

# into the light

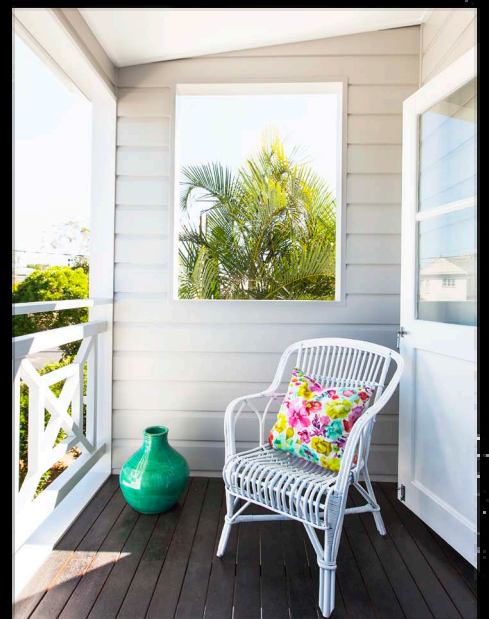
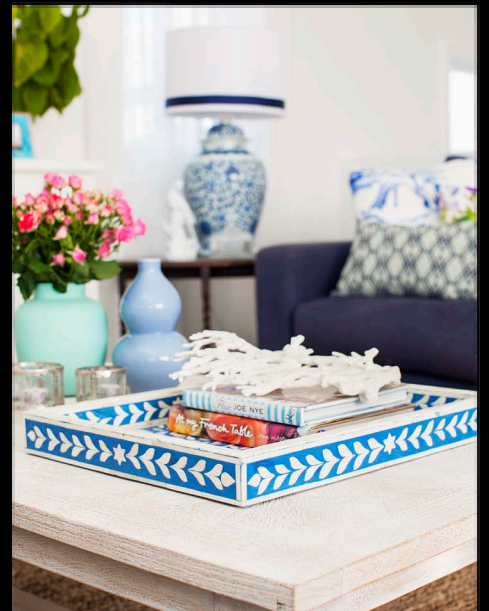
Lauren and Ryan breathed new life into an original Queenslander to create a vibrant home for their young family

STORY JENNA REED BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY ELOUISE VAN RIET-GRAY





Colour, pattern and personality unite in Lauren and Ryan's updated Queenslander. The couple gave the poky cottage modern appeal with an open-plan rear addition and spacious deck (opposite), furnished with rattan chairs from Citta Design and a Moroccan style coffee table from Hamimi. Original features were preserved and restored throughout the renovation, including the pretty wrought-iron entry gates (left). "I love that there are parts of the original house that have been restored to how they would have been all those years ago," says Lauren. >



STORY COURTESY OF CONTENT AGENCY



**ENTRY (left)** Lauren was determined to create an entrance with style, so she teamed Schumacher 'Summer Palace Fret' wallpaper with a bone-inlay console from Ruby Star Traders.

**LIVING AREA (above)** The new open-plan living area leads onto a wide rear deck. "I love having the bifolds open and filling the house with fresh air," says Lauren. "We get the most beautiful breezes."

**DEDICATED DECORATOR LAUREN** often wonders what the interior of her lovely Brisbane cottage must have felt like during the Second World War. In the dark days of the 1940s, when houses had to be blacked out at night for fear of bombings, the then-owner, Connie, painted over all the windows and installed a trap door in the rear room with a ladder leading to the bathroom downstairs, so she could come and go unnoticed.

Today, the pretty timber cottage retains its sense of history but with a thoroughly modern twist. Sunlight now pours into the revitalised home through new doors and windows, including clerestory windows that wash light across a raked timber-lined ceiling in the new living area. It dances across the generous back deck, which has views of the city, and sparkles as it catches the pretty mosaic floor tiles in the two new bathrooms. This lovely renovation, with its crisp paintwork, classic marble benchtops, restored decorative timberwork and fresh interior furnishings, was conceived and planned by Lauren, who owns and runs Brisbane homewares store Rylo Interiors, and her builder husband, Ryan.

