

AUSTRALIAN

50 WAYS TO A WONDERFUL BATHROOM

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Cloud NINE

A Sydney couple are in heaven after an interior designer took them on a life-changing journey with bold colour and lively prints.

STORY & STYLING *Natalie Walton* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Chris Warnes*



HOUSES **H&G**

This is the life

"Our house has plenty of room for our family to be together, but also places we can retreat to separately," says owner Angela. Husband Victor has an office he uses for work and photographic pursuits, while daughter Sofia enjoys the media room upstairs. Angela loves her larger dining room and revamped kitchen with new features, especially the double oven. "It's great being able to entertain lots of people now," she says.

DINING Formerly a living room, this larger space accommodates an extension table that seats 14. "It's a triumph!" says Angela of the design. At night, the pendant light from ECC Lighting+Furniture casts beautiful shadows on the ceiling. Table, Sapphire Wood Furniture. Chairs, Coco Republic (white) and Boyd Blue. Harlequin 'Nuvola' wallpaper, Domestic Textile Corporation. Artwork by Catherine Cassidy. **HALL** Entry to the house is via an extra-wide front door by MRY Constructions. Stool, H+J Furniture. Runner, The Rug Company. **Local hero:** 'Barc' wall light, from \$134, Axiom. ►

After 10 years of living in the same home in Sydney's inner west, Angela Balafas and Victor Carey decided to make some changes. The couple's offspring had all moved beyond the demanding years of childhood, and the way the family used the house had changed. What they really wanted at that point was a home more suitable for entertaining friends and hosting great feasts.

"Everyone thought I was crazy, but I knew our house could be transformed without knocking out walls," says Angela, who felt that good design might be the key.

The couple originally purchased the property in the late 1980s and rented out the tired fibro residence until 2003, after which they knocked down the old house and replaced it with a two-storey project home. The new build included both casual and formal living and dining spaces on the ground level, along with a kitchen, laundry, powder room and study; upstairs offered four bedrooms (the main with ensuite), a media/living room and bathroom. Daughter Sofia, now aged 13, has one of the rooms and Alexander and Mia, Victor's twenty-something children from a previous relationship, have their own spaces when visiting.

While Angela knew what she wanted to achieve with the renovation, she felt that pulling it all together required some help. "I had never used an interior designer before and, to be honest, I was nervous," she says. "This was not an architectural masterpiece; it was just a nice house in a nice suburb."

