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The long, formal sitting room is filled with graceful French antiques and mirrors. All the windows are swathed in oyster silk-taffeta curtains, thickly lined to achieve a sumptuous sweep of fabric. A pair of Empire mirrors bought in France adorns the mantelpiece.

Fresh vision

It took a passionate renovator to see potential in a poky 1930s cottage. Today, it's been transformed into an inviting home filled with treasured antiques.

STORY **BABETTE HAYES** PHOTOGRAPHY **JENNIFER SOO**

'As a keen collector, I enjoy having my favourite pieces on display. There's no better way to personalise a home.' **DREW LINDSAY** HOMEOWNER

When real-estate agent Drew Lindsay first saw Hawthorne Villa, his home in the New South Wales Southern Highlands, he was distinctly underwhelmed. He spotted it while visiting the surrounding garden, which was open for public viewing. "The garden was magnificent. The house was not – it was a dark little bungalow," says Drew.

Built in the 1930s to accommodate the gardeners who tended the grounds of the neighbouring estate, the two-bedroom cottage had clearly seen better days. Then, in the 1990s, Drew's mother bought the property as a weekender.

"Unfortunately, she found the Southern Highlands a little colder than she could bear, so I purchased the house from her in 2001," he says. "I don't mind a cool climate; I enjoy living in a place that experiences distinct seasons."

Drew, a seasoned renovator, set about extending the house. "My main priorities were making the house more spacious and comfortable. I wanted the rooms to flow and connect. Bringing the sun in, for warmth and more light, was important, too."

The house was extended at both ends, in effect doubling its floor area. Drew was determined to retain the simplicity of the house's original 1938 facade, but he also included a touch of romance by adding a charming conservatory. It sits opposite the front entry, separated from the house by the verandah ▶

RENO KNOW-HOW

Homeowner Drew Lindsay has honed his renovation skills on several previous homes. "For a while there, it was as though I was moving house as a matter of course!" he laughs. Drew considers his design strengths to be a good eye for colour and furniture placement.

THIS PAGE Drew prefers dressers to kitchen cabinetry. The 19th-century Welsh dresser, from Sydney Antique Centre, houses his china and collectables. **OPPOSITE** This set of antique toys was bought by Drew at Graham Geddes Antiques for his grandchildren. Table lamp from Brosalco. For Where To Buy, see page 203.

'Sticking to mostly neutral tones has made a huge difference to this home. The creamy palette I chose is the ideal backdrop for my artworks and antique furniture.' **DREW LINDSAY** HOMEOWNER

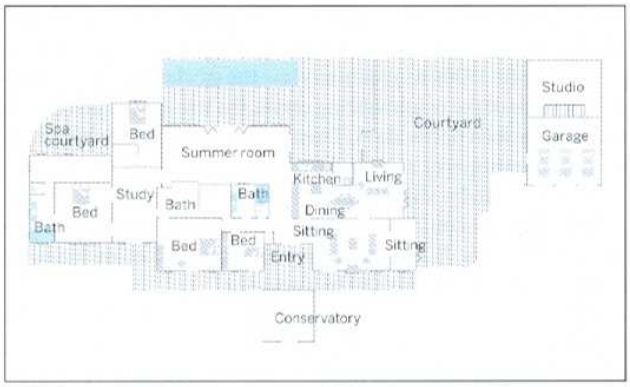
◄ that runs the length of the house. "The front verandah was my mother's favourite spot. She would sit there, in the sun, looking out to the garden," says Drew. "I decided I wanted to extend the house out into the garden. The conservatory breaks up the linear look of the front of the house. I use it so much; in hindsight, I wish I'd made it bigger."

Drew designed each of the house's rooms to offer views to the courtyards and trees beyond. "It took six months of thinking and planning, and then another 12 months of building," he says.

While new walls went up in the new areas, existing internal walls came down between the old kitchen, scullery, dining and living rooms to create one open-plan kitchen, dining and living area that opens onto the verandah and outdoor dining space.

The main living areas – which include two sitting spaces – are sited to the right of the entry and all extend out via french doors to a variety of walled courtyards. To the left, the original cottage has been transformed into guest quarters.

Behind the guest bedrooms is a spacious 'summer room' that leads into Drew's bedroom, home office, ensuite, dressing ►



THIS PAGE Model ships and lithographs of the First Fleet perfectly suit Drew's masculine study. Walls are painted Porter's Paints Wet Sand. OPPOSITE In the guest bedroom, french doors frame a view of the garden. A Lloyd Rees print hangs above the bed. For Where To Buy, see page 203.

THIS PAGE Two-hundred-year-old Indian doors separate Drew's private rooms from what he calls his 'summer room'. **OPPOSITE TOP** In the conservatory, removable covers were added to the antique French daybed and modern rocking chairs to create an informal look. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** A fireplace keeps the wisteria-covered outdoor dining area warm.

'The daybed in the conservatory is about two metres long. I found it when I was building the room and then, fortuitously, I came across the chairs. They finish the space perfectly.' **DREW LINDSAY** HOMEOWNER

◄ room and a courtyard with a jacuzzi. When he's looking for a little personal space to read or play his piano, Drew can simply close the ornate Indian doors that define his 'zone'.

Another bedroom and bathroom were built at the back of the house, behind Drew's study. Accessed only from the rear courtyard, this wing is designed to accommodate Drew's son, Sam, and his family when they visit. "The children can do their own thing – listen to music or watch TV – but still be able to join the rest of the family in the main part of the house."

Meanwhile, another of Drew's sons, Tim, lives in a separate garden apartment. "We pulled down the ramshackle sheds in the corner of the garden and replaced them with an apartment designed to look like stables from the outside," says Drew.

Turning the cottage into a home that's tailored to his family's needs has been a labour of love for Drew. "I've been in real estate for a long time now, and every property I look at, I think, 'what would I alter?' or 'how could I improve it?'. Helping people find their dream home is my job, so it's been a great experience creating my own."