

belle

INTRODUCING
STEVE CORDONY'S
CHIC AGENDA

Inside Charlotte Coote's CREATIVE & CHARISMATIC HOME

Influencing Decus
WHAT'S INSPIRING
ALEXANDRA
DONOHOE CHURCH

Luxe in the
COUNTRY

BUCOLIC BOLTHOLES FROM BYRON TO BLAIRGOWRIE

MOUNTAIN PATH

Portrait **ABBIE MELLÉ** Photography **LISA COHEN**

Drawn to the pure air, lush gardens and abundant room to move in Mount Macedon, interior designer Charlotte Coote of Coote & Co. has made herself right at home.



WHAT APPEALED TO YOU ABOUT YOUR HOME AND WHAT CHANGES DID YOU MAKE? Geordie, my husband, and I moved to Marnanie with our young family in November 2017. I grew up in country Ireland and he in country Tasmania. We both felt that Mount Macedon was very similar to these places through its old trees, whimsical gardens and abundance of space and fresh air. We wanted to give this to our children. The house was built in 1890 for the first Australian-born governor Sir Isaac Isaacs, his wife Lady Deborah Isaacs and their daughters Marjorie and Nancy (after whom Marnanie was named). We loved the history and charm of the old house and its significant garden. We wanted to restore it and make it our own. It had plenty of natural light and lots of potential, and so the journey began. The house and garden will be a 10-year project that we are halfway through. So far, we have made updates in three major stages. The first, before we moved in, was for new sisal flooring, freshly painted walls throughout, as well as new window treatments and furnishings. Second, we converted the old garage and sub rooms into an extensive double-height kitchen, flower room, powder room and drying room, all with underfloor heating. The third was the landscaping out the front of the house, designed by Paul Bangay to connect the new kitchen (the old garage) to the rest of the home.

WHAT INFORMED THE SELECTION OF FURNITURE, ART, FITTINGS AND FINISHES? Many pieces were collected or inherited from my past. I designed some items especially and others are more recent antique purchases – all complement and balance each other. Objects and artworks continue to be collected and add to the layering of the home. The aesthetic is English/Irish classic with a contemporary Australian twist. It is authentic. We are not interested in current trends or mass rolled-out ideas. We collect

This page, from top In the blue library at Marnanie where the walls are painted in Resene 'Nauti', the sofa is upholstered in Georgia Macmillan 'Double Inky Stripe' and the Coote & Co. 'Gough' footstool in Schumacher 'Fishnet Marine'. The Promise of Life c1890 artwork by The Winsome Collection. Inspired by the garden's pink rhododendrons, Charlotte had the dining room painted in Resene 'Glamour Puss'. The chandelier was made in London in copper leaves and hand-cut Italian crystal. Opposite page Charlotte designed the Georgian-style console, recreated by artisans in mahogany and County Kilkenny marble based on a sketch by Sir Edward Lovett Pearce, the architect of the Coote ancestral home, Bellamont Forest, an 18th-century Georgian mansion in Ireland which was one of her childhood homes.





This page, from top Charlotte on the croquet lawn in front of the soaring rhododendron garden. The kitchen is painted in a custom colour Charlotte calls 'Mount Macedon Green', which is complemented by nickel hardware from The English Tapware Company and limestone flooring. Sub-Zero integrated refrigerator from E&S.

and curate things we find aesthetically pleasing or amusing. We don't like creating anything typical or obvious.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE ELEMENTS? I am very chuffed with the new kitchen. It is grand and generous and excellent for a big family and entertaining friends. We light the fire, play music loudly, cook and dance, and the neighbours can't be offended. It's all a lot of fun.

HOW DOES THE SPACE REFLECT YOUR DESIGN SENSIBILITIES AND CREATIVE INFLUENCES? Living in Mount Macedon, it is hard not to be influenced by the lush garden beauty seen outside the windows. It's green everywhere with a wonderful array of flowers. I have enjoyed bringing the outside in.

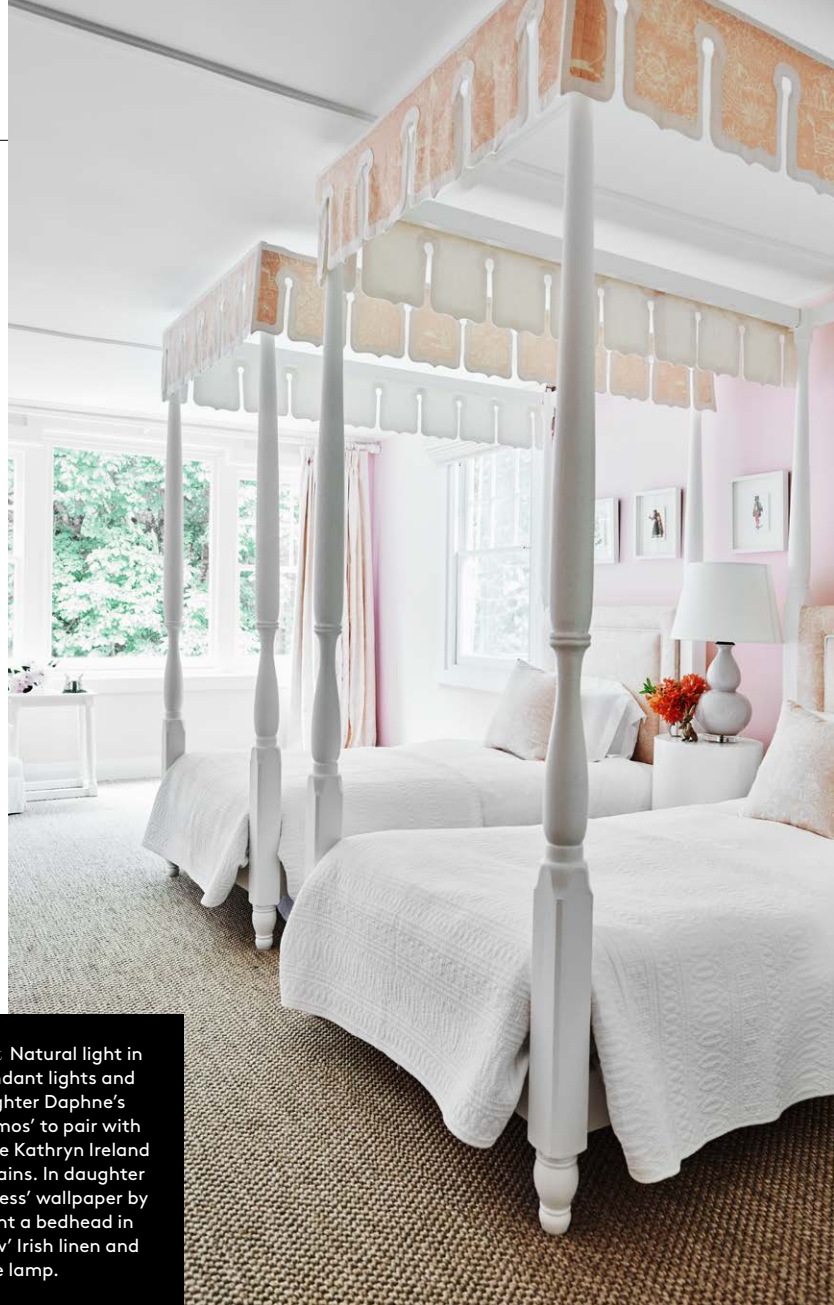
WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT LIVING IN YOUR HOME AND HOW DO YOU USE THE SPACE? We love entertaining and really do use every room in the house. The dining room hosts lively dinner parties of 12 which spill over into the sitting room before and after for drinks and conversation. The library is where the family spends time reading, watching television and relaxing. The kitchen is where everyone congregates and is the heart of the home.

IS YOUR HOME A SANCTUARY OR DOES IT DOUBLE AS A WORKSPACE? We try to keep it as a sanctuary.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR PERIOD OR STYLE THAT APPEALS TO YOU? I love the often clean lines and aesthetic of the European 18th-century but I try to provide relief from that by injecting colour or a contemporary element with rugs, textiles, paint, contemporary art, lighting or objects.

IF YOU DIDN'T LIVE IN THIS LOCATION, WHERE ELSE WOULD YOU LIVE? Not in a major city. Somewhere where the air is fresh and concrete is rare, and light is in abundance. It is good for the soul.





This page, clockwise from top left Natural light in the entrance is boosted by pendant lights and table lamps. Charlotte's daughter Daphne's room is painted in Resene 'Cosmos' to pair with the "slightly clashing pink" of the Kathryn Ireland toile used for the beds and curtains. In daughter Sybil's room, walls in 'The Countess' wallpaper by Charlotte Gaisford complement a bedhead in Coote & Co. Baronscourt 'Billow' Irish linen and Coote & Co. pineapple lamp.

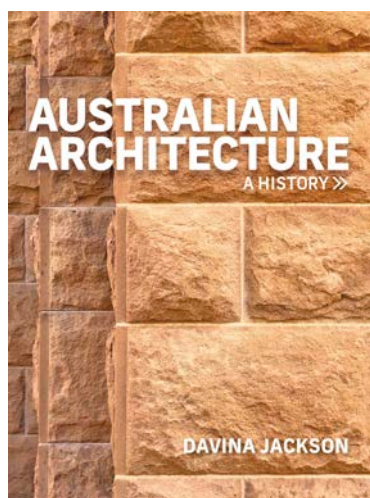


WHICH MUSICIANS, ARCHITECTS AND ARTISTS ARE INSPIRING YOU AT THE MOMENT? Music: Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Chet Baker, Louis Prima, Maria Callas, Van Morrison. I listen to the Top 50, because of my young daughters, and think The Weeknd is terrific with its 80s vibe. Architects: We have been enjoying working with the team from Stephen Akehurst & Associates. Artists: I went to the most recent Melbourne Art Fair and thought Justin Miller's stand was great, as well as work by Laura Jones and Kate Tucker. COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEW BOOK, *COLOUR IS HOME*? I wanted to share my design ethos on creating timeless, authentic homes. My goal was to produce a really visually interesting publication that was full of tangible knowledge for people to access and apply to any project. I hope it is a book that people can reference now and in 20 years' time.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE NEXT YEAR? We have many exciting projects on the cards, including collaborating with SIRAP to film and produce our online interior design masterclass. We have launched our design studio in Noosa and are working with some wonderful clients on their homes up there. Also, a new build designed by Coote & Co. for Geordie and I on the east coast of Tasmania – it's a contemporary high-end beach house, and a new design direction for us. cooteandco.com.au; *Colour is Home* (Thames & Hudson, \$59.99). See Library, p56.

COLOUR IS HOME

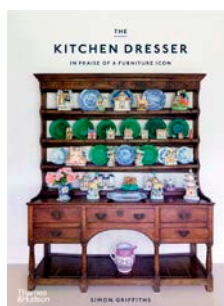
As the daughter of the late, celebrated interior designer John Coote, Charlotte Coote has an impeccable design pedigree, so her first book is unsurprisingly impressive. Arranged as a 'how to', it illustrates through persuasive text and glossy photographs her philosophy of timelessness, authenticity, scale, quality and lifestyle. With handy tips on creating a narrative, working with light, introducing colour, re-purposing antiques and designing floor plans, there is no question left unanswered. For more, see p50.
Charlotte Coote, Thames & Hudson, \$59.99



AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE: A HISTORY

Writer, curator, academic and *Belle* alumnus Dr Davina Jackson has penned an erudite treatise on Australian architecture which is as diverse as the country itself and its inhabitants. The evolution from English- and European-inspired forms to a distinctly Australian design vernacular has taken many turns, with technology and climate issues driving the most change. A fascinating and comprehensive look at our built environment.

Davina Jackson, Allen & Unwin, \$39.99



THE KITCHEN DRESSER

In a world of minimalist marble and steel-clad kitchens, there are still some who prefer more personalised accoutrements. This book, subtitled *In Praise of a Furniture Icon*, is a paean to such predilections. Kitchen dressers, in huon pine, French oak or elm, are becoming popular again, even within sleek, contemporary homes, offering stylish storage solutions for collections as well as lending personality and vintage panache. Some exquisite examples are captured on these pages.

Simon Griffiths, Thames & Hudson, \$50

WONDERLAND

A rising star, US decorator Summer Thornton impresses with her assured design sensibility injected with quirky touches. One of her adages, 'Do at least one thing your mother wouldn't', underlines her fresh approach, while her belief that 'colours don't clash' informs her bright and fearless schemes. Her no-rules ethos sees an abundance of technicolour tableaux, ikats paired with leopard skin and buffalo checks with suzanis. No wonder the book's subtitle is *Adventures in Decorating*.

Summer Thornton, Rizzoli, \$95



Style counsel

Edited by JUDY PASCOE

Savvy ideas from smart creatives.



A HOUSE PARTY IN TUSCANY

The wonderfully evocative title transports our imaginations to the glorious olive groves, cypress hedges and sun-splashed vines of Tuscany and, with it, the story of the author's family home at Arniano, where she learned to cook. This engaging tale covers the renovation of the dilapidated farmhouse and its transformation into a residential painting school and food experience. Liberally sprinkled with recipes, as well as mesmerising photographs of the house and its romantic setting, it is an escapist's dream.

Amber Guinness, Thames & Hudson, \$65

KOICHI TAKADA: ARCHITECTURE, NATURE AND DESIGN

Organic forms and an affinity with nature inspire architect Koichi Takada. His buildings integrate with the natural environment as showcased in this volume of his work from the past 10 years. While he is Sydney-based, Japanese-born Takada has perfected his craft around the world, with some of his projects, including the residential Arc towers in Sydney and the National Museum of Qatar in Doha, taking pride of place in this monograph.

Philip Jodidio, Rizzoli, \$150

