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The search for a special anniversary present led to not one but two dramatic works of art for this striking family home.

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Styling by Kirstin Randl-Katalinic



Anna remembers well the path that led to procuring two of the biggest talking points in her Annangrove home in Sydney's rural west that she shares with her husband Paul and their four children. "I was looking for a very special tenth anniversary present," she says and decided on a family portrait. The spectacular result hangs in the family dining room. "It took a while to find the artist," she confesses. "I did a lot of research and looked at a lot of work."

An added plus was that the artist was living in nearby Kenthurst at the time. As she and the children sat for the portrait, Anna got to know him and discovered he had recently completed another portrait – this one of a famous Australian, Kylie Minogue. She convinced him to part with it, and it now hangs prominently on a feature wall in the formal lounge – a striking addition to a striking home.

FAMILY SPACE

The family – Anna, Paul, Stephanie, Mark, Bridget and Elizabeth – carefully planned their home in Annangrove. The couple had lived in the area as newlyweds, and liked it. They knew the area had good schools and was close to work but they wanted acreage, to provide more room for a family and all the benefits of semi-rural life.

ABOVE: With the exception of a few feature walls such as this aubergine panel in the lounge room, the interior walls are all a pale yellow shade with white ceilings.

LEFT: A credenza sits beneath a work painted by a friend of Anna's.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Parquetry flooring features in the dramatic front entry.



They finally bought five acres not far from their then small home – which was growing seemingly ever smaller as their family grew bigger.

"It's lovely and quiet," Anna describes. "There are wonderful bush views. But at the same time, it isn't too remote and it's close to the freeway and amenities. It gives us space without being in suburbia."

After ten years, they built their dream home. Having reviewed many other houses to formulate their preferences, they worked with an architect to finalise the plans. The couple had some firm priorities. Paul was particularly keen on an open feel. They also wanted a warm and welcoming family room which would be the place where they would all unite every day. A good kitchen with plenty of space for preparing family meals was considered ideal – and a large family meant a large laundry room was crucial too. "I've got two washing machines!" Anna elaborates. "Then there's a dryer and heaps of bench space. These are absolutely essential with four children and two adults."

UNIFYING THEMES

With five bedrooms, a large family lounge, dining room, family room, loft area, games room and more, the house could have devolved into many different looks, with a disjointed result. But Anna provided unifying themes throughout which tie the décor together. Timber floors feature, ranging from a stunning parquetry pattern in the lounge room to very wide brushbox boards throughout the rest of the home. The high ceilings are accented by elaborate bespoke cornices designed

RIGHT: A red vase provides a rich touch of colour in the lounge.

BELOW: An ornate French commode is topped by a decorative red casket.





by Anna and Paul and a double-height ceiling in the dining area creates a loft space for the family computers.

Paint colours, in a predominance of neutral shades with the addition of some feature walls in chocolate or aubergine, were chosen with white for the ceilings. White bespoke panelling and skirting are repeated around the house and are a particular feature in the kitchen.

A FAMILY KITCHEN

The kitchen is a particularly important room to the family. "There's always somebody in there," Anna notes. "We just naturally meet there." As with the rest of the house, the room is flooded with natural light provided by large windows and no close neighbours – and it's easily accessed, located between the family room and the dining room.

The striking cornices continue in the kitchen, as does the classic styling, which is evident in the elaborate cabinetry. Small cupboards and drawers abound, providing plenty of nooks and crannies perfect for hiding cooking equipment.

The kitchen is more than just stylish, it's fully equipped for busy family life and entertaining with two ovens, a microwave, a steamer and a very professional coffee machine. One oven is placed below the cooktop, more apt for the French provincial look of the room. The other is wall-mounted nearby with other stainless-steel appliances.



ABOVE: Since the house sits on five acres, with no nearby prying eyes, the lounge room windows are uncovered, allowing natural light to flood the room.

RIGHT: The games room sits at the front of the house, to the left of the formal lounge area.



The kitchen is a particularly important room to the family.

A dramatic island bench sits angled in the centre of the room. In contrast to the marble benchtops elsewhere, it has a timber top with a craftsman carved edge. It's loaded with storage space and is perfectly set up as a food preparation area.

COLOUR ACCENTS

With a fairly neutral backdrop, Anna has relied on furniture, soft furnishings and art to provide sparks of colour. She called upon the services of Amgad Kamel of *ak interiors*. "Classical and elegant interiors never date," he believes. "Anna's style and luxury taste was communicated through luxe finishes, materials and furnishing. The use of classical shapes with contemporary fabrics delivered a timeless interior."

They worked together on the ebony Empire-style chairs the frames were found by Amgad while the gold embellishments were Anna's idea. Plus, more highlights are evident in the timber tones of a dramatic four-poster bed in the master bedroom, an antique-style credenza flanked by paisley print chairs in the dining room and an Empire-style narrow table with gold garlands in the bedroom wing hallway.



ABOVE: The extended timber benchtop is supported by decorative corbels.

LEFT: Cut-out walls allow natural light from the main living areas to flood the kitchen area.