When the couple were looking for a house to buy, Lauren's parents gave her good advice: it had to face north at the rear so that any new extension would capture the sunlight, and it should be in a suburb close to the city and Lauren's shop and studio in East Brisbane. "We really liked the idea of finding something we could renovate and restore, rather than building afresh," recalls Lauren. The little home fitted the location criteria nicely and, in a fortunate turn of events, was also in a demolition control precinct. This meant the near-derelict cottage had to be preserved, so few potential buyers were interested.

Undeterred by its decrepit state, the couple was drawn to its history. Ryan climbed the crumbling front staircase and stepped over the rotting landing to check out the interior. Despite some wonky stumps and the condition of the landing, the house was reasonably sound, and he and Lauren became its new owners. "I much prefer timber to brick houses, and Ryan loves them too," says Lauren, who was drawn to the traditional look of the Queenslander. "He appreciates the details and craftsmanship that went into them, and he likes the idea of adding his own touch."

Ryan took on the home as a full-time project, employing two carpenters and subcontracting other trades to revamp the entire home. There are now two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a study in the house, which was raised to usher in cooling breezes – and, as a bonus, city views – while a new extension houses the airy open-plan living area and a wide rear deck. After just seven months, the couple moved in – only a day before Lauren was due to give birth to their first child. "Thankfully he held off for a while," says Lauren with a laugh. Clayton, their son, arrived two weeks later, just in time to enjoy his newly finished and beautifully calming nursery.

Lauren and Ryan's home revamp adds another chapter to the story of this once humble timber cottage – a chapter defined by dynamic prints, vivid colours, classic finishes and a respect for yesteryear. "For a house to be a home it should have soul and a story," says Lauren. "I love houses with stories – old Queenslanders all have them because they've been around for so long." And as the tale of this Queenslander continues to unfold, Connie would, no doubt, be happy to see her home so well loved.

**KITCHEN** "We went to a lot of open houses before we bought this home and they'd put really modern kitchens into old Queenslanders, which we didn't want to do," explains Lauren. She and Ryan instead chose a classic-meets-contemporary style that doesn't detract from the original house. A trio of pretty glass bell lights – available through Rylo Interiors – illuminates the bench, while chrome-plated cup pulls from Mother Of Pearl & Sons adorn the 2-pac joinery. Lauren's best bargain buy was the Ikea 'Henriksdal' bar stools, which she repainted to match the kitchen cabinets and personalised with custom-made slipcovers. >





"With its raked ceiling, the extension is classic but also contemporary in style" - Lauren



**DINING ROOM & DECK (above & left)**

It's easy to see why the family spends so much time on the wide, covered deck, which overlooks the garden and enjoys views of the distant city. Inside, La Maison 'Orient Bay' cane dining chairs are perfectly in keeping with the airy interiors and offer a nod to the Citta Design rattan lounge chairs on the rear deck - without being too matchy-matchy. Two sets of bifold doors are left open most of the time and seamlessly connect the spaces.

**LIVING ROOM (opposite & top left)**

A sofa upholstered in China Seas 'Ticking-Stripe' in Navy is a chic landing spot, while the pouffe and coffee table, both from Ruby Star Traders, highlight Lauren's eye for eclectic style. The open-plan space stays bright and inviting, thanks to the raked ceiling and clerestory window.

A woman in a bright yellow dress is petting a small black dog on a striped sofa. The room is bright and airy, with large windows and a white ceiling. The sofa is decorated with several colorful pillows. In the foreground, a white coffee table holds a blue and white patterned tray with books and a vase of pink flowers. A blue and white patterned ottoman is also visible.