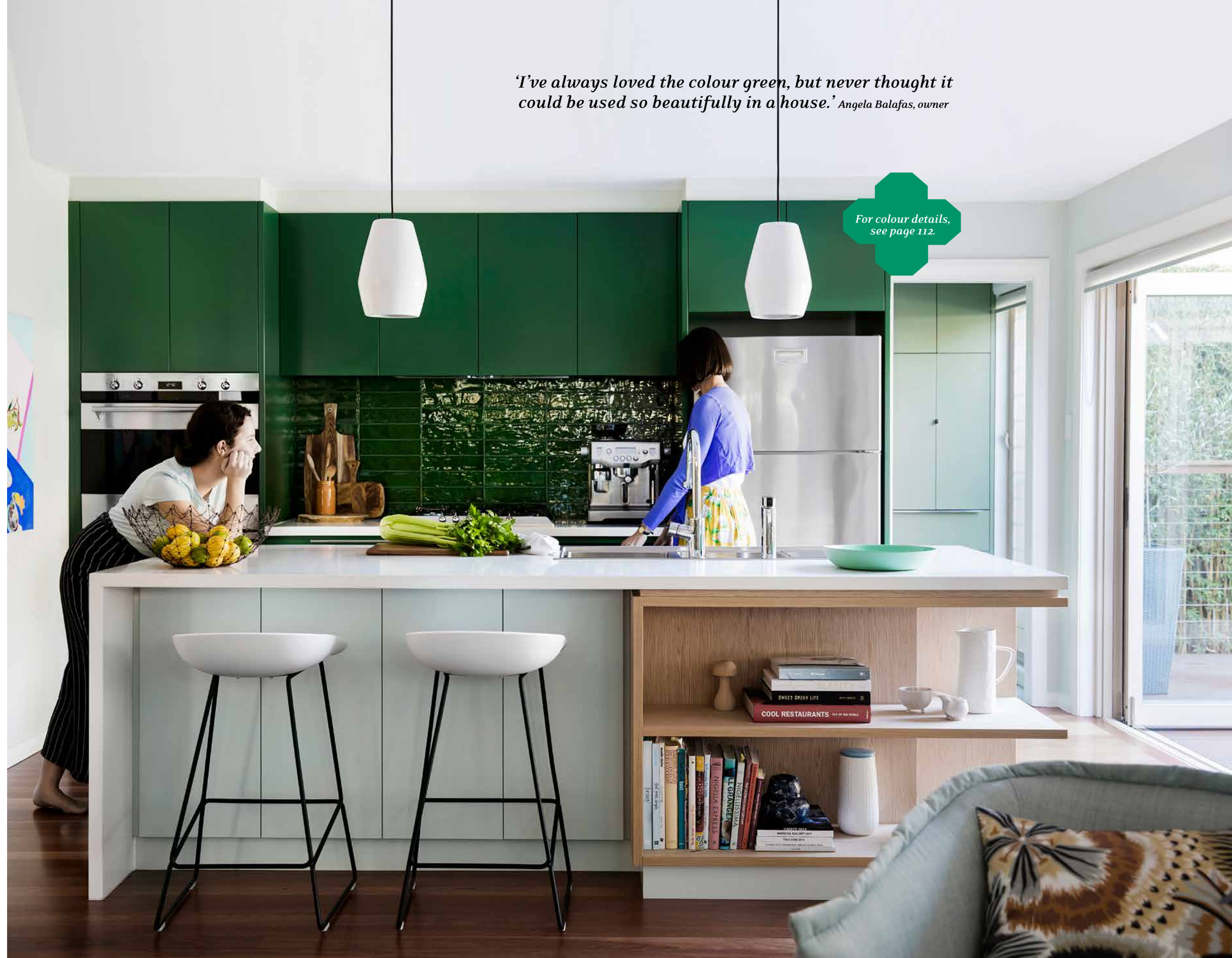
In the end, Angela hired Karen Akers, based on her portfolio of successful home transformations. "What I loved was Karen's use of colour in ways that were unexpected, and how all her homes were different, unique to their owners," says Angela.

They first met in 2012, Angela armed with a short wish list: paint over feature walls, refinish floorboards and update furniture. The work was quickly put on hold, however, when the couple decided to put in a swimming pool first. By the time Karen's company was contacted again in 2015, Angela had bigger plans. She was now keen to update the kitchen and adjoining laundry and powder room, allocate more space to entertaining, and make changes to the main ensuite. "The spa bathtub in the corner had to go!" she says with a laugh. ▶

KITCHEN Mother and daughter hang out in the transformed cooking space. "I adore all the drawers and bench space," says Angela. A new double oven, deeper benches and improved storage make it easy to entertain a crowd when required. Caesarstone benchtop in Organic White. Smeg double oven. Westinghouse fridge. Hansgrohe 'Talis S2 Variarc' mixer and Billi chilled/boiling water tap. Tiles, Surface Gallery. Hay 'About a Stool' stools, Cult. Northern Lighting 'Bell' pendant light, LightCo. Artwork by Helen McCullagh. **Local hero:** 'Pebble' bowl in Wasabi, \$147, Mud Australia.

'I've always loved the colour green, but never thought it could be used so beautifully in a house.' Angela Balafas, owner

For colour details,
see page 112.



“Angela had an idea of what she wanted her home to convey,” says Karen. “We wanted the house to represent her and the family in personality and feel.”

In April 2016, Karen began work on the project, right at the threshold. She widened the opening and installed a new front door “to create the illusion of more space and open living”. Then, to accommodate the owners’ love of entertaining, she swapped the formal dining and living areas to fit in an extension table capable of seating 14 people.

The kitchen and ensuite were renovated and every corner of the house transformed with well-considered furnishings, textiles, wallpaper and paint. Karen is known for her creative use of colour, so the family was excited about the green palette she proposed to run through the home, starting with the kitchen’s

emerald-coloured cabinetry. Green pops up in accents throughout the living room, and as substantial highlights in the main bedroom (large rug) and Sofia’s room (entire ceiling) .

