



"the renovation
was actually
an enjoyable
process"

Hiring an interior designer was the best renovation decision that Anthony Semann made for his Sydney terrace


Loud and proud

The rug was the first piece chosen for this room. The orange was colour-matched to a painting Anthony had bought in WA. Rugs Carpets & Design scanned the colour and placed it into the rug.



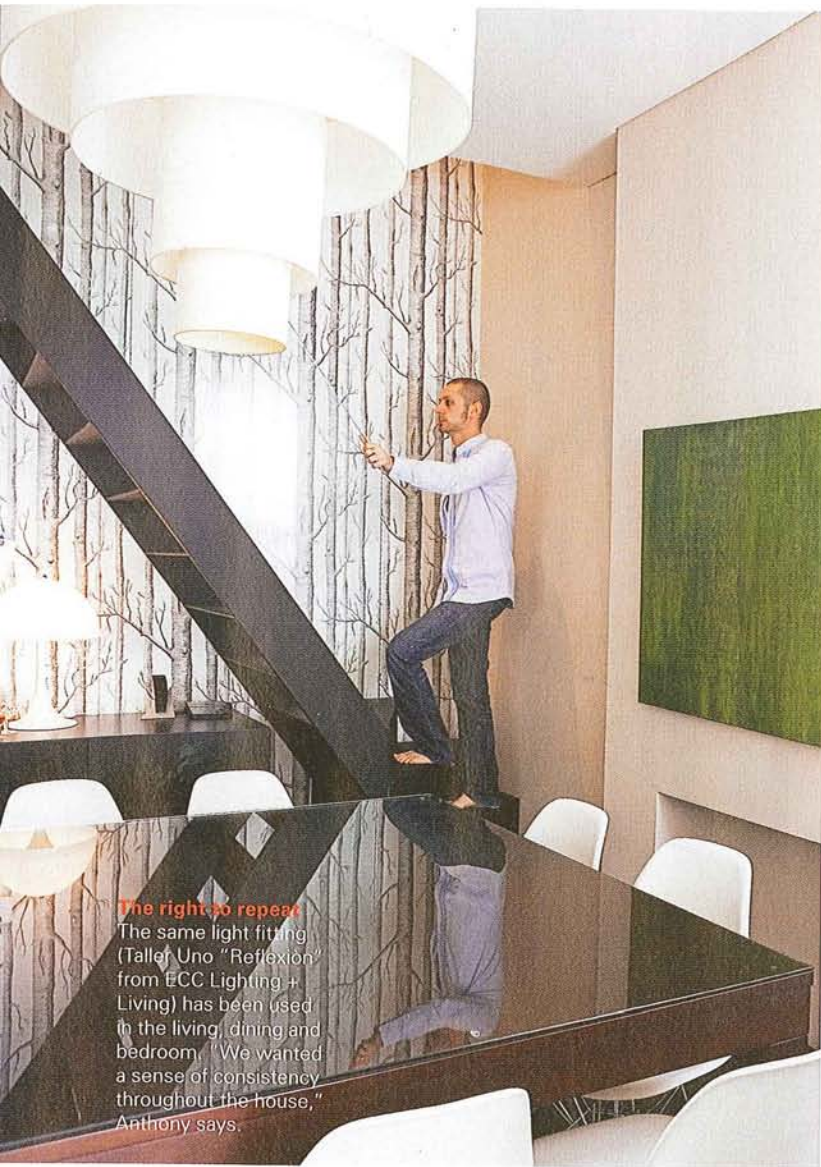
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Welcome home
Anthony kept the exterior colours of the house
in tune with other terraces on his street. →



"There was a sense of history in every aspect of the house"

Quietly consistent
The living and dining room have been kept separate – Anthony didn't want to change the "footprint" of the old building. The dining room leads on to the kitchen and courtyard.