## we love *Blue notes*

The classic combination of blue and white lends a breezy, vivacious feel. "It's crisp and fresh," Lauren says. Here, fabulous cushions in James Dunlop Textiles 'Painted Garden' fabric and Bluebell Gray 'Willow' fabric, both available from Rylo Interiors, add eye-catching accents. >

**MASTER BEDROOM** Pink and navy form a marriage made in heaven, with pretty cushions by Caitlin Wilson Textiles creating a focal point against a bedhead covered in James Dunlop 'Kismet' fabric. Lampshades covered in Westbury Textiles 'Trelliage' fabric in Navy add extra glamour. The floor is the original pine timber boards, stained to match the new floor in the extension. "If you look closely, you can still see the difference between the old and the new floors," says Lauren. "It shows where the old house ends and the new begins." Council heritage rules meant the built-in front verandah had to be retained, so the couple used the space to add a luxurious walk-in wardrobe.



**FABRIC**  
'Fleur Chinoise' fabric in Navy  
\$166.93 (US \$60) /yard plus  
shipping, Caitlin Wilson Textiles.



"We have learnt so much about how we live and how we want to live by doing this project" - Lauren

**GUEST BEDROOM (above)** French doors in the guest bedroom open to the front verandah, which is the perfect place to sit and watch the world pass by. Lauren found the cane chair by the side of the road years ago and repainted it. "It's so comfortable," she says. The floral cushion is from Ada & Darcy.

**BATHROOM (above right)** The freestanding tub in the main bathroom is in full view, while the shower recess is hidden behind a wall. "Privacy was a big reason for the design," explains Lauren. "Also, the clawfoot bath with the artwork above is much nicer to look at when you walk down the hall than a shower." The 'Foliage Watercolour' print is from The Designer Boys Art Collections and the pretty hexagonal marble mosaic floor tiles came from Edge Tile & Stone.

**ENSUITE (right)** Lauren designed all the cabinetry throughout the house - made by Wallin Cabinetmakers - to include as much storage as possible. "I utilised every tiny bit of space I could find!" she says. The recessed mirrored cabinet above the vanity was another of her designs. "It's probably one of my favourite little details in the house." >







**NURSERY** Baby Clayton's nursery blends soothing greys with scene-stealing pattern. Against the grey chevron rug from Bayliss, a custom-made pouffe in James Dunlop Textiles 'Nerida' fabric adds a fun pop of colour. An original drawing by Alexandra Ranken hangs on the wall beside the window.



## INSIDE STORY

### Who lives here?

Lauren, an interior designer and owner of homewares store Rylo Interiors; her husband Ryan, a builder; baby Clayton; and Ralph, the silky terrier cross chihuahua.

### How did you approach the renovation?

Lauren: "I wanted the original part of the house to still look original, and the new part to be something that would complement it without copying it. The extension is classic and contemporary in style."

### What element of the house do you love most?

"The raked ceiling in the new living area. We really wanted to do an exposed beam ceiling, so we had to find a building that would allow that."

### Where is your favourite place in the house?

"My favourite thing is to sit on the couch feeding Clay, and all I can see through the kitchen window are palm trees. I love that!"

### Would you do anything differently next time?

"I'd prefer a living area that opens straight onto a backyard, which is better for kids and pets. That said, in this home the living area had to be upstairs, to take in the city views."



"Our butler's pantry hides those little bits and pieces," says Lauren. "It's so practical and I love having all of my pantry goods out on display."

"For a house to be a **home**, it should have **soul** and a **story**" - Lauren



Blue vases from Meizai pop against walls in Dulux Deiskau.

## CONTACTS

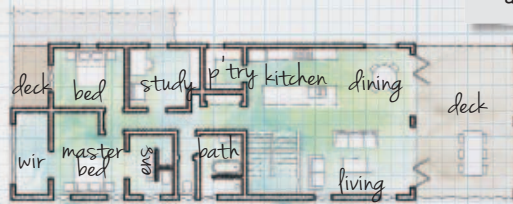
### Builder

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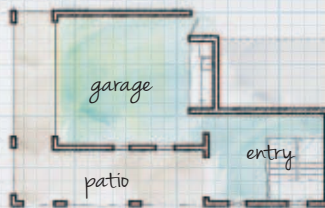
### Interior Designer

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## PLANS



First floor



Ground floor