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IN A NEW LIGHT

PRODUCED FIONA DUFF STORY JOANNE YANCO PHOTOGRAPHY ANDRE MARTIN

FRENCH FLAIR GETS A FRESH UPDATE IN THIS WARM AND WELCOMING FAMILY HOME. HERE, CLASSIC PIECES ARE FIRMLY FAVOURED

Before Anna and Paul Crosato started building their home they put together a folio of ideas by going through magazines and taking Sunday afternoon drives and photographing houses they liked the look of.

"We wanted wide hallways and vaulted ceilings, to create a sense of space. We were looking for French style that was comfortable, not aloof, so the house would be liveable for our children: Stephanie, 12, Mark, 11, Bridget, nine, and Elizabeth, eight," says Anna.

To make the house practical and family-friendly, they wanted to include items such as brushbox timber floors to take the heavy traffic, metal-framed lamps to take the

knocks, and warm rugs so the children could sit comfortably on the floor.

Once it came to making their plans a reality, Anna turned to interior designer Amgad Kamel for help. "I knew that with his expertise, we could find exactly what we wanted," she says.

Adds Amgad: "I look at what my clients wear, what they collect, even what they like to eat. All these things tell me a lot about a person, and what style and colours they will be happy with." To make the house feel warm and welcoming, walls were painted Dulux Delicate Yellow, a colour that could extend through all the rooms in the house. "When Paul first saw this buttery tone painted ►

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Opposite: a portrait of singer Kylie Minogue hangs in the formal living room. Painted by Paul Newton, it won the people's choice award in the Archibald Prize. Two armchairs from Baker Furniture are upholstered with Eros fabric in Bayberry from Elliott Clarke.

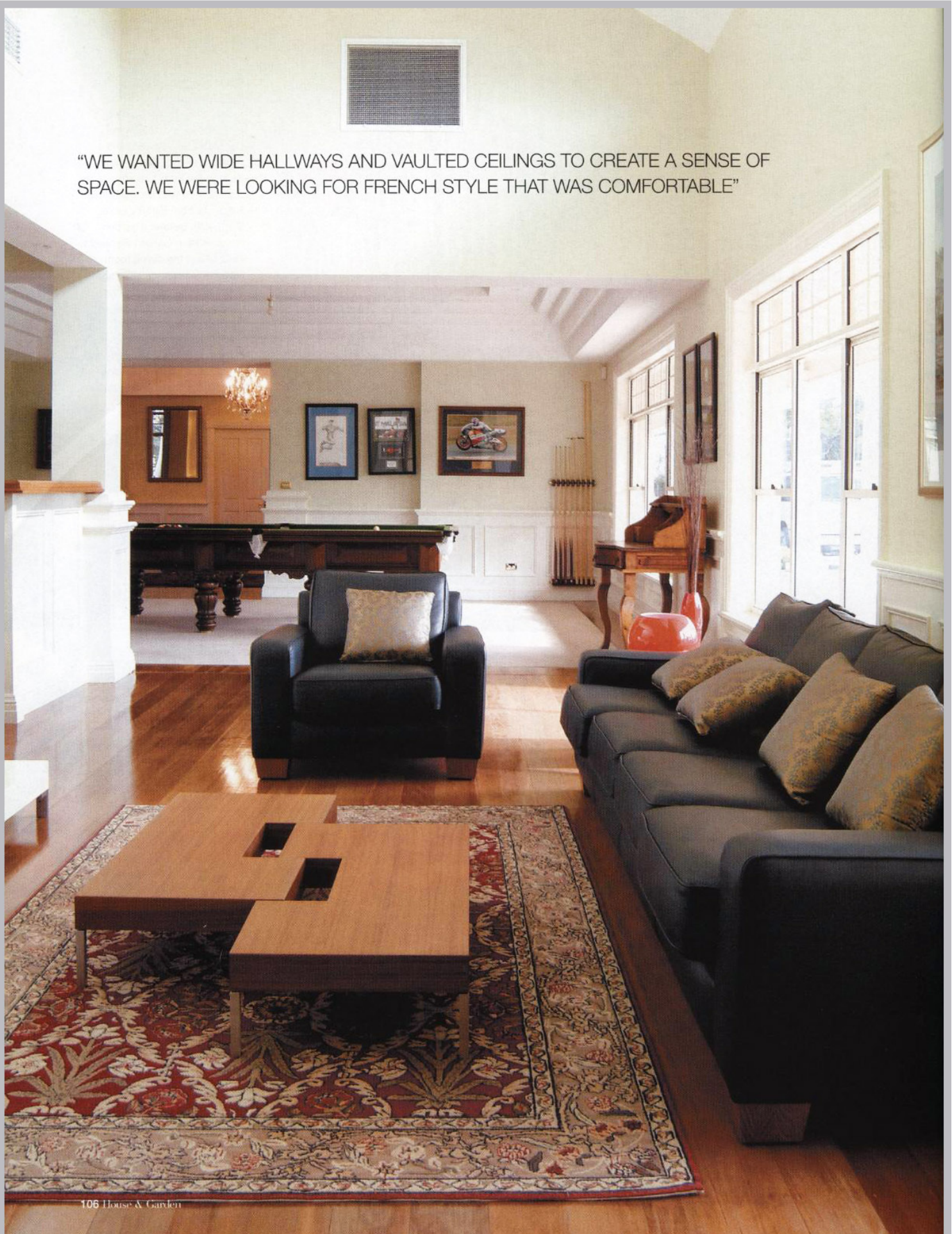
Opposite, below: a garden fountain from Garden Elements.

