

BEFORE&AFTER

# TERRACE MAXIMUS

A Sydney home that was perfect for a couple 18 years ago has been cleverly updated to accommodate their three children



**W**hen Robert and Jackie bought their Sydney terrace in 2002, they planned to live there – if not in the immediate future, certainly in the years after that. They were engaged to be married, and following the time-honoured Australian tradition of a stint living and working overseas, first in New York, then London. After that, they'd head home. Probably. “We’ve always been that couple,” says Jackie. “Things happen – and we like a new adventure.”

“One thing led to another, and we ended up staying much longer than expected,” says Robert, which is a modest way of saying they forged successful careers in the UK capital, made strong friendships and had a couple of children.

It was 2009 before they were able to tear themselves away from London and really test that adventurous spirit by renovating the Paddington house with a toddler and baby in tow. Although it has three bedrooms the property was compact, so to maximise the space they extended the ground-floor living area into the rear courtyard, and installed clutter-hiding joinery in every room. Meanwhile, skylights went in and the wall between the kitchen and stairwell was replaced with glass, to filter light through.

LAMBERT & FILS 'DOT LINE SUSPENSION' LIGHT, LIVING EDGE, NANIMARQUINA 'QUILL M' RUG, CULT, ZANOTTA SOFA (OPPOSITE) AND 6TRADITION CHAIR, CULT, COFFEE TABLE, CATAPULT DESIGN

## cheat sheet

**Who lives here** Robert, an investment consultant; and Jackie, a media executive; with their sons, Zac, 13, Max, 11, and Luca, 9; and Japanese spitz pooch Kubo.

**Style of home** A small three-bedroom terrace in the Sydney suburb of Paddington.

 Robert and Jackie bought the house in 2002 while living in London. They leased it to tenants and partly renovated in 2009, before completing the job in 2018 with the help of interior designer Lara Ette.

 The most recent renovation came in at approximately \$120,000.

**FAMILY ROOM** Although they have that invaluable indoor/outdoor flow to the courtyard, Robert and Jackie would like to replace the doors with something more architecturally dramatic one day. In the meantime, the curtain that Lara suggested really improves the look of them. It's Kvadrat fabric from its Daybreak range, made by Marlow & Finch.

**HALLWAY** A pale pink panel in the entrance's arched inset adds a subtle block of colour. Lara used Bohemia by Porter's Paints in a Duchess Satin finish. Mila chair from FrancoCrea.

AREA  
145sq  
metres



**KITCHEN** The big difference here is the new white cylindrical Albany rangehood by Qasair, which has a much more streamlined silhouette than the bulky stainless-steel one it replaced. Polytec wall shelves and cupboard fronts in Casentino Beech Woodmatt with new handles have transformed the cabinetry and made a feature of the desk area. Every inch of cupboard space has been utilised, with shelves and drawers that can be adapted to store different things. Artwork (next to the desk) by Jordana Henry.



## the first go

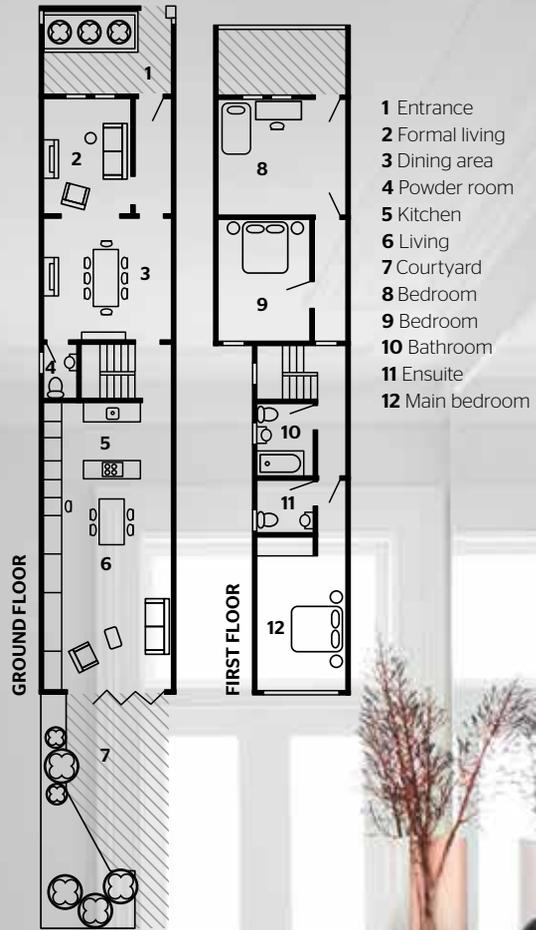
“We were still mid-renovation when we started talking about moving back to London,” sighs Jackie. They had been in Sydney for 18 months and only lived in the fully renovated house for a matter of weeks before packing up again. If that wasn’t hectic enough, they were 32 weeks pregnant with their third child. Once again, the house was leased, and by the time they moved back again in 2018, it was looking tired. There were also now five family members and a dog, which gave them pause for thought, especially as their London house had five bedrooms.

