, Tigger Hall, and custom lumbar cushion, in Nine Muses Textiles 'Gentaine Green', Tigger Hall, both made by H + J Furniture. Messina 'Moss River' bed linen, Polite Society. **POWDER ROOM** Gastón y Daniela Salobreña 'Azul' wallpaper, Domestic Textiles. Luumo Design 'FA 33' mirror, in Brass, Gubi. 'Arch Fluted' basin, ADP. 'City Plus' wall mixer set, Brodware. Vintage vase, Rudi Rocket.



ORANGERY The glassed orangery is a wonderful place to take tea – but not in summer, of course! Wall clad in Shackleton Quartz Natural Lay, Gather & Co. Pacific Bluestone pavers, Eco Outdoor.

THIS IS THE LIFE

This versatile home is the great entertainer. "I always bring friends down here with me," says Alex. "I want to share it with people. And everyone leaves clutching a bunch of herbs." Her favourite spots for entertaining or precious own-time are mostly indoor-outdoor. "I love the northern patio with its outdoor fireplace and the southern balcony with its borrowed view of horses grazing."



THE SOURCE

Create a sense of refined elegance in your home with ornate shapes, sophisticated black steel and notes of sky blue.



1 Bloomingville 'Cophia' vase, \$99, French Bazaar. 2 Gubi 'FA 33' mirror, from \$1790, Cult. 3 La Marquise 'Cameo' pillar candle in Cornflower Blue (10x6cm), \$55, Trudon. 4 'Double Waves' outdoor cushion in Blue (60x40cm), \$250, Bonnie and Neil. 5 'Tiglia' tall table lamp by Kelly Wearstler, \$2995, Becker Minty. 6 'Antigua' outdoor sofa with custom cushions, POA, Xavier Furniture. 7 'Urbane II' acrylic freestanding bath (160cm), \$2826, Caroma. 8 'Carlisle' piped double bedhead in Cloud, \$729, Temple & Webster. 9 'Remington' iron oval chandelier, \$1099, Pottery Barn. 10 'Elysian' sensor commercial pull-out kitchen mixer in Stainless Steel, \$759, ABI Interiors. **H&G**