

FREE *spirit*

A LOVE OF TRAVEL AND EXOTIC PIECES INSPIRED THE UNIQUE LOOK AND FEEL OF THIS BYRON BAY HOME

STORY & STYLING KYLIE JACKES PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN DOWNS



WHITE ON WHITE It took them four years to renovate, but for homeowners Kathy and Ralph, it was worth the effort to create their forever home – shared with their adult daughter Hannah – in Byron Bay’s hinterland. Awash with white, the serene palette is the perfect base for eclectic pieces sourced globally. “The first thing I bought, before we’d even started, was three magnificent chandeliers,” says Kathy of antique pendant lighting from Olde Memories & Treasures, one of which is in the entrance (above left). Dated and dark, the original exterior with its ’70s bamboo balustrades was transformed by a white rendered finish (opposite), complementing custom-made Moroccan-style railings. Sculptured seating was carved from concrete, while butterfly chairs such as this one from Mediterranean Markets – with a Turkish towel from Bisque Traders – can move around the pool. >





LIVING AREA "I love the fact there's no TV in our living room," says Kathy (pictured opposite). "I was adamant I wanted it to be a chill-out, conversation area and that's how we use it." Furnished with a mix of homewares, including an Indian daybed and Moroccan pendant, the light-filled space reflects the owners' love of natural, muted colours (above). For Kathy, textural African cushions are a reminder of her childhood in South Africa, while a gallery wall is devoted to treasured photos.



KITCHEN The kitchen (left) has a wonderful rustic feel, courtesy of its tactile finishes. To achieve the timeworn patina, custom cabinetry was made from recycled pine and topped in marble, with a butler's sink and Perrin & Rowe tapware from The English Tapware Company completing the look. **LIVING AREA** Drawn to the romance of "old pieces with a story", the couple discovered this console at a market in Marrakesh (above). The framed artwork is by Kathy's father, Jacobus Francois Coetzee, and the cuttlefish wall hanging is from Bisque Traders.



Set on the rolling green hills of NSW's Byron Bay hinterland, the home that Ralph and Kathy share with their daughter Hannah, looks out to the ocean and farmland. Yet step inside and there's a sense you have travelled to a more exotic part of the world. With its sculptural curves, whitewashed finishes, handcrafted fixtures and array of antique furniture, the property has an incredible feel. "I'm originally from South Africa, so people tell me they can see that influence," says Kathy. "Others say it reminds them of Greece or Morocco, but to me, it doesn't have a particular style. It's a global house that reflects some of the places we've been."

Built in the 1960s, with subsequent renovations over the years, the house had little going for it when Kathy and Ralph bought it five years ago. "It really was decrepit," she remembers. "The only thing I liked was the location and the outlook across a sea of date palms. And the trees weren't even in our yard, they belonged to the neighbours!" Undeterred by the task they faced, the couple got stuck into transforming the place. Everything needed replacing – windows, doors, plumbing and, being in a cyclone-rated area, the framework had to be reinforced. While the scope of the renovation was more than they had first anticipated, the couple are thrilled with how it's come together.

"Because the house looked so bad, I thought anything we do is going to be an improvement, so

I played out my fantasies and included all the things I love," says Kathy. Doorways were turned into striking features with intricately carved antique doors sourced from India, where the couple travel on buying trips for their homewares and furniture company Bisque Interiors.

Mediterranean-inspired moulded finishes and curves were added wherever possible, with beds, seating nooks, bathroom walls and outdoor benches crafted by multiple builders. Ralph was also hands-on throughout the four-year renovation and mastered the art of rendering and carving Hebel.

Low ceilings were removed to expose original beams, which enhance the sense of space and allow for antique pendants that capture attention in every room. The kitchen was overhauled with new cabinetry and the layout reconfigured so it connected seamlessly with adjoining spaces.

Like the renovation process, which was slow and steady, everything in the home has been collected over time and is imbued with memories. One of Kathy's most recent purchases, a Berber chest from Marrakech, even retains the faint smell of smoke, having been in a Bedouin camp for decades.

While the family still spends up to three months a year travelling for work, they agree there's really no place like home. "Whenever we get back, I'm overwhelmed with gratefulness that this is where we live," says Kathy. "We've created our forever home and I don't want to move anywhere else." >

"MY BED HAS A *bohemian opulence*,
BUT THE ROOM STILL HAS
A *really relaxed* FEEL" ~ HANNAH



HANNAH'S BEDROOM In keeping with the home's sculptural curves, the centrepiece of Hannah's bedroom is a decorative moulded bedhead (above). The shape was inspired by a holiday to Kenya's Lamu Island, where the family was captivated by traditional Swahili architecture. "It was a weekend project for us to create," explains Kathy. "I carved the star out of Hebel, which Ralph inserted into the bedhead he'd made." An emerald velvet throw, cushions and antique lighting, all from Bisque Traders, provide striking contrast against the sea of white.



BEDROOM DETAIL Treasured clothes and accessories are displayed in Hannah's room like pieces of art (below), providing a little splash of colour and pattern. A favourite piece is a vintage kimono from her Aunty Elke. Atop an Indian chest of drawers, a gold headpiece doubles as a sculpture. >



“I’M A BATH GIRL, SO I *sacrificed* HAVING A SHOWER IN THE ENSUITE SO I COULD FIT IN AN *indulgent bath* WITH VIEWS OF STARS AT NIGHT” ~ KATHY



WE LOVE...
eclectic fixtures

With so many friends asking Kathy where she sourced fixtures and fittings for her bathroom, she decided to make the decorative fan-shaped Turkish tapware and wide Indian marble basin part of the range available at her store, Bisque Traders. Taps, \$127 each; basin, from \$935, visit bisquetraders.com.au. >



ENSUITE Kathy’s daily ritual is to unwind in her ensuite (top left), where double doors open up to a clawfoot bath from Early Settler. Like every change to the house, careful planning went into the striking bone-and-mother-of-pearl-inlay doors, which were designed by Kathy and custom-made. For a white-on-white look, the bath’s feet were painted in the same white as the floors (Berger Kitchen & Bathroom Low Sheen Acrylic in White), with warmth added by a timber stool and a carved wood-and-gold-foil mirror. The ensuite vanity (bottom left) encompasses Turkish tapware teamed with an Indian marble basin and an antique mirror (from Bisque Traders). For similar lights, try Lighting Collective.

MAIN BEDROOM Great joy was taken in ripping up shag pile carpets in the bedroom (top right) to expose concrete floors, which were then transformed with white paving paint. Appearing to almost float, the moulded platform bed is dressed in Miss Molly linen, with cushions from Coea Mojo providing a pop of vibrant colour. Inbuilt ledges are adorned with curios and religious iconography, including an Indian fertility goddess statue and an Ethiopian cross, while wall hooks allow for an ever-changing display of bags and jewels.

MAIN BATHROOM Moulded finishes flow through to the main bathroom, forming the open-shelf vanity (opposite). “We spent years adding curves to every room, but they create a sense of calm and cohesion,” says Kathy.

POOL To make the most of poolside entertaining, a cabana, complete with thatched roof, was built several years ago to host a family Christmas (below). “We use it all the time now,” says Kathy. “The table was made with original fence palings from the property and a reclaimed timber top, and it’s just huge – it fits everybody!” For similar roofing, try The Thatch Roofing Company. Beside the pool, white-washed concrete instead of pavers continues the resort vibe.



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GLOBAL SOUL

INSIDE STORY
KATHY & RALPH'S HOME

Who lives here?
Kathy and Ralph, founders of Bisque Interiors; daughter Hannah, co-director of Bisque Interiors; and spoodle Charlie.

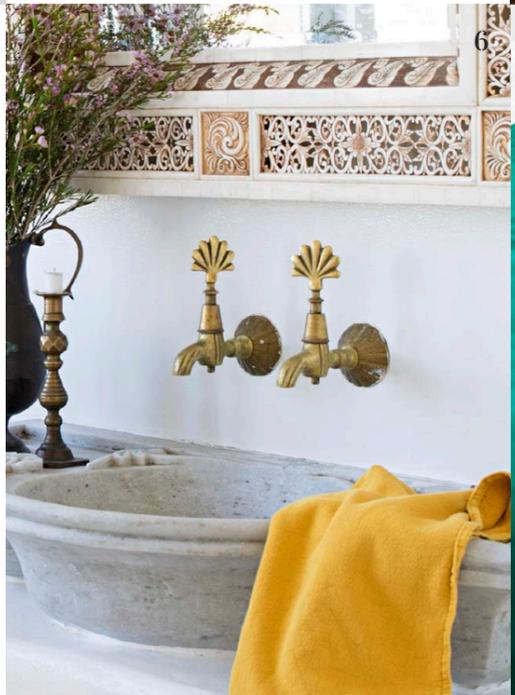
What's your interior design philosophy?
Kathy: “By establishing early in life what it is you love, you can keep adding to your collection and it will all work together. I also like things being really relaxed. People often comment they love the ‘feel’ of my home, which isn’t something tangible, it’s an atmosphere that’s created.”

What do you love most about where you live?
“We’re slap bang in the country, yet only a five-minute drive to Byron Bay and five minutes from Bangalow, where our store is.”

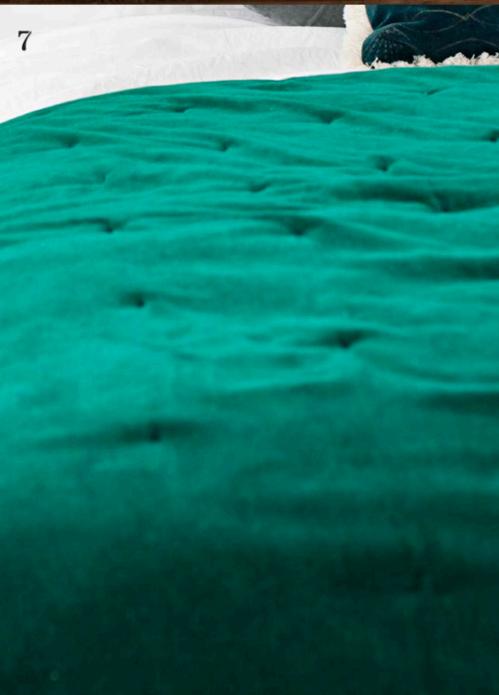
How do you entertain in summer?
“All our friends in the area live on properties out of town, so whenever we visit each other we all bring along something to make the load easier. In South Africa, we call it a ‘bring ‘n braai’.”



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ACTUAL PAINT COLOURS MAY VARY ON APPLICATION

1. Brass pendant from Bisque Traders.
2. Kathy, Hannah, Ralph and Charlie enjoy alfresco dining.
3. This door was custom-made, but for similar bone-inlay furniture, try Bone Inlay Home.
4. The walls feature Berger Kitchen & Bathroom Low Sheen Acrylic in White.
5. Antique pieces add interest to the coffee table – try vintage stores and markets for similar.
6. Hand towel in Saffron from Saardé.
7. Emerald velvet throw on Hannah’s bed from Bisque Traders.