

Editor's LETTER



Every day that I learn something new is a good day for me. And, if knowledge comes easily instead of painfully, then it's a bonus. Don't even ask me about the weekend I tried unsuccessfully to remove all the built-up furniture wax from my dining table. I now know what to do, but I certainly found out the hard way.



Let us know what's happening in your home. What rooms have you spruced up lately?

Was it a success? We'd love to hear from you. You can find us at

www.countryhomeideas.com.au

This issue, our house experts have been busy. Colour consultant Samantha Bacon takes the hard work out of choosing just the right shades of cream to create that warm organic look we love so much in modern country-style decorating – not an easy task when there's so many neutral hues to consider.

Plus, interior designer Clare Palisi looks at the entrance of a home and how to make it more appealing and welcoming for us, our families and for visitors.

For those of us who are interested in what our future fashion and interior designers and stylists are up to, we recently asked a group of students from the Whitehouse Institute of Design to style a display apartment for us. It was amazing what they achieved in the space of

two days. Of course, they'd done their homework beforehand, but after beginning with a blank canvas that consisted of a new flat completely devoid of furniture and furnishings, they worked wonders. I think you'll agree when you see what they've done, starting on page 62.

Let us take the hard work out of making your house the home of your dreams. Every issue we strive to bring you as many pages as we possible can, full of ideas and products we think you'll love, and that you can use in your own place.

Margaret



Blank CANVAS

Discover what happened when
Country Home Ideas gave six aspiring
stylists just one day to turn a modern
apartment into a country-style haven.

Story by Aurélie Toulemonde
Photography by Tony Potter
Styling by Whitehouse Institute of Design





This is the story of six of Australia's finest stylists-to-be from Sydney's Whitehouse Institute of Design. Keen to test their newly acquired skills in the real world, they accepted our challenge to turn an empty space into a beautiful home suitable for the pages of *Country Home Ideas*.

OPENING SCENES

Armed with the enthusiasm and resourcefulness that comes with youth, the team made their way to the unit; however, what they

found on site caught them off guard. "When I think eclectic I think bare bricks, textures, flood boards, but there was none of that," Daisy Kearey recalls. "The apartment was ultra modern and it felt like there was nothing there for us to work with, no central elements we could leverage."

Once they overcame the initial shock, the group quickly found its bearings and decided to treat those attributes as qualities rather than obstacles. "The abundant space and neutral tones meant the apartment was like a blank canvas for us to play with," Aleen Apanian explains. Encouraged by this new vision, they measured up the space then hit the shops.

THE TEAM'S BEST ADVICE:

Eclectic doesn't mean clutter! Go for quality rather than quantity.

ABOVE: A basic IKEA table is given a country-style makeover with the addition of French cottage chairs.



INSPIRATIONS

With the clock ticking, our budding stylists opted to allocate the rooms between themselves – and the living and dining areas were put in Aleen's hands. Looking for inspiration, she turned to pictures of Parisian homes, antique jewellery, quaint English cottages and artworks from around the world. "The look reflects my creativity but also the importance I place on family life. I think people want to surround themselves with objects that bring meaning to their lives either because they're beautiful or because they're connected to special memories," she says.

Aleen opted for soft hues with shades of white, cream and grey helping turn the apartment into the warm and comforting sanctuary she'd imagined. "It's a very relaxed space, definitely somewhere you can put your legs up and relax and where you don't have to worry about breaking something!" she laughs.

In the bedrooms, the challenge was to tone down the glare created by the mirrored built-in wardrobes that span the entire length of the rooms. "We wanted to make the rooms feel fresh, cosy and unique so we chose one special object and worked our way from there," Daisy explains. The bold bird-patterned lampshade inspired the scheme in the master bedroom while a multicoloured



ABOVE: The sandy-coloured tiles of the splashback give the kitchen the ideal tonal backdrop for a country-style home.

RIGHT: Warm, welcoming and elegant, Aileen chose this Louis XV-style armchair, matching ottoman and console from PC Volz on Sydney's Bourke Street, her favourite furniture store.

ALEEN'S TIP:

Don't be afraid to mix together colours, textures, fabrics and even items from different eras. Be brave! If it doesn't work, who cares – you can always put that item in another room.



DAISY'S ADVICE:

Whatever shape or size the room, don't be scared to play with volumes. Undersize objects are just as important as oversize ones – balance is what matters.

oriental-style bedspread led the way in the guestroom. The result is a striking combination of vibrant colours and patterns. "We worked with pink and red in the main bedroom," she says. "It's definitely an unusual mix but also quite sumptuous and luxurious – and definitely very grown up!"

