Calm & Collected
Clever Kitchen Layouts

Inside the Homes of Garden Lovers

Best of the Best
Decorating cues from a colour queen

Beautiful
Bronte House
A fresh look for one of Sydney’s landmark homes

Future proof
All the latest in bathrooms

Spring Fling
Pretty updates for small spaces
Calm & collected

SEPTEMBER

Decorating & design
21 Palette Soft blues and greys are flavour of the month in the kitchen.
22 At Home With Take in the grand colonial heritage and coastal charm of a splendid Sydney estate.
33 Best Of The Best Marvellous interiors inspired by Modernist design legend Marion Hall Best.
47 Ask An Expert A fresh view on how to incorporate TVs into interiors.
48 Refresher Course Use florals, homewares and greenery to give small spaces a lift.
55 Top Brass Gorgeous metal finishes.
56 Hide & Sleek Leather to dye for.

Insider
59 Nest Designer and retailer Lucy McNamara invites you into her appealing Bondi apartment.
60 Insider Design news and reviews.
66 Design Moment The visionary Marion Hall Best and her place in the annals of Australian design.
69 On Home Author Peter FitzSimons reminisces about keeping up with the big boys on the family farm.

Lovingly tended by its current caretaker, Anne van der Gardner, Sydney’s historic Bronte House is a joy to behold inside and out. Join us for a tour on page 22.
Custodian Anna van der Gardner strolls along one of the pathways in the historic Sydney garden, under arches laden with roses and other sweet-smelling climbers. Purple Salvia leucantha ‘Santa Barbara’ is in flower here for much of the year.
ESTATE OF MIND

The new occupants of Sydney’s Brontë House have brightened the interiors with soft coastal colours and botanical designs inspired by its magnificent location.

STORY: Nerida Piggott | STYLING: Kate Nixon | PHOTOGRAPHY: Prue Ruscoe

221 | AUSTRALIAN HOUSE & GARDEN
“You have to throw yourself into a garden like this,” says Anna van der Gardner, current tenant of Bronte House with her husband Wes and two daughters. This is a serious gardener’s garden, full of history and rare plants, on a vast scale. “It is a big responsibility,” she says. “But we feel it responds to the love and care we give it.”

Covering two acres (0.8ha), the garden rambles across a gully close to Bronte Beach, protected by some of the original trees planted by Georgiana Lowe, the first homeowner, in the 1840s. Leo Schofield made the garden great again during his 10-year lease from 1994, working with designer Myles Baldwin.

Each part of the garden has its own character, from the Lovers’ Walk (named by Georgiana) running under tall trees carpeted with thousands of olivias, to the laws of the eastern terrace facing the sea and a succulent garden and rockery inspired by the Jardin Exotique in Monaco. The Carriageway Border features thoughtful planting combinations of unusual perennials and shrubs such as wigandia (Wigandia caracasana) and mist flower (Bartlettia squarrosa), which bears mauve blooms in September.

Following Leo’s tenancy, there was a major restoration of the house by Waverley Council, which owns the Bronte House estate, after which the garden, too, was again in need of love and rejuvenation. Anna and Wes have supplied that in spades.

“Gardens are evolving things, so they always require new ideas,” says Anna. She inherited a passion for gardening from her mother and trained as a florist before transitioning to interior design. Though the subtropical, flower-rich plantings of Bronte House are a change from the green palette of her previous gardens, she has embraced it. “All the different areas are so beautiful, and offer flowers at different times of the year. We love the excitement of the queen of the night cactus (Epiphyllum hyllocereus), which climbs up through the frangipani tree and only flowers between dusk and dawn. Now I love going to rare plant fairs and finding special little things to bring home.”

Such a large and important garden needs professional assistance, so Anna brought in Nicola Cameron and her award-winning team at Pepo Botanic Design. “It’s a thrill working in such a special environment,” says Nicola. “With its amazing collection of plants suited to coastal Sydney, this is like a botanic garden. For anyone who wanders through, there’s so much inspiration. In spring, it’s breathtaking.”

Pepo Botanic Design; (02) 9349 1220 or pepo.com.au.

ABOVE LEFT A rich mix of foliage and flowers makes this a paradise for plant lovers. Proceeds from the last open day enabled Anna to buy a shredder, which has meant all the green waste from the garden can be kept on site. ABOVE RIGHT The east-facing lawn is just the place for morning tea.

OPPOSITE This yellow and white border contains many rare and fragrant plants, including Salvia madrensis ‘Yellow Majesty’, giant leopard plant (Fatsia japonica var. giganteum), variegated Iris germanica and a yellow angel’s trumpet (Brugmansia aurea). To see inside Bronte House, turn to page 22.
A plan for all SEASONS

The 19th-century garden at Bronte House was one of NSW’s most exceptional. Now in the care of the aptly named van der Gardners, its future is back on track.

STORY Helen Young | PHOTOGRAPHY Prue Ruscoe
We have a little estate of 42 acres, four miles from Sydney on the sea; it is lovely beyond conception.

Georgiana Lowe, original homeowner, 1840s
FRONT GARDEN: "The north-west verandah is where I like to do my potting," says Anna van der Gardner, surveying the grounds of the historic property from the front hall. This colonial-era estate is listed on the National Trust and NSW State Heritage registers and Anna's family is on an extended lease. First laid out in the 1840s, the beautiful gardens are maintained by the van der Gardners in conjunction with a landscape design firm.
EASTERN VERANDAH Laid with classic tessellated tiles, this shaded stretch enjoys ocean views filtered through the trees. In the 1840s, Georgiana Lowe wrote to her mother about the original property, saying, “We have a beautiful bay to ourselves [Bromont Beach]; we have a waterfall of sixty feet and this runs through a fine valley [Bromont Gully].” Woven armchairs, The Country Trader. For similar wrought-iron bench, try Le Forge. EASTERN LAWN Anna watches daughters Ada (left) and Lillie enjoying what must seem like boundless outdoor space. Play tent, Mocka. EASTERN FACADE Elaborate detailing – such as the hexagonal corner turret and arched window detail – speaks to the 19th-century fascination with gothic architectural features. The house actually has two ‘fronts’ and impresses from both sides. Armchairs, The Country Trader. Planter pots, Villa Maison. GARDEN PATH Anna walks through a bower surrounded by trees and plants tended by the van der Gardners, with regular help from Pepo Botanic Design. To see more of this historic garden, turn to page 128. For Where to Buy, see page 221. H&G
ENTRY Anna has lightened the interior colour palette considerably, incorporating the existing hand-painted canvas wallcovering in the hall into her design (see page 226 for details). Through french doors with a fanlight, this space looks across the lawn to the very 20th-century double garage. Console table, OneWorld Collection. Bench, Villa Maison. Cushions, Bandhini Homewear Design.

DINING DETAIL A Bethany Linz artwork takes up the botanical theme. Lamp, Emac & Lawton. For similar cloche, try Provincial Home Living.
'When people visit the garden, hopefully they will see that every part has been touched and loved.'  
Anna von der Gardner

You're invited
The next scheduled open day at Bronte House is September 17, 2017. For more information, go to waverley.nsw.gov.au or Anna’s Instagram account @thedesignbarn.