

# ESCAPE

*Rural doesn't have to mean restrained. This Australian property is a creative and confidently colourful rethink of country style*

Words CARLI PHILLIPS  
Photography ANSON SMART  
Styling OLGA LEWIS

## THE ORDINARY

Drive south from Sydney for 75 miles and the din of urban life recedes as the landscape changes, revealing rolling hills blanketed by rich green grass. It was here, hidden on the outskirts of the town of Kiama, that George Geagea first discovered Greyleigh, a decaying 19th-century dairy farm once celebrated for its award-winning cattle.

George had worked with interior designers Dominique Brammah and Shannon Shlom of Duet for his city home and enlisted them again for this renovation, confident the duo could breathe new life into the house. While the footprint and bones remained intact, Dominique and Shannon gutted the rooms, resurrecting the property with a playful mix of clashing prints, unruly colours and provincial-meets-modern fabrics.

'The clients never said no. We ran amok and the crazier we got, the more exciting it was,' reflects Shannon. 'We'd buy something vintage online, but then reupholster it in a luxurious fabric or an expensive tweed. We never hit the middle ground – we high-logged

it the whole way through,' she says of the home's dichotomous pairings. 'And if we bought something off the shelf, we'd customise it with a flourish – a little cherry on top,' echoes Dominique, referring to the home's many pelmets, trims and window dressings. To temper some of the more traditional furniture, the pair introduced a contemporary feel with recurring scalloped details, marble and checkerboard prints.

When the project began, the sprawling house was a disjointed rabbit warren. Part of Duet's strategy involved wrapping entire areas in colour to help visually marry the spaces. The shared formal dining and living area felt immediately better after a coat of deep green-blue paint, and the adjoining casual zone is now clearly defined with mustard-coloured walls. Upstairs in the loft, the romantic main bedroom has a cocooning low-pitched ceiling, with dark blue accents creating a moody atmosphere. Characterful touches include a four-poster bed and a luxurious freestanding claw-foot bathtub,

which looks out onto a magnolia tree and the countryside beyond.

Outside, a brick path leads from the main dwelling to an open-plan guesthouse. This comparatively compact space is designed with a cosier sensibility and outfitted with an inviting reading nook, navy gingham roman blinds and patterned wallpaper. 'It's punchy, but more serene. We've just softened the intensity,' explains Shannon.

While Greyleigh was originally intended to be a weekend escape for the family, it's now evolving to incorporate a barn, farm stays, a workshop for artists in residence and holiday cottages. 'Towards the end of the renovation, I was standing by the orchard, with its mandarin, orange, fig and lemon trees, and saw the property in a new light. It had been so neglected and I could finally see it sparkling,' reflects George. 'Even though the house was meant to be a private project, I knew it had to be shared, so now it can be rented out – but only for special occasions.' [greyleigh.com.au](http://greyleigh.com.au); [weareduet.com.au](http://weareduet.com.au)





