



Sunlit SCENE

Against a backdrop of lighthearted creams and whites, this beachside home features hues inspired by the deep blue ocean

STORY KERRY RAMSEY STYLING AIMEE JONES PHOTOGRAPHY SUE STUBBS

A relaxed vibe welcomes visitors to the home of owners Kate, her husband Doug and their three daughters. Evoking a beach house feel, the entrance (opposite) features sandblasted glass and grey-toned timber decking, while the interior is pared-back and simple. In the master bedroom (above), a well-loved armchair has been reupholstered in striking Pierre Frey 'Shabby' linen, continuing the sea-inspired theme. >



On inspecting a ramshackle residence in the Sydney beachside suburb of Clovelly, househunter Kate's first reaction wasn't encouraging. "It looks like a caravan," she recalls saying to her husband Doug of the "shocking" front exterior added on by the previous owners. Luckily, Kate and Doug saw through first appearances to the home's potential and bought the house in late 2005 with the intention of transforming it into the light-filled, coastal-themed family home it is today.

On a tight deadline, Kate, an interior designer by trade, and Doug worked together to complete the design, plan the budget, get the development application lodged and start the building process, all within six months of taking ownership. Built in the 1920s, the two-storey freestanding house needed some dramatic changes. It wasn't only the facade that needed work – the original salmon pink and laminate kitchen, with its low and narrow benchtops, evoked unpleasant associations of those in retro campervans, too.

Spurred on by memories of carefree vacations at the beach, Kate and Doug persevered with their little rickety bungalow, even when it seemed the renovation would never end. The first task the couple took on was to move the staircase and add an extension with a new kitchen, which now opens to an exterior entertaining area and pool. "We have water views in all directions – of the beach from the front rooms, and the pool from the back," says Kate. >



DINING ROOM {top left} A family heirloom, the ornate timber dining table, surrounded by Light Oak 'Boulees' chairs from Thonet, is a place for the family to gather and discuss the day. Against the room's primary colour palette of timber tones and pristine whites, a chequerboard landscape painting by Melbourne-based artist Nick Howson adds vivid colour. Sculptural red spider orchids in a clear vase, both from Susan Avery, complement the artwork.

HALLWAY {left} A mid-century Chinese console table from Architectural & Antique Elements anchors an artistic collection of artworks and selected art books.

great idea

< well placed art

A dedicated art collector, Kate gives a lot of thought to placing her pieces. "A painting can look quite nondescript on its own, but a group of paintings becomes a strong feature," she says. Artworks by (clockwise from left) Arthur Boyd, Donald Friend, Earle Backen and Juliet Holmes à Court are set in pale American Oak box frames alongside more traditional gilt frames. "Stretching fabric over a canvas is a great way to create affordable artwork," suggests Kate. "A big drop of Marimekko fabric looks amazing on a wall." When hanging artwork, it's worth hiring a professional. "Sometimes you just need someone to hang it properly – it's worth it to get it right," admits Kate.

LIVING ROOM The painting by former Archibald Prize winner Nicholas Harding is the focal point of the living room. "We look at it every single day," says Kate. "It was worth every penny." All furniture fabrics feature soft, subtle tones, such as cushion covers in stripy 'Capri Red' fabric and raw linen, both from Ici et Là. The 'Low' table from Koskela completes the intimate setting and complements the tallowood floorboards. One of Kate's favourite pieces is the vintage wicker armchair from Take 2 Decor, which evokes a laidback feel. >





ELIZA'S BEDROOM (top left) When putting together daughter Eliza's bedroom, Kate followed her own interior design mantra: "Choose beautiful colours and keep everything timeless for a clean and simple look." It's reflected in the room's pared-back palette of soft pink and pale green, in the striped pillowcases from Household Linens, the doona cover and the roman blinds, which Kate designed under her former textile business, now interior design company, Bell + Watson.

LAUNDRY (top right) Extensive storage was on Kate's wish list when designing the laundry, so this space has scored a mix of pull-out drawers, open shelving and – "the saviour of the house," says Kate – a laundry chute.