The right to repeat

The same light fitting (Taller Uno "Reflexion" from ECC Lighting + Living) has been used in the living, dining and bedroom. "We wanted a sense of consistency throughout the house," Anthony says.

ANTHONY SEMANN DOESN'T believe in half measures. Either do it properly or not at all – that's his motto in life. So when he bought his terrace in Sydney's inner-city Darlington, he knew it was better to wait a few years before renovating and decorating rather than only do half a job at the start. And that became the plan.

Phase 1: live in the house. "I needed to know where the sunlight came in and at what time of day," he says. "I also had to decide whether I liked having the living room at the front of the house." You can only really know these details through time, yet so often people rush into their renovations, tearing down walls before they've slept a single night in their place. Thankfully, though old, the terrace was still liveable. "There was a sense of history in every aspect, from the floorboards to the staircase," Anthony says.

And he loved the area. "There's such a cosmopolitan feel here," he says. The diverse urban strip of King Street, Newtown, is only a quick walk away, and his home is also only a short distance from his workplace in nearby Camperdown – Anthony is director of a training and consultancy business, Semann & Slattery.

After a year of living in the house Phase 2 emerged: planning. While Anthony always knew he wanted to engage the services of an interior designer for the house, he wasn't sure exactly what was



unusual approach that works well

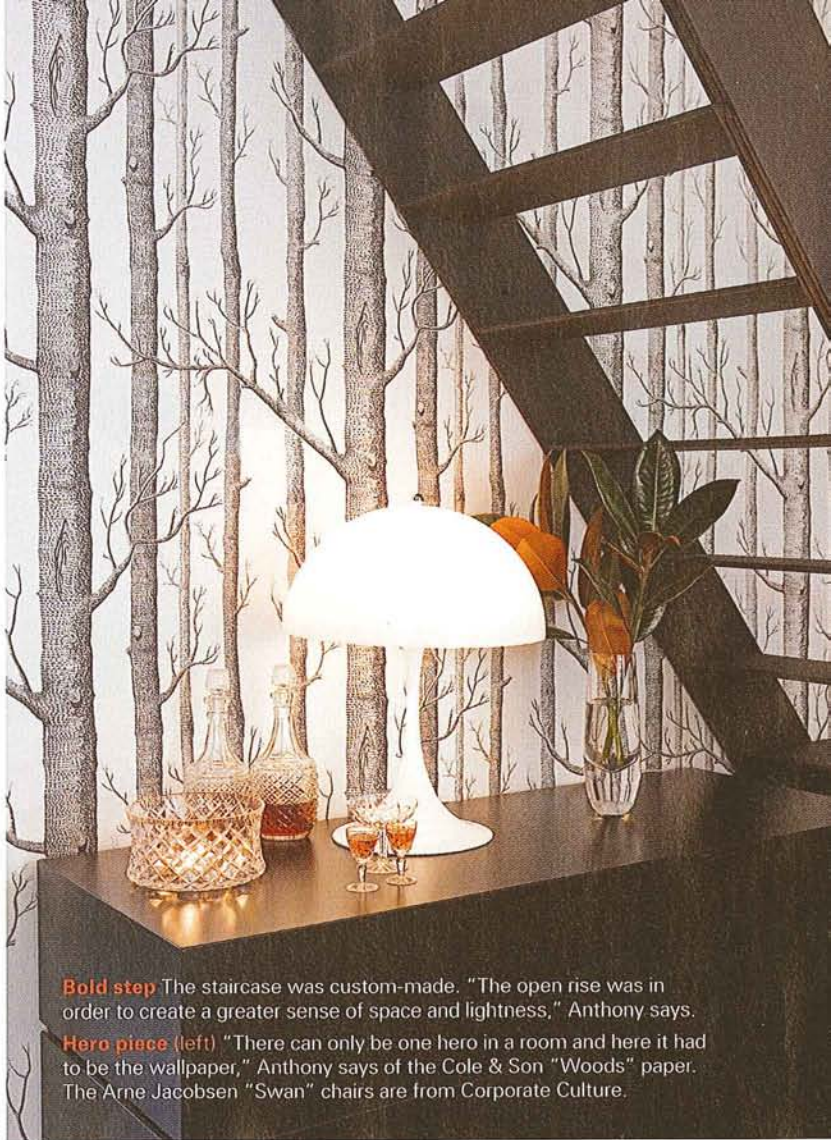
Mirror, mirror...

