

Period



drama

With its thoughtful, painterly interior scheme and dreamy, almost untouchable, elegance, this heritage villa transcends time.

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The peaceful front lounge with its large windows is the perfect place to showcase artist Jessica Zoob's Big Smile wallpaper from Seneca. A moody Y chandelier from Douglas & Bec hangs above a custom sofa by Trinity Interior Design. The Nonn Weatherman coffee table from Simon James Design holds a Baker Gemstone vase and shagreen tray from Cavit & Co. OPPOSITE The welcoming bench seat and squab were designed by Trinity Interior Design. The blue Armadillo & Co rug is from The Ivy House.



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On the custom drinks cabinet and mantel are an Olsen table lamp from Visual Comfort and bowls and objects from Cavit & Co. OPPOSITE The lounge’s dreamy sheer curtains were designed by Trinity Interior Design using Jab Anstoetz fabrics from Seneca. The Moresby floor lamp in antiqued brass is from Visual Comfort.

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The light constantly changes, and that alters the atmosphere and beauty of things every minute,” once penned painter Claude Monet, the leading figure of French Impressionism. While distant in time and space, his philosophy still echoes today in the thoughtful and restful renovation of an Auckland villa surrounded by a manicured garden and adored by a family of three.

The original Devonport home was built in 1908 (when Monet was still mesmerised by, and mimicking, the many moods of his sun-dappled water lilies) and has undergone several restorations by previous owners, including the addition of a conservatory in 2001 and an interior done in the nostalgic Victorian style of bottle green and burgundy walls, with voluminous taffeta drapes.

Lorraine O’Rourke of Trinity Interior Design was called on by the current owners to be the abode’s breath of fresh air. The brief was to redesign the main living areas – the kitchen, conservatory, front lounge, office, master bedroom, family bathroom and entry hallway – to service their modern lifestyle with ease.

“The clients wanted a light, restful space where they could spend time with family and friends,” says Lorraine. “The spaces needed to flow, be fit for purpose, but also possess that intangible quality of feeling right.”

The interior designer’s three secrets to creating an almost ethereal space are to focus on spatial elements, suitability of homeware, and sensory factors. The first places to be given this treatment were the conservatory and lounge, which both led off the kitchen but felt disjointed and, as a result, were largely unused.



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The newly refurbished kitchen is home to RD bar stools in natural leather from Douglas & Bec. The oak-veneer cabinetry with clashed edge was made by DBJ Furniture. The raw-feeling floor features black slate tiles from Artedomus.



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Creating new openings, and redirecting the flow through furniture placement within these spaces, has improved how the inhabitants move around the house. For the homeowners, who love entertaining, the kitchen is now the central hub and the conservatory has been repurposed as a dedicated dining area.

Pushing the dining room into the conservatory allowed more space to introduce dedicated zones in the kitchen. A large bar near a tea-and-coffee station, complete with a HydroTap and drinks fridge, is central to informal catch-ups over tea or Champagne, with guests sitting on the leather RD bar stools from Douglas & Bec. Likewise, the sunny dining space is now a well-thought-out and sensory area for long lunches at the owners’ original crafted wooden table with Danish-designed Gubi chairs. It now seems much more English conservatory than afterthought add-on.

As a heritage building, the relevant consents were required before restoration work could begin on various original features. The pressed ceilings, which had rusted through in parts, had new plaster mouldings formed on site by Plastercraft 2000 and the kitchen chimney breast was stripped and repointed by United House builders.