This page: the dining room features a generous table and buffet from Brigitte Forestier. Chairs covered with Edenberry fabric in Barley from Elliott Clarke. Chandelier with Louis XV French gold finish and Bohemia crystal from Custom Lighting. A round table from Baker Furniture holds family photos.



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"WE WANTED WIDE HALLWAYS AND VAULTED CEILINGS TO CREATE A SENSE OF SPACE. WE WERE LOOKING FOR FRENCH STYLE THAT WAS COMFORTABLE"



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◀ throughout the house, he said to Amgad, 'are you sure?' and to me, 'but it's yellow!' I said: 'just wait, it'll work.'

The butter-yellow paint did work – very well. In fact, it proved to be an incredibly versatile backdrop. In the formal rooms, it mixes easily with muted earthy tones for subtle sophistication. To make the family areas more casual and welcoming, Amgad went for brighter, fresher accent colours, ranging from vivid lime and soft lilac (for Stephanie's room) to racing-car red and charcoal (in Mark's room – both father and son share a strong passion for Ferraris).

Amgad likes to employ a theatrical flourish in unveiling the finished product. For each of the bedrooms, he gathered all the necessary items together, then stored them until he was ready to transform the room in one day for a surprise finish.

Stephanie, for instance, went for a sleepover, leaving behind just her bare bed and calico curtains, then came back to her room transformed by Anna and Amgad. "She was so excited she ran up and hugged Amgad, saying 'thank you!'" says Anna.

The opulent master bedroom was revealed in a similar fashion. "Paul loves ▶



Opposite: the living area of the games room features a Westbourne leather sofa and armchairs from Jordan. Cushions in Jim Thompson Rapture silk from Milgate Fabrics. Modern Puzzle coffee table from Poliform on traditional rug from Whitecliffe Imports. **Above left:** homeowner Anna Crosato with interior designer Amgad Kamel of AK Interiors. **Above, top:** the French-country style kitchen features two ovens. Timber panelled cupboards are painted Dulux Chalk USA. Benchtops are Carrara marble and handpainted splashback tiles from Country Floors. All appliances are Miele. The idea for the kitchen joinery was sourced from a US magazine, trialled by Anna's father, a carpenter, and completed by a local cabinetmaker. Anna says the walnut-topped island bench gives the kitchen "a nice flow, and creates a central point for people to mill around when we're entertaining". **Below:** a family portrait by artist Paul Newton hangs in the formal dining room. Columns and panelling lend formality, while Dulux Delicate Yellow and Dulux Chalk USA create a sense of welcome. For stockists see Buyer's Guide.



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CLASSIC STYLE



"With my Italian heritage you can imagine the type of furniture I had growing up," says Anna Crosato. "My husband Paul and I had a very modern house previously. So this time we wanted something more classic, that would grow old gracefully with us." Paul prefers clean lines, so the pair combined the best of

both worlds by mixing classic shapes with contemporary colours, fabrics and lighting. Bold cornices give this house a strong signature; concealed lighting helps make the ceilings appear to float. Timber panelling 'anchors' this effect, and adds a sense of luxury throughout the house. The message? Great style from any period has lasting appeal. Says interior designer Amgad Kamel: "If you mix pieces rather than stick to a period or a fad, the look lasts over a period of time."



