



into the bargain

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SLEEK DESIGNER LOOKS CAN BE ACHIEVED ON A SLENDER BUDGET, AS THIS SYDNEY HOME, PROVES

W

hen they were renovating their terrace house in Sydney's Annandale, graphic designer Carol Hudson and her opera singer partner Xiaoