





SPACE

Past glories

A couple's search for one 1960s wallpaper ended up giving them the theme that would transform their Australian home. Julie Simpkin reports. Photographs by Richard Power

Tana Turnbull and Gary Hardwick had no intention of living in a minimalist box. When bouncing around ideas for the renovation of their 1930s house in Sydney's eastern suburbs, they envisaged big, splashy poppies on the walls and a life-size photo-montage of a 1960s surf shop in their beach-loving daughter's room. Then there was a particular bamboo print wallpaper that Tana had in mind and was trying to track down. It was this search that would lead them to interior designer Greg Natale, and to a house full of bold colour and exuberant prints.

The couple, both British, had emigrated to Australia separately and met there. They have four children: Biba, 10, Lili, seven, Ben, four, and Hugo, one. They had never worked with an interior designer before, but



Tana Turnbull and Gary Hardwick (above) at their home in the Sydney suburbs. Each room features a different print by designer Florence Broadhurst, whose bold, extrovert style was big in the 60s and 70s

the juggling of demanding careers – Gary is managing partner of a media and communications company and Tana works in media sales – together with a hectic family life, left no time for DIY. Plus, there was the thrill of working with someone who, as Tana puts it, “knows what’s new and happening, knows where to find it and comes up with combinations we could never have imagined”.

“We set ourselves a budget of A\$200,000 [£85,000] and tried to keep to that,” says Gary. During the



six-month renovation, the family moved out for eight weeks. When they came back, they had no kitchen for about six weeks and managed with just a microwave, toaster and electric pan. Two weeks before Tana was due to give birth to Hugo, the work was still going on.

“About halfway through the renovation, I turned to Gary and said, ‘Why couldn’t we just have painted the walls white?’” says Tana. “I think we got a bit nervous, thinking it was going to be over the top, but living in it is wonderful. It’s actually a very calm house.”

“Tana and Gary wanted cutting edge,” says Natale, “but they didn’t want it to be cold. Instead, we wanted each room to reflect its use through a different colour and pattern.” »

Each room features a different print by celebrated Australian designer Florence Broadhurst, whose name is synonymous with the extrovert style of the 1960s and 70s, and whose prints are currently enjoying a revival. It all required meticulous planning: the wallpapers and fabrics were custom-printed to ensure colour continuity. "This sort of project you couldn't do bit by bit," says Natale. "It was totally scheduled from the start."

The master bedroom is a "dark and sexy" mix of charcoal-grey, red and silver, with Broadhurst's traditional Florentine Tapestry print on the walls, curtains and bedlinen. "We wanted the feeling that when you shut the door, you go into a different world," says Tana. In Biba's room, Broadhurst's Peacock Feathers in powder blue with red eyes shimmers on the



walls and dances across the bed.

They didn't want to stamp "nursery" over Hugo's room, so Natale chose Egrets, a classic bird print, and for a fun look for Lili and Ben's room walls and furnishings are coordinated in a pattern called Abstract, printed in aqua on white. In the formal dining room and sitting room, floor-to-ceiling curtains and upholstery in Broadhurst's Hollow Squares harmonise with the cucumber green walls.

"When you're dealing with so many different colours and patterns, you need a theme," says Natale, "and Florence is the theme that brings the house together." Natale says he's "interested in coordinated interiors – Buckingham Palace, what Jackie O did at the White House, the Colefax & Fowler look – but reinventing them in



'We felt that each room should have a different personality,' says Gary. But despite the many prints, the decor is not over the top. In fact, says Tana, 'it's a very calm house'

a modern way. My mother's from the same town as the Versaces in Italy, so I've grown up with over-the-top."

Tana puts her love of pattern down in part to the influences of a relative who lived at Kelmscott Manor, the Oxfordshire home of William Morris. "We used to go there often, and I think that has a lot to do with some of the pictures I have – all that William Morris full-on pattern."

The kitchen derives its retro-style richness from a travertine floor laid in a chequerboard pattern and the warm oak veneer on the island bench.

Before rolling out the wallpaper and red carpets, however, the home required some structural redesign.

The kitchen was dark and poky, so the dining room was remodelled into a kitchen to make a larger, sunnier

space that forms the hub of the home.

Although the poppies and 60s surf shop image didn't find a place in the end result, Broadhurst's Bamboo print has brought life to the rumpus room in the basement, a space that serves as both a home theatre and general playroom.

Gary's mother, who migrated to Sydney to join them two and a half years ago and lives around the corner, loves the home's look. "Our house in England wasn't dissimilar back in the 70s," says Gary. "We had flocked wallpaper, bold colours and rich textures. So mum thinks it's quite funny that, 30 years on, we're back to the future."

Florence Broadhurst's designs are at Borderline Fabrics, 020-7823 3567 (borderlinefabrics.com).