



Pure breeding

*Belle/Coco Republic Interior Designer of the Year
Greg Natale has brought his city sensibility
to a country property, balancing glamour and earthiness.*

This page Chevron wallpaper by Greg Natale from Porter's Paints lines the dining room, which is painted in Porter's Paints 'Aniseed' below the dado. 'Stella' table from Xavier Furniture. Opposite page Horse photo by Susan Knight is one of many in the house.



Photographs ANTON SMANT
Words CHRIS PEARSON



Passionate horse lovers, the owners of this 1880s homestead near Geelong in Victoria, sit high in the saddle after interior designer Greg Natale has given them chic living spaces with thoroughbred credentials. A guesthouse on the Rosemont Stud, the five-bedroom house was suffering a case of the beiges when the owners approached him in early 2013. "It was a creamy hospital yellow, all one colour and it had no love," says the owner. A 1980s extension had created a light-filled living area at the rear, but the whole homestead needed some serious grooming.

Drawing inspiration from the wonderfully eclectic boutique hotels of New York's SoHo, the owners thought Greg was the person to give them the decorative layering they sought: sitting rooms within sitting rooms, pattern on pattern. "Whether combining geometrics with florals, or stripes with Navajo prints, Greg does patterns with a twist," she says. "He also uses lots of colour. We love colour, but are afraid to use it ourselves."

The couple gave him two distinct briefs which, says Greg, is not unusual when he has two owners to accommodate. The wife requested urban glamour, with an after-five air. "I also wanted warm colour, but a formal take on it, such as maroons, mustards and olives, and a pure white kitchen," she says. Meanwhile, the husband wanted something with more rural overtones, with a hint of the industrial. But they were unanimous in their desire for comfort and generous entertaining spaces.

Little structural work was needed, which was fortunate, says Greg, because the original sections of the homestead boasted internal walls half-a-metre thick. In the kitchen area, where there was once a laundry, Greg removed a wall to create a bar. And he installed a bluestone fireplace recycled from the floor of the gatehouse in the informal living area.



This page in the living room is a 'Stanley' leather chesterfield from Casa Mia. 'Zebra Trunk' coffee table from Cromwell with horseheads from Restoration Hardware. Bronze side table from Bisque Interiors. Hickory Chair 'Elliott' wing chairs and 'Leigh' ottomans and Visual Comfort 'Classic Ring' chandeliers, all from Laura Kincaid. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Grey tongue-and-groove wall panelling is offset by white trim. Visual Comfort 'Mykonos' chandelier from Laura Kincaid. Horse statue from Restoration Hardware. In the study, 'Provence' desk from Town & Country Style. 'Honey Suckle' carver from Xavier Furniture. 'Lake Gamo' runner in the hallway from Designer Rugs.

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This page A generous covered terrace enables year-round entertaining. 'Hampton' outdoor table and dining chairs from Town & Country Style. 'Barcelona' iron pendants and table lanterns from Restoration Hardware. 'Frog Rain-Drum' accent table from Pottery Barn. Opposite page, from top Subway tiles, white joinery and marble benchtops give the kitchen a classic ambience. 'Filament' chandeliers from Restoration Hardware. Tolix stools from Thonet. 'Tate' round dining table from Town & Country Style. Hay chairs from Corporate Culture. 'H-Stretcher' dining table from MCM House. Timber bowl from Restoration Hardware. Ceramic jugs from Pottery Barn. Two sitting zones back-to-back were created in the informal living area. Bolter 'Domicile' sofas from Cavit & Co. 'Randall' club chairs from Williams-Sonoma. Mirror from Boyd Blue. Horse print cushion from Domestic Textile. Bluestone fireplace from Eco Outdoor. Custom-made rug from Designer Rugs.



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SPEED READ

» The owners of Rosemont horse stud near Geelong commissioned interior designer Greg Natale to work his magic on this bluestone homestead. » The couple had different ideas, the wife wanting glamour and elegance, the husband requiring something a little more earthy and industrial. Both wanted comfort and generous spaces for entertaining. » Greg relied on his forte – mixing patterns and strong colours to successfully answer both briefs.



Original features, such as cornices, dado rails, panelling and mouldings were spruced up and painted white. Greg patched up the tongue-and-groove walls and moulded ceilings, and stained the existing pine floors dark, while the handsome original marble fireplaces just needed a wipe down.

In the finishes and furnishings, he deftly married the owners' two visions. The front part of the house, sophisticated and elegant, sports a moody palette, with brass accents. "It's more dramatic, with formal patterns," he says. Both living and dining rooms combine boutique-hotel elegance with the aura of an exclusive club – perfect for entertaining. Meanwhile, the rear of the house lets its hair down. The relaxed living areas, with exposed beams, painted white and bathed in light, and rich red sofas are a sanctuary after a long day in the stables.

The horse motif features strongly in accessories, with photos of the couple's racing horses and equine statues throughout, and a saddle, which Greg discovered in a secondhand shop, in the hallway.

For both Greg and the owners, this project gave them the chance to extend their boundaries. The owner says Greg's clever mixing of pattern and strong colour "stretched the way we look at design". Meanwhile, for Greg, who mainly designs city homes, the project offered the opportunity to do new things. Appropriately, Greg's deadline was Melbourne Cup Day. The cup may not have found its way to the mantelpiece, but the house has won accolades of its own. "Greg really nailed it," says the owner, who likes this house so much, she has asked him to work on other projects. Watch this space. 15

For more go to gregnatale.com. Greg's book, *The Tailored Interior*, will be published in November by Hardie Grant.

This page In the powder room Bourkeshire '091' tiles from Bourkeshire Interiors extend up the wall. Vintage 'Barn' pendant light from Restoration Hardware. Basin from Schots Emporium with 'Icon' tapware in Aged Brass from Astra Walker. A saddle, sourced by Greg, sits in the hallway. Opposite page, clockwise from top left The original bluestone homestead has a tessellated tile verandah. A guestroom is wallpapered in Greg Natale 'Pinstripe' in Patina from Porter's Paints. 'East Village' sleigh bed from Max Sparrow. 'Boston' bed-end stool from Xavier Furniture. 'Polyhedron' light from Restoration Hardware. Artwork by Susan Knight. 'Camino' round chandelier from Restoration Hardware in the hallway.