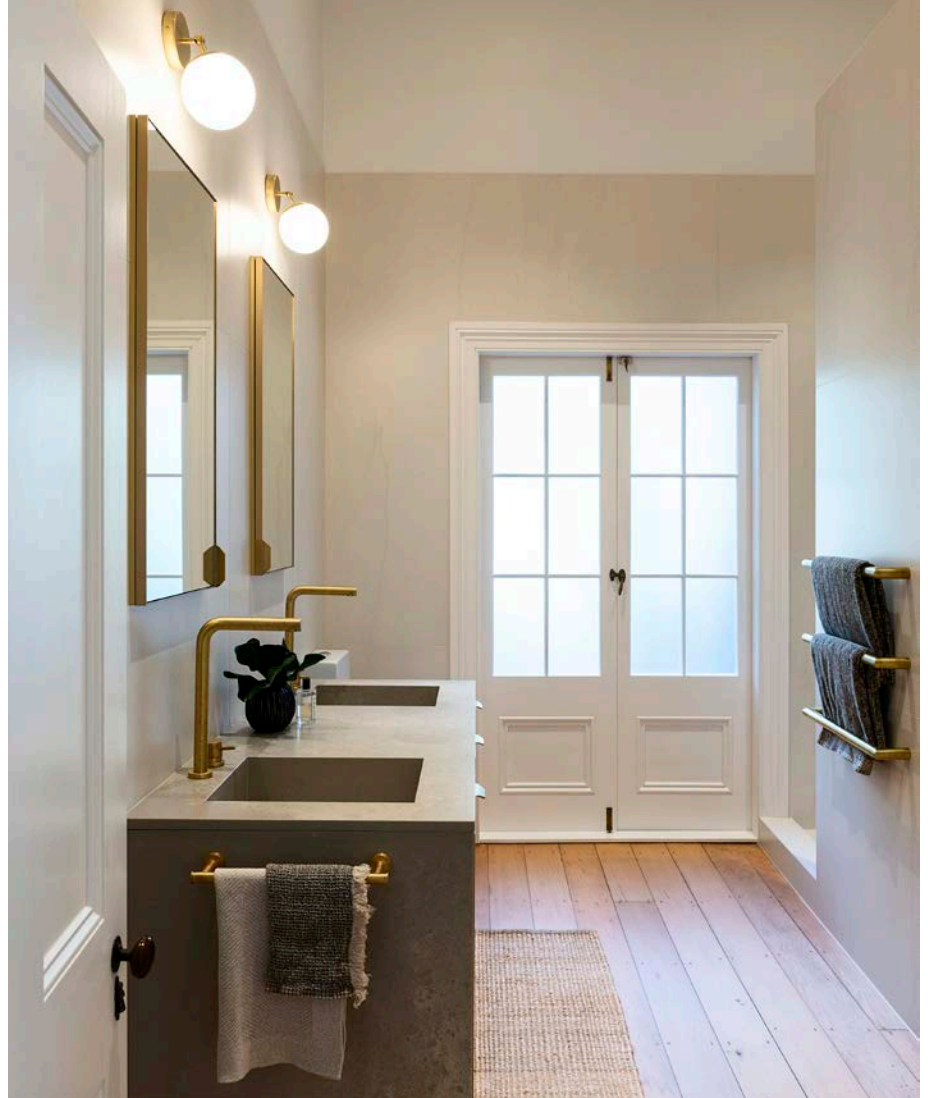
Over the years, previous owners had added painted, marble-look elements and these were duly removed and replaced with a new Victorian-style plaster hallway arch and fireplace surrounds in the lounge. “In terms of design, it is always wonderful to work with villas. The high studs, stained-glass windows and architectural detailing provide a wonderful platform to work from,” says Lorraine.

The owners have a family background in farming and leatherwork and as such are

The striking kitchen splashback is made with Appiani Seta Mirto mosaic tiles from Artedomus. The benchtop is engineered stone by Granite Workshop, from DBJ Furniture. OPPOSITE The clients’ own rustic table has been partnered with Gubi dining chairs from Cult Design. Behind, the custom window seat by Trinity Interior Design is a cosy spot with Seneca and Città cushions.



RIGHT The bathroom revolves around a custom vanity and mirrors (concealing recessed cabinets) with Katalog handles. The wall lights are from Douglas & Bec. The brushed-brass Buddy taps are from Plumblin. BELOW The Master bedroom creates ambience with a pendant light from Lightplan and Cecilie Manz wall lights from Cult Design, while the bench seat and drawers were designed by Trinity Interior Design. Bedding and throw by Society at Alfresco. The vase and jewellery box are from Cavit & Co.



drawn to natural materials. An organic palette, including wool, stone and blonded oak, was used for custom cabinetry and furniture to further enhance the feeling of comfort and distinction. “It’s modern but with due respect paid to the historic nature of the home,” the family say.

Materials were also sourced to suit the clients’ busy lifestyle, and complicated shelving throughout the home was stripped away for streamlined storage solutions. Low-maintenance finishes were key for high-traffic areas but these are balanced with rich colours and pastel tones to still be easy on the eye.

The custom brass-trim vanity mirrors in the family bathroom, for example, conceal recessed storage cabinets with power points for charging electric toothbrushes, while the wall-mounted vanity is clad entirely in engineered stone with integrated basins. The wall-to-wall oak window seat in the conservatory, with a durable indoor-outdoor squab, offers a place to relax but also houses deep storage drawers for the daughter’s board games and Lego.

Colour and texture are important for every surface and help give a romantic quality to the rooms, from the master bedroom’s ceiling in dusty pink Aalto Paint ‘Curve’, to the front lounge’s similarly rose-tinted sheer curtains from Seneca.

The feature of the lounge is a spectacular, painterly wall covering, which is a vision when the sun filters onto it. A print by fine artist Jessica Zoob, it is inspired by the magical light and beauty of the Sussex countryside, where she creates what she calls “dream state” oil paintings.

It’s a breathtaking backdrop for a custom sofa upholstered in a bespoke Martini velvet and a sideboard finished in Aalto Paint ‘Lure’ semi-gloss lacquer. The bespoke elements are luxurious touches that certainly make living here a dream for the homeowners, who sought tranquil spaces to unwind in.

“Each project is different and should reflect the essence of the people who live there,” reflects Lorraine. “On entering the completed lounge, the owners likened the wallpaper to Monet’s garden, which made my day.” ■