Anthony came up with the idea for mirrors on the kitchen cupboard doors. "It makes the room feel more a part of the outside given the reflection," he says of the room, which borders the courtyard.

involved. So 12 months before the renovations began, Anthony did his research. A meeting was set up with leading interior designer Greg Natale to discover if they had a similar aesthetic vision, whether they could happily work together and to learn how much the designer's services would cost. "I would rather save and do it properly then do half a renovation over many years," Anthony says. "I didn't want any replicas and I was prepared to wait."

He adds that it was important to learn about the process of working with an interior designer. Anthony often travels with his work and didn't want to be constantly interrupted during the day with questions on the phone. "I wanted to plan everything before we started," he says, talking about selecting fittings and furnishings. "I wanted to see it, touch it, feel it and know it before work began."

By that stage Anthony had also learnt enough about the building itself: "loved but old", he says. "It was charming, historic and →



Bold step The staircase was custom-made. "The open rise was in order to create a greater sense of space and lightness," Anthony says. **Hero piece** (left) "There can only be one hero in a room and here it had to be the wallpaper," Anthony says of the Cole & Son "Woods" paper. The Arne Jacobsen "Swan" chairs are from Corporate Culture.

warm but too dark." So a wish list was created, based on his need to create a sanctuary to return to after working long hours.

So what was on Anthony's list for the Phase 3: renovating? The old kitchen had to be redesigned so more natural light would flow into the rooms. "The backyard was a jungle and initially extremely depressing," he admits. "No matter how hard I tried to visualise a liveable space in the back, it was beyond my imaginative capacity."

Hiring Greg Natale meant the process of renovating could actually be enjoyable – not a word usually associated with renovating, but Anthony insists it was. "Having a creative mind who guided and scaffolded my ideas was such a relief," he says. "I could never have produced what I have now if I didn't engage an interior designer."

There were also several other benefits in using a designer. Not only did Greg have a long-term vision for the project and let Anthony know what could happen during the renovation process, he

made clear when Anthony's ideas and contributions *couldn't* happen – and why. Good to know, because the finished result couldn't have been further from Anthony's previous homes. He grew up in a typical suburban home with a working-class family. So this house – his first – is quite a departure, but a welcome one.

"I love it," he laughs. "Every dream came to fruition. The house makes you enjoy it: the way the light moves through the bathroom, the way in which the furniture beckons you to engage with it – it was all a wonderful surprise."

Walking through the house, the place feels light and airy even though it's actually quite small. While strong colours have been used with the furniture, the window treatments and light fittings are deliberately neutral and help flood the rooms with light. The mirror-covered kitchen cabinets are also a clever touch.

And the bathroom was the crowning achievement, according to Anthony. "It's a sanctuary within a sanctuary," he says of the sunken bath that's tucked in the end room on the ground floor. Only louvres separate it from a private courtyard. "There is nothing more enjoyable than sitting in the bathtub with a glass of Champagne on a summer's evening with the louvres open and the water feature running in the backyard. Life doesn't get much better than that." **1**

original features in
all their glory



There is no window treat
to be woken by sunlig
alarm clock," he laughs

"I could never have
this without e
interior



*louvres: natural
air-conditioning*



For more examples of Sydney-based interior designer Greg Natale's work, visit gregnatale.com

Luxurious touch

Interior designer Greg Natale devised the idea of the sunken bath. This room is actually where the old outdoor toilet used to live. It has been transformed with travertine, a type of limestone.