## designer help

There was no way to further increase the size of the property, but to make the most of what they had, they enlisted interior designer Lara Ette to spruce things up before their return. Coordinated Skype calls were a key part of this process, along with photographs of things like brush-outs, so they could choose between paint options in situ. Then, for materials that really need to be touched – curtains, carpet, etc – Lara shipped them a large box of samples. “Lara was a dream to work with,” says Jackie. “As well as being creative, she’s brilliant at project management and we could rely on her to see everything through end-to-end.”

## room refresh

When they returned to Sydney in September last year, the family was blown away by the result. “Before, the house felt dark and small and we were doubtful about it,” says Robert. “But now it feels refreshed and new.” The layout hasn’t changed from the 2009



- 1 Entrance
- 2 Formal living
- 3 Dining area
- 4 Powder room
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Living
- 7 Courtyard
- 8 Bedroom
- 9 Bedroom
- 10 Bathroom
- 11 Ensuite
- 12 Main bedroom

**FORMAL LIVING** Light-framed furniture makes this small space at the front of the house look blissfully uncluttered. The fireplace is original. Sofa, clients' own. Fogia 'Poppy' pouf, Fred International. Rug, Tappeti. Artwork by Zara June Williams.



**MAIN BEDROOM** This room compensates for its small size with a luxe feel. Lara Ette designed the bedhead using Kvadrat 'Hero' fabric by Patricia Urquiola. The wall-mounted Rubn Lighting 'Miller Wall' lights from Fred International are a real space-saver.

## DARK TO LIGHT

**1** In the second renovation, Lara stripped out a large high-gloss panel on the living-room wall and replaced with plasterboard, which was painted. **2** New Polytec cabinetry was installed. **3** Finally, the dark floorboards were sanded back by EuroStyle Floors and given a lick of Bona White primer, followed by Bona Traffic Natural to finish.



1



2



3

reno, but everything has been updated. The dark flooring has been restained and the walls throughout have been lightened with Dulux Mount Aspiring (half and quarter) and Dulux Torere quarter (the front rooms). In the kitchen, the pre-existing joinery and units have smart new Polytec fronts and hardware. Everywhere you look the furniture is low-profile and sophisticated.

## expert colour

All told, the house is bright and minimalist, without appearing cold, thanks to the nuanced colours on the walls and in the soft furnishings. "Lara did such a good job with all the colourways, especially in the way she has enabled those two front rooms to flow," says Jackie. "Our piano is on its way from London, and once that's in place the space will be perfect."

## space shifting

Now the renovation is complete, is there enough room for everyone? "The kids have plenty of space," says Robert. "That's the funny thing; if they were younger I don't think we'd fit into this house, but now that they're older they don't bounce off the walls as much. When they're here, they're doing homework or practising music. Then we go out to play sport." Both Robert and Jackie are glad they didn't open up the ground floor entirely, which can be tempting with a terrace. "It means we have multiple living areas," he says. "The back of the house is a family space and the front rooms are more adult, where we can sit and read." Jackie agrees, adding. "I love cosy corners rather than a cavernous space. My favourite element is that formal aspect of the house." **10**

To see more of Lara's work, go to [laraettedesign.com](http://laraettedesign.com)



## LESSONS LEARNT

“Try to have a sense of location when you decorate”

JACKIE, HOMEOWNER

“I would have gone for a much paler colour palette – which was what we had in London – but Lara was helpful in reminding us just how strong the light is in Sydney. I’d forgotten that. It means the colours can be quite a bit stronger, with brighter pinks and mustards et cetera. That was a really good lesson for me.”