BATHROOM (left) In the main ensuite, Kate has incorporated a Pax wardrobe from Ikea for extra storage and to keep the room uncluttered. Sand-toned tiles warm up the white space.

MASTER BEDROOM (opposite) The inviting armchair has been moved from house to house since Kate bought it in London. "I had it reupholstered recently because it was in a hideous red-and-white check – the old country look that was big in the '90s," she says. A Designers Guild throw from No Chintz echoes the chair's pale blue hue. Patterned fabrics in gentle tones are a feature of the room, with the daybed upholstered in Marimekko 'Kukkula' fabric from Chee Soon & Fitzgerald and the seat in 'Haipo Stripe' fabric from Mokum (see page 89 for details). >

ARTWORK BY (TOP LEFT) LUCY CLUBBON



"I stick with a certain LOOK FOR MY HOME'S INTERIOR AND SEEK OUT CLASSIC AND TIMELESS PIECES TO FIT INTO THAT CLEAN AND SIMPLE STYLE."



< Given the extensive changes they were making, the family moved into a rental house during the build. As project manager, Kate worked with her regular builder, Gavin Mead of Southside Constructions & Developments, and joiner Tim Maybury of TSM Cabinets, and was on site every day; she chose the colour palette and fixtures for the house herself. "Many people get themselves in a knot choosing the type of toilet but at the end of the day, if it's white, a good price and works properly, it will be fine," says Kate, who believes that decorative pieces – furniture, linen and accessories – are the key to personalising a house. "It's great to keep your basics white and bring in colour with artwork, cushions and rugs. At the moment, I'm loving apple green as an accent colour but I'll probably want to change it in another year."

As an interior designer, Kate can't resist mini-makeovers, but stops short of changing the furniture itself. "I never change it. I stick with a certain look for my home's interior and seek out classic and timeless pieces to fit into that clean and simple style."

Simple yet elegant, this family home now captures that nonchalant vacation vibe, without even a faint suggestion of its former caravan-like appearance. The lifestyle benefits are a bonus; Kate and her three daughters, Ruby, Eliza and Julia, love that the house is just a 10-minute walk to the glistening surf. "I walk down to the beach a couple of mornings a week, and often head to the Bondi Icebergs ocean pool for a few laps early in the morning," says Kate. "We moved here for the beach, so it's wonderful to get that ocean injection every day."



"It's great TO KEEP YOUR BASICS WHITE AND BRING IN COLOUR WITH ARTWORK, CUSHIONS AND RUGS"

KITCHEN {opposite} "Our kitchen is the absolute nucleus of the house," says Kate. "It's all one big open-plan room; everyone is drawn to the kitchen island bench." The bench is an early 19th-century baker's table **{right}**, from Architectural & Antique Elements, with an original marble top to which Kate matched the other kitchen benchtops. Around the baker's table are Artek '64' birch stools from Anibou, tying together the new and the old. Matchstick bamboo blinds from Ashwood Bamboo Blinds & Security Doors are used throughout the home. "They give a beach house feel and are inexpensive," says Kate. Decorative touches, such as a bright tea towel from No Chintz, add colour to the predominantly white space.

DISPLAY {top right} "There are lots of little tricks that can make spaces seem larger," says Kate, referring to the kitchen's built-in shelving unit and above-bench cupboards with glass doors. "Built-in joinery to the ceiling enlarges a space, while freestanding items can be messier and close in the space." Thanks to the cabinetry's glass doors, Kate can display her collection of pale pink plates purchased "in the most beautiful shop in Paris." >

ARTWORK BY DAVID BAND



Inside story

Who lives here? Interior designer Kate, 43 (inset); her husband Doug, 44, a stockbroker; her daughters, Ruby, 13, Eliza, 11 and Julia, seven; and Rex, a wolfhound cross.

Favourite colour scheme when designing a house? Kate: "I go for white, white and more white. We have amazing light here, and we get a lot of colour from the ocean views, the greenery out the windows, and the reflection of the pool, so it was best to keep the backdrop understated. For colour, I display crockery in different blues in the kitchen and often add a red vase in the living room."

