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H O M E

S W E E T

H O M E



RIGHT Owners Michael Hogan and Ann Sherry loved this painting by Lorna Fencer Naparrula on sight. "We thought it exceptional then as we still do."
 BELOW The delicate woven fish basket is from Maningrida in Arnhem Land.

An elegant restoration of a Sydney abbey by interior designer Karen Akers blends historic design elements with culturally rich Indigenous artworks from the owner's extensive collection.

Helen McKenzie writes.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS DALHOFF

I really love how the various Aboriginal works create a playful air in this converted church. Unorthodox placement (including placing a painting above bookcase) ensures the interior feels uncontrived and relaxed.

Juliette Arent
 ART EDIT DESIGN COUNCIL

LIVING WITH ART

The Stables, located in the grounds of the historic inner Western Sydney landmark Annandale Abbey, is part of a grand-scale award winning restoration project. Sydney Heritage architects Design 5 transformed the 1882 building that once housed three apartments into a contemporary two-bedroom home. The architects added a mezzanine level that allows for natural light to flood in and views to The Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Glebe Point Bridge. **Karen Akers'** interior design brief was to make The Stables a great place for the owners **Michael Hogan** and **Ann Sherry's** adult son **Nick** to live independently.

The couple had searched for a property that would enable their son, who has an intellectual disability, to manage his life with the safety net of parents nearby if he needs it. "We love to see Nick and we come together for meals occasionally," says Hogan.

"Nick is pretty happy with the way his place has turned out," says Akers. "The brief was not to make it too masculine and not too full of stuff." The designer notes that the overall look "is a bit blokey, with the leather button chair and simple lines. Comfort was definitely part of the brief. Nick likes watching television, particularly sport and having his friends around. Initially I had quite a neutral palate in mind, but they [Hogan and Sherry] said 'no we want more colour'; so that's where the big green sofa came into it."

Akers enjoyed working with the bones of The Stables: "I see it as being a very arty and creative room because of all the different shapes, the supports, tiling, roofing and the scale of it," she says. "I love it and think it has a great feel. Everyone who visits really loves it; it's really light."

The owners are keen collectors of Indigenous art and Akers was able to find a number of works from their collection to hang for The Stables. Akers says there wasn't much scope to hang large works, "we did not have a huge amount of wall space because there are columns and windows," she explains.

Hogan says that their Indigenous art collection was primarily sourced on the couple's travels, "with additional pieces from Alcaston Gallery in Melbourne, Hog-



THIS PAGE, RIGHT
Light streams into the home from all angles for a fresh and airy feel.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT
The earth tones in this work by East Kimberley artist Freddie Timms are echoed in the living and dining room palette.

BOTTOM RIGHT
The owners sourced this work by Nancy Dilyai on a trip to Kununurra. Highly evocative of the East Kimberley, the owners find it "quintessentially recognisable and visually enjoyable".



arth Gallery in Sydney and **Andrew Baker** and **Philip Bacon** in Brisbane."

Akers did not let the colour in the art works dictate her choice of colours for the interior. "I chose the art afterwards, because I was using a really neutral palate," she says. "I knew with Aboriginal art I'd be able to work with it anyway because it is kind of a muddy palate."

Architects Design 5 were awarded a National Trust Heritage Award for the restoration and rebuilding work on Annandale Abbey. The four-year refurbishment of the house and stables has successfully delivered the Hogan family the hoped for independent living arrangements. Hogan warmly adds: "Nick is intensely house proud."