"WE HAD A VERY MODERN HOME PREVIOUSLY. SO THIS TIME WE WANTED SOMETHING MORE CLASSIC, THAT WOULD GROW OLD GRACEFULLY WITH US"



Above, inset: this French commode is from Brigitte Forestier. Lamps from Orient House. Foyer painted Dulux Deep Plum. **Above, top:** the chaise longue is upholstered with "very tactile" velvet. Cushions by Julia Garner Agencies, available through AK Interiors.

Far left: tiled steps lead up to the bathroom's Stylus spa. **Left:** lamp in the master bedroom from Julia Garner Agencies. **Above:** the games room and bar lounge area has a more contemporary look to keep the room accessible for the kids as well. **Opposite:** most of the master bedroom's soft furnishings and furniture were custom-made or sourced for AK Interiors through Julia Garner Agencies. ►

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THERE'S ROOM AMONG THE CLASSIC DESIGN FOR ELEMENTS OF SURPRISE AND DRAMA, ACHIEVED WITH STRIKING FURNITURE AND SWATHES OF THEATRICAL COLOUR



◀ purple," says Anna, "and we had chosen a variety of textures for the bedding. We had seen swatches of it, but it was still a fabulous surprise when it was all put together."

Amgad gave the bed a theatrical setting, by recessing it into a feature wall painted Dulux Purple Plum, under a bulkhead with halogen downlights that can be dimmed at whim for a romantic ambience.

This, together with curtains that have a gold shimmer, "looks gorgeous at night", adds Anna. "The chaise was designed by Amgad in a very tactile plush velvet. Our kids have a ball on it."

Before they moved into their new house, Anna decided to get a family portrait painted by artist Paul Newton as a surprise for the couple's 10th wedding anniversary.

"I pretended that Paul was a photographer when he came over to take a few shots of our family. Paul said: 'he's the worst photographer that I've ever seen', to which I replied: 'don't worry, I won't buy anything if I don't like it'. When Newton finished the painting, I secretly hung it up in our dining room, so Paul would get a surprise on the day we moved in."

You may spot another portrait in their home that looks familiar: "While I was at Newton's studio I fell in love with a portrait of Kylie Minogue that he had painted," says Anna. He later brought it over to our place, and Paul liked it, too, so we decided to add it to our collection." What makes it special? "Kylie had posed for it personally, and it won the people's choice award in the Archibald Prize one year."

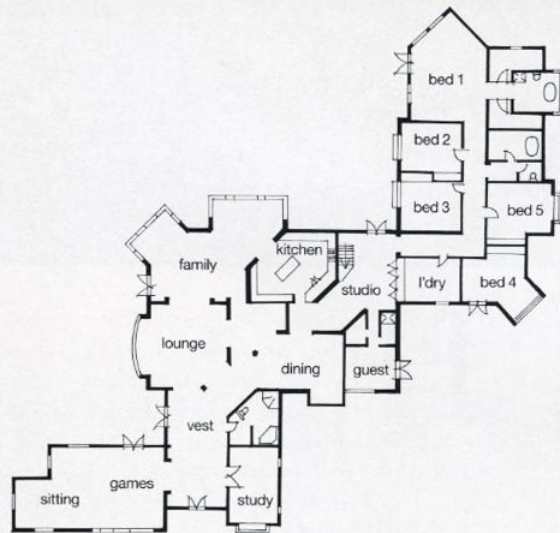
Where the interior is Anna's domain, the garden is Paul's – he has 20 years' experience in the garden and landscaping industry.

The grand gates and other decorative elements seen around their formal gardens show the mix of contemporary and classical landscaping features available from his company, so that, as Anna says: "even with Sydney's water restrictions, our gardens can still look good."

H&G

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Opposite: the decor in son Mark's racy bedroom is inspired by his passion for Formula One racing, motorbikes and Ferraris – seen in his collection of framed prints and other memorabilia. Cushions in red Positano fabric from Westbury Fabrics. Desk, bookcase and TV bench in wenge finish by Singway Furniture. **Above left:** daughter Stephanie's bedroom features a chair from Casa Mia, upholstered with Midland fabric in grape from Elliott Clarke Fabrics. Blind by BQ Design. **Above right:** Stephanie's bedhead upholstered in Viola Lilac by Monkwell Fabrics. The quilt is Breezy Violet by Marco Fabrics, with valance in Fontvielle Turquoise by Milgate Fabrics. **Left:** this classical water fountain from Garden Elements overlooks the garden's neat hedging. For stockists see Buyer's Guide.