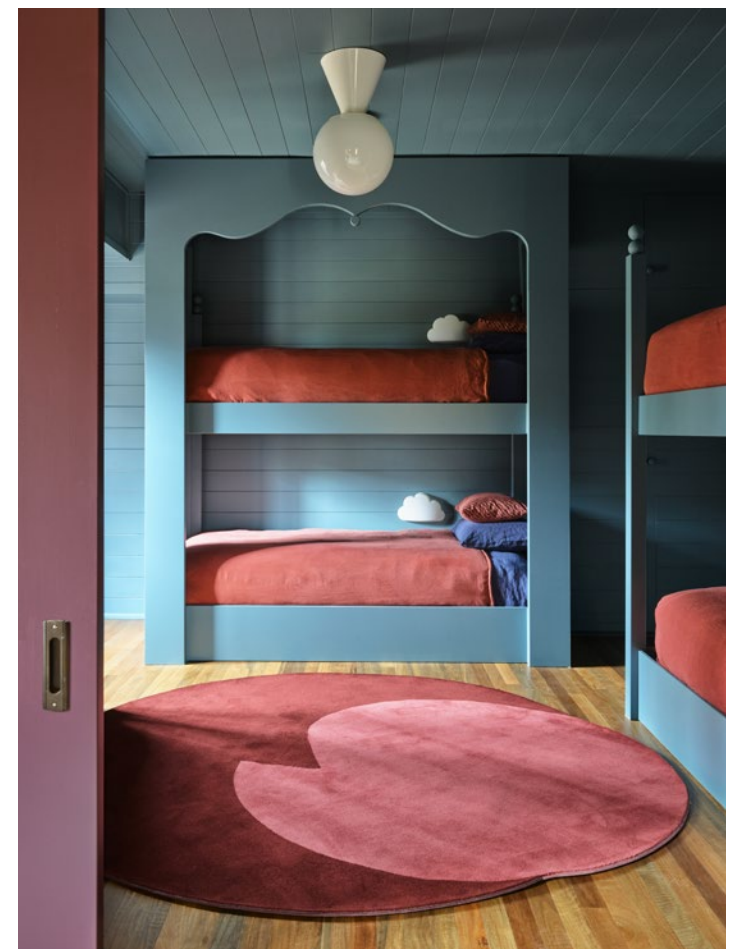




THE PROPERTY WAS RESURRECTED  
WITH A PLAYFUL MIX OF COLOURS  
AND VINTAGE PIECES



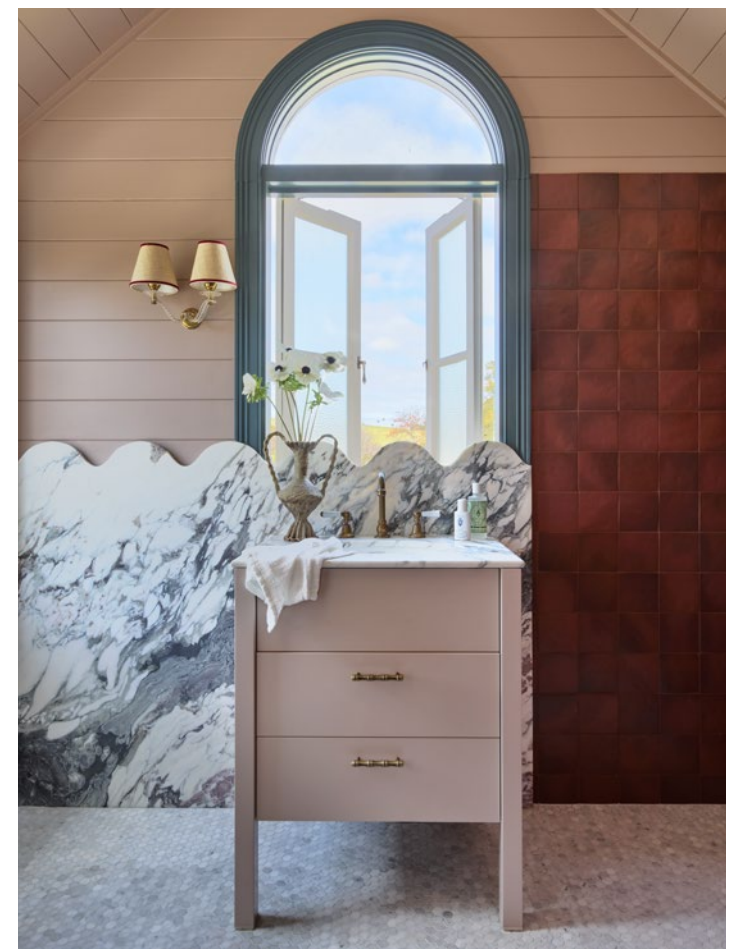














A LUXURIOUS FOUR-POSTER BED AND  
CLAW-FOOT BATH SET A ROMANTIC  
MOOD IN THE MAIN BEDROOM