A STYLE OF ONE'S OWN

One of the group's favourite sources of inspiration was *Flea Market Style* by Emily Chalmers and Ali Hanan – the little bible for lovers of all things second hand. Filled with handy advice on how to furnish and decorate a home with 'found' objects instead of new items, the young

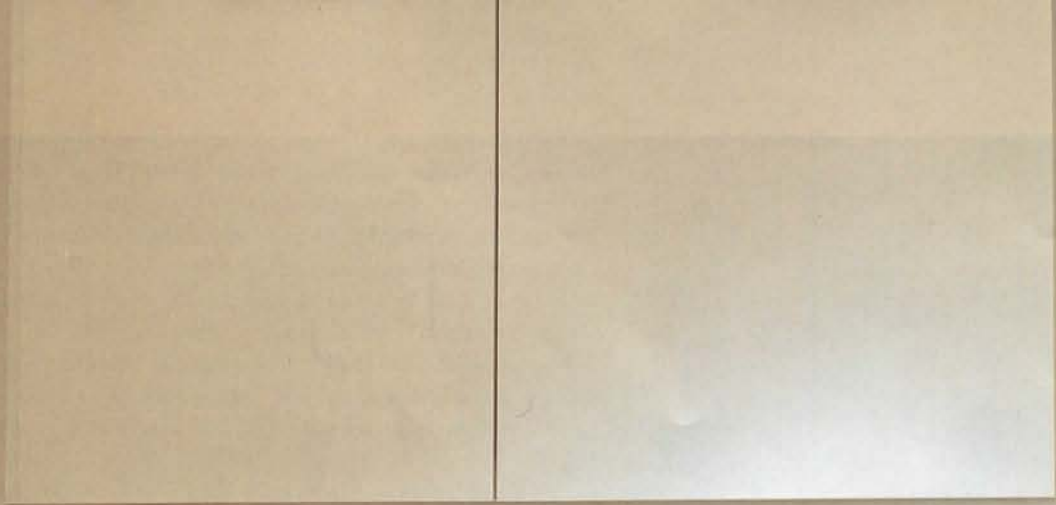


ABOVE: The bold bird-patterned lampshade from Shady Designs was the inspiration for the master bedroom's colour scheme.

LEFT: The oversize clock from *ici et là* was Daisy's find. "You just don't come across bold objects like this every day," she says.

OPPOSITE PAGE

The students opted for a modern glass-top desk to give the apartment a practical working space, and chose a white provincial chair to give the study the quaint edge it was missing. Simple white storage boxes keep the office area neat and tidy.





"The best things happen when you don't try too hard – just let your natural instincts take over. If everyone else's house is pink but you don't like pink, don't follow! It's all about being true to yourself." – Aleen

ABOVE: Plush white towels soften the bathroom's hard edges without overcrowding the room. An orchid and sprigs of lavender add a natural element to the windowless space. A basket of fresh towels is included, showing one of many clever storage ideas.

LEFT: For a hint of country charm, Viktoria filled a collection of mismatched glass bottles with purple-hued bath salts and oils.

stylists strove to follow its lead and find fresh and unexpected uses for pieces that have seen a bit of life, while emphasising their beauty.

The bathroom and laundry were ideal for putting this philosophy into practice. "The idea was to decorate these spaces with accessories rather than large items," Viktoria Ing explains. "We used plush white towels to soften the bathroom's hard edges without overcrowding the room, and we included an orchid and sprigs of lavender which added a natural element the room lacked." Her favourite find was a collection of mismatched glass bottles which they filled with purple-hued bath salts and oils.

Pale blues and whites were the colours of choice for the laundry, while textures were added through various wicker baskets and a selection of vintage-style tins used to store detergents. While not much in themselves, these few bits and pieces gave the room a clean and fresh country feel.

FINALE

After weeks of hard work and preparation, the photo shoot was over in just one day. "The class was briefed to create a style that would be suitable for *Country Home Ideas*," their teacher, Carolyn Fienberg, explains. "Their aim was for the magazine to accept the shots and now they're being published, which means they've achieved a great final result!" Ask the students and they'll tell you stories of long backbreaking work and beginners' mistakes, but they'll also tell of the handy new skills they learnt along the way and the exceptional reward of creating a stunning final product." ■

RIGHT: Pale blues and whites bring an element of freshness to the laundry, while various wicker baskets and a selection of vintage-style tins for storing detergents add texture to the tiled space.

BELOW: The biggest challenge was to achieve a lived-in look so the stylists in training selected accessories that would bring life and personality to the space.



The Whitehouse Institute of Design and *Country Home Ideas* would like to thank Payce Consolidated, IKEA, Oz Design Furniture, Shady Designs, Guests Furniture, PC Furniture, ici er là, Lanterne and Kas Australia for their help with this project.