



SAVING FACE

Having to preserve the facade of this house did not deter *Greg Natale* from unleashing all his creative chutzpah on the interior.

Photographs ANSON SMART Words CHRIS PEARSON



This page Greg Natale geometric rugs in the hallway and vestibule. Visual Comfort 'Westport' pendant light. Inner Peace artwork by Scott Petrie. Opposite page Kelly Wearstler 'Souffle' chair in lamb leather is a focal point in the living room. Baker Furniture 'Archetype' sofa from Cavit & Co and side table from Venfield, New York, sit on a Catherine Martin rug from Designer Rugs. Fornasetti plates from Macleay on Manning, Cole & Son Fornasetti collection 'Malachite' wallpaper from Radford Furnishings.



This page Visual Comfort 'Ziyi' chandelier from Laura Kincade. Kenzo Maison gloss table from Casa Luxury. Christopher Guy mirror from Laura Kincade. Owl of Yeoman's Rock artwork by Joshua Yeldham. Greg Natale geometric rugs from Designer Rugs. Cole & Son Fornasetti collection 'Malachite' wallpaper from Radford Furnishings. Opposite page, clockwise from top left Kelly Wearstler 'Souffle' chair. Fornasetti plates from Macleay on Manning. Coffee table from J Robert Scott. Stork from Becker Minty. Giant belly lamp from Jonathan Adler. Side table from Venfield, NY, holds Fornasetti accessories. Walls are painted in Dulux 'Heaven Sent'.



The eyes have it in this home's living room, but the 16 Fornasetti plates on the wall aren't the only beguiling faces the three-bedroom Federation house in Sydney's inner west presents to the world. Its crisp restored facade relives its origins, while the multi-layered interior design lends a fresh and glamorous twist to its preserved period features.

But, when designer Greg Natale sighted the brick bungalow in 2009, previous renovations had almost erased its past. And a beige 1970s two-storey mishmash of rooms on the back didn't reference any era or style. Thankfully, original detailing in the front section – including arches, cornices and ceiling roses – was intact and it drew the owner to the house. “The minute I opened the door and looked up and saw those original features, I could visualise what could be done and, with the high ceilings, I knew it could be something special,” says Lena Moawad, who lives here with husband Adam Haddad and their girls Sabine, 12, and Amelie, eight.

Having seen Greg's previous projects in *Belle*, she knew he was the person for the job. “I loved the flamboyance. He has his own confident style, which is a little bit classic, a little bit modern,” says Lena.

Her home's proportions and detailing provided inspiration and a ready canvas for Greg's design, while her passion for Fornasetti became part of a potent mix. But, first there was an extensive renovation to do in a project that lasted four years. The couple wanted two living spaces with the parents' wing separate from that of the girls, and to open the home to the outside with a new verandah at the rear. A library was a must. “I am passionate about books, so it was important to have space for them,” says Lena. What better way to decorate it than with Fornasetti 'Ex Libris' wallpaper.



With the house being in a heritage zone, the council insisted that the facade be restored to its original brickwork and Greg couldn't venture beyond the footprint and existing height at the back. He removed the render, sandblasted the exteriors and repointed the brickwork. Meanwhile, the extension was gutted to the slab and its painted brickwork stripped to match the facade. Banks of French doors added at the rear upstairs and down ensure an easy connection with the outside.

Greg opened up the hallway, knocking out a wall to connect it to the formal lounge and creating a vestibule, while sliders between the library and the living room, once permanently shut, were prised open. "The central vestibule is the core of the house and creates so much light," says Greg. Adds Lena, "It's the roundabout in our house – there are four access points and people meet there." Off this core are the lounge, a study, the kitchen-cum-dining and the bedrooms. Downstairs are the family room and outdoor area leading to the garden and pool.

Arches connecting the rooms to the vestibule provided Greg's starting point for the classically inspired interiors. "Arches became the theme," he says, which was reinforced by the panelling he introduced throughout. Drawing cues from the reborn brick-and-tile exterior, he used splashes of terracotta in the rugs. "That and the powder blue work so well together. The blue adds that pop." Also adding the pop is Lena's love of Fornasetti, expressed in the wallpapers and the plate wall, and accentuated in the kitchen tiles. With their Fornasetti arches, they fuse two recurring motifs.

The result is a house that, although glamorous and stylish, never takes itself too seriously – this is a family home, after all. It offers many faces, being "classical, mid-century, graphic and a little playful," says Greg, "but it's also warm, soft and layered, thanks to the rug by Catherine Martin and the Kelly Wearstler white leather 'Souffle' armchairs."

"Who would have thought those chairs would work so perfectly with the classic lounge?" says Lena. "But Greg pulled it off beautifully." ☺

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This page In the library, Cole & Son Fornasetti collection 'Ex Libris' wallpaper from Radford Furnishings creates a suitable backdrop. Kelly Wearstler 'Souffle' chairs surround a 'Platner' bronze coffee table from De De Ce on a Greg Natale rug from Designer Rugs. Visual Comfort 'Simple Scallop' chandelier from Laura Kincaid. Opposite page, clockwise from top left Limoges teapot, cup and saucer from Macleay on Manning on a 'Platner' bronze coffee table from De De Ce. In the family room a Jonathan Adler 'Bond' maple coffee table sits on a Greg Natale rug from Designer Rugs. Orange 1 and Orange 2 artworks by Scott Petrie. Jonathan Adler 'Bond' console in the living room beneath a Jo Davenport work, *As the Storm Gathers*.



SPEED READ

» A Sydney couple bought an inner-west Federation bungalow, which had seen better days. 'Improvements' over the years saw the brick facade rendered and a bland extension attached to the rear but, luckily, many original interior details were retained. » They called on Greg Natale to renovate the home, restore the facade, let light into the interiors, create private zones for the family and improve the connection with the garden front and back. » Two starting points for the design were the internal arches and the owners' passion for Fornasetti. Greg has melded them in a house that presents different faces to the world, being "classical, mid-century, graphic and a little playful, but also warm, soft and layered".



This page, clockwise from top the rear facade of the house was restored and the brickwork repointed. On the front porch, Loll Design Adirondack chairs from Own World. Tessellated floor tiles from Olde English Tiles Australia. In the kitchen a 'Bond' dining table from Jonathan Adler is matched with silver-leaf chairs from Regency Distribution. Visual Comfort 'Reed' pendant from Laura Kincaide. Ceramica Bardelli 'Architettura' tiles by Piero Fornasetti from Classic Ceramics. Vases from Melzai. Bowl from Space. Opposite page In the main bedroom is a Dorothy Draper 'Grand Lattice' bed from Kindel Furniture. Visual Comfort 'Ingrid' table lamp from Laura Kincaide. Greg Natale rug from Designer Rugs.