Despite a few stops and starts – most notably when the floorboards weren’t up to scratch and had to be refinished a second time – the work went smoothly and the result has revitalised the house. It’s made everyday living and socialising much more enjoyable, and changed Angela’s view of designers.

“I think most people would benefit from using an interior designer,” she says. “They really work magic and push you to do things you would never imagine. And your house doesn’t have to be a mansion to justify it.” ▶

Designed by Karen Akers, McMahons Point, NSW;
(02) 8920 9018 or karenakers.com.au.

CASUAL LIVING/DINING Angela, Victor and youngest daughter Sofia in weekend mode. Re-covering their existing ottoman in a dazzling shade of green has made it a centrepiece. King Living ‘Bongo’ ottoman in Chivasso ‘Tango’ fabric from Unique Fabrics. ‘Kivik’ corner sofa, Ikea. Rug, Cadrys. ‘Dizzie’ dining table, Stylecraft. ‘Rombus’ dining chairs, Thonet. Lightyears ‘Lullaby’ pendant light, Cult. **FORMAL LIVING** A conversation corner by the stairs. Sancal ‘Talo’ armchairs, Ke-zu. Cushions, Jim & Jane (left) and Flower Power. Gilt-coated black bowls found in Vietnam. ‘Diamond Velour’ rug, Designer Rugs. **Smart buy:** ‘Flore’ coffee table, \$805, Exhibit Interiors.

Joinery keeps this open-plan area orderly and provides display space.

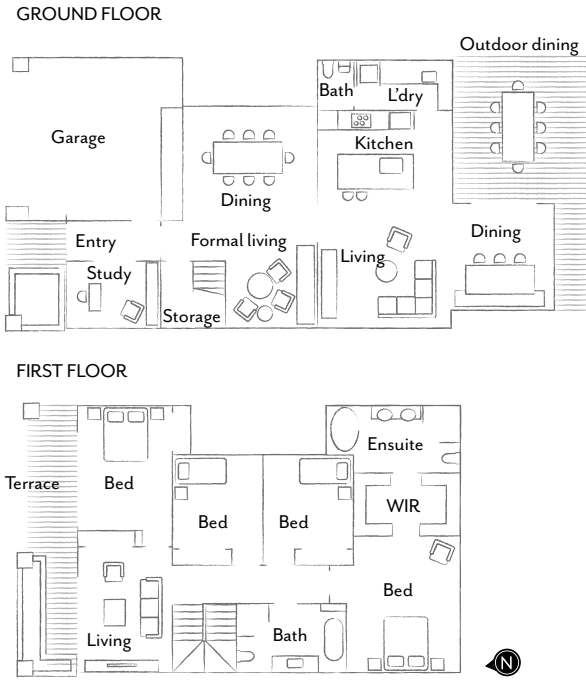
Comfort level

Texture, form and pattern combine to soothe the senses in this home, balancing the invigorating effect of its colour palette. Dreamy, cloud-covered Harlequin wallpaper starts at the front door and wends its way through the formal living areas and up the stairs. “The patterned walls are welcoming and cocooning,” says interior designer Karen Akers, who’s accentuated the soft, floaty feel with plush rugs and curtains.





THE LAYOUT



THE PALETTE

Caesarstone
Organic White
(kitchen, ensuite)

Harlequin
'Nuvola'
wallpaper
(living)

Sydney
blue gum
(floorboards)



SOFIA'S ROOM Green makes a surprising appearance on the ceiling. Linen, Orla Kiely. Throw, Sheridan. Printed cushion, Me & Amber. Audio-Technica Bluetooth turntable. **Designer buy:** 'Cameroon' Fairtrade headress (on wall), \$330, Temple & Webster. **LIVING-ROOM CABINET** Keen photographer Victor captured the black and white images. Striped and spotted vases, Jim & Jane. Printed bowl, Marimekko. Footed vessels, Chrissie Cotter Gallery. **MAIN BEDROOM** A major style update has worked wonders here. Bedhead in Christopher Farr Cloth 'Peonies' fabric. Throw, Cultiver. Lamp, MRD Home. Rug, Kulchi. Artwork by Gina Law. **ENSUITE** The corner spa was replaced with a L'Isola bath from Harvey Norman. Wall tiles, Bisanna Tiles. Basin, Cass Brothers. Pendant light, Mud Australia. Stool, Orient House. *For Where to Buy, see page 188.* **H&G**