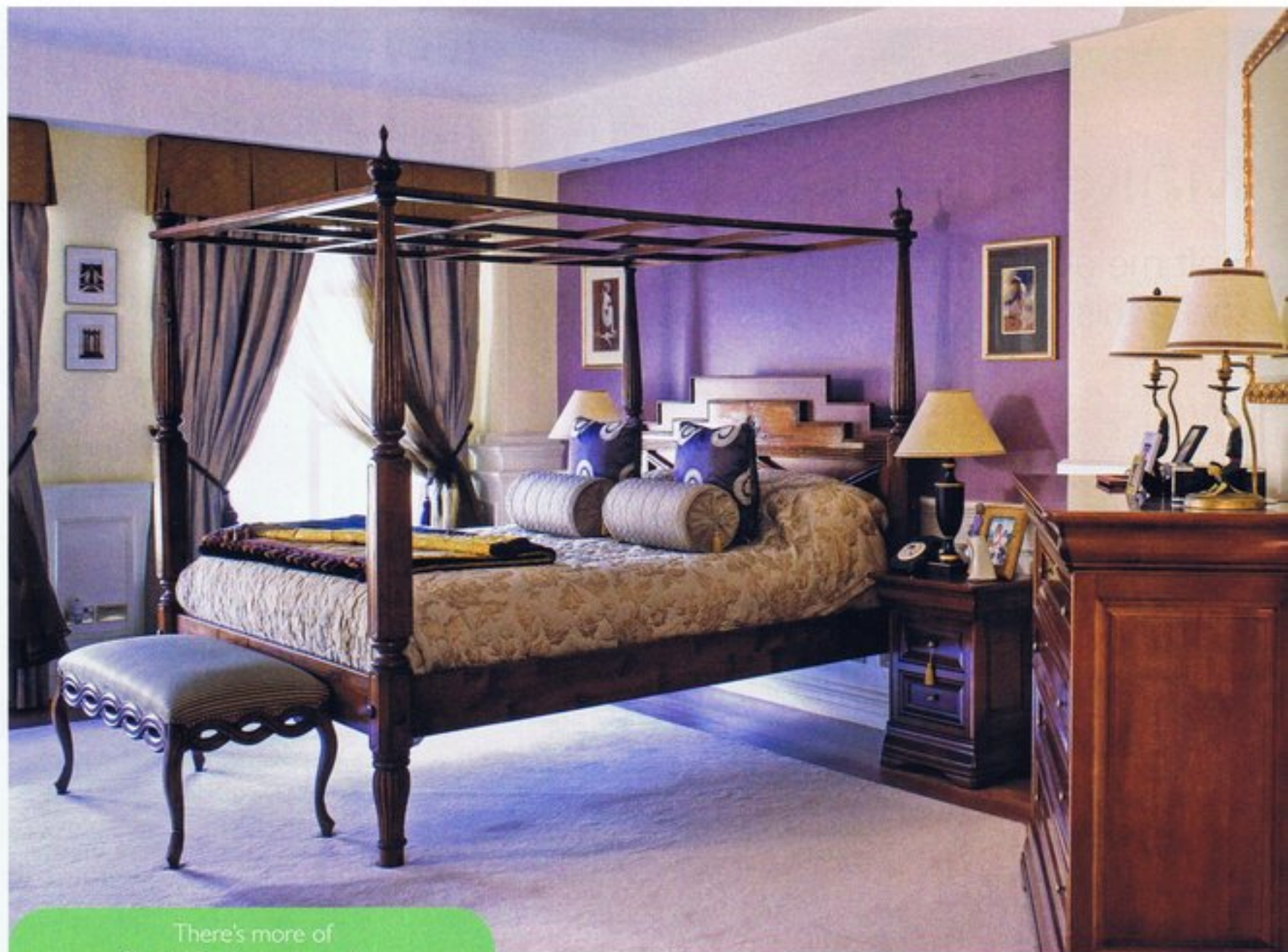
OPPOSITE PAGE: The raked ceiling created an open space upstairs used by the family not only for computers and work but also as just a simple hideaway.

ANNA'S TOP TIP

When decorating, take your time. Don't rush decisions, but think things through carefully. You want the house to work and be enjoyable for the whole family.







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More vibrant touches are provided by the artwork. In the dining room is a huge modern painting done by a former neighbour. "She rang and said, 'I'll do a painting for your new house'," Anna recalls. "I could only say, 'wow'." Over the garland table is another large work, a misty modern depiction of a rower on Sydney Harbour by Newtown artist Joseph Rollela.

Large rugs also provide injections of colour in the formal areas of the house – and chandeliers provide sparkling accents in several rooms. There is a big home, but it has a warm and welcoming feel. "I think the best feature of the house," Anna concludes, "is that it's functional for everybody – it works well. I wouldn't change a thing. It's the perfect setting for our family life." ■

Amgad Kamel
www.akinteriors.com.au

ABOVE: The dark dramatic four-poster bed was the first piece purchased for the master bedroom and the rest of the décor was worked around it.

RIGHT: In the hallway to the bedroom wing, pride of place is given to a painting by Australian artist, Joseph Rollela.

OPPOSITE PAGE

ABOVE: The quiet seating area off the master bedroom is a welcome sanctuary for Anna.

BELOW: The ensuite bathroom is tiled in marble, complementing the marble vanity top.