What's the most used item in the house? "The French baker's table, which I've transformed into a kitchen bench. We all sit around it; that's where we eat and everything happens. If ever we move, it will come with us."

Smartest idea when designing the house? "As well as the four bedrooms and home office upstairs, I designed a living area for the girls just outside their bedrooms. There's enough room for a bookcase, a built-in bench, a fish tank, a computer desk and a TV unit. The girls really needed that space since their bedrooms aren't that big."

Any collections you're accumulating? "I'm collecting the Dibbern crockery range, which I often buy at Chee Soon & Fitzgerald. The brand offers an amazing colour palette."



GARDEN (this page) When designing the pool, Kate chose a glass fence so she could soak up the relaxed ambience while overseeing her daughters playing {opposite page, centre}. A trained hedge of Coastal Rosemary borders the pool and outdoor entertaining area.



ILLUSTRATION WWW.KENZIEDSIGN.COM

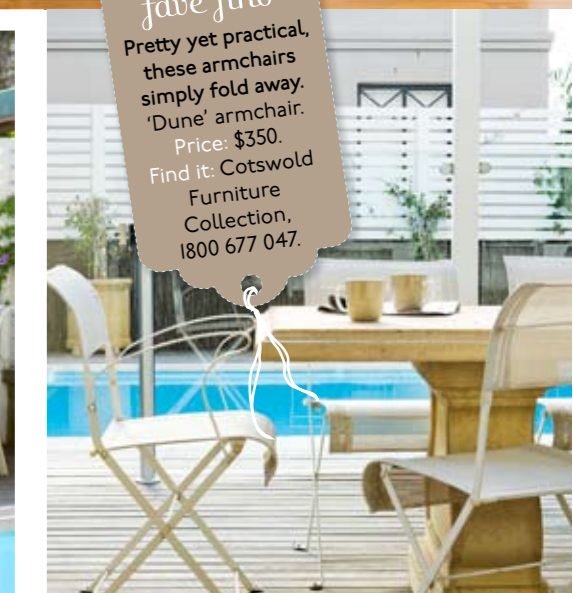
KITCHEN (right) A mix of open shelving and glass-front cabinets display Kate's penchant for white crockery with a hint of aqua.

HALLWAY (below) A wicker basket is a stylish storage solution in the fuss-free entry.

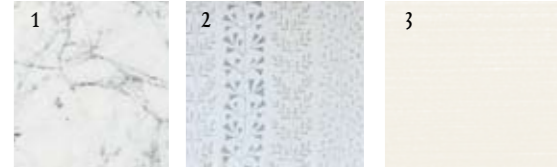
OUTDOOR AREA (below right) The family use the solar-heated pool year round. White 'Dune' armchairs and side chairs from Cotswold Furniture Collection surround an old table from Parterre.



"For a burst OF COLOUR, I DISPLAY CROCKERY IN DIFFERENT BLUES IN THE KITCHEN"



fav find
Pretty yet practical, these armchairs simply fold away.
'Dune' armchair.
Price: \$350.
Find it: Cotswold Furniture Collection, 1800 677 047.



great idea

< customised cabinetry
To make an interior functional as well as a real style statement, joinery is the key. "I'm a big believer in built-in," says Kate, who made sure joinery costs were covered in the renovation budget, with all the joinery in the home built by Tim Maybury of TSM Cabinets. "I always design thick white shelves throughout the house for the visual effect," explains Kate, who has also had glass-front cupboards fitted to display all her favourite objects in the kitchen {top right}.

colour & materials

- 1 Kitchen benchtops in 'Carrara Gioia' marble, \$715/sqm (material and installation), Granite & Marble Works.
 - 2 Fabric 'Haipo Stripe' in Seafoam, from \$115/m, Mokum.
 - 3 Paint Wash & Wear 101 Advanced Low Sheen in Stowe White at half-strength, \$35.50/litre, Dulux. [Stockists, page 198](#)
- Due to the printing process, actual colours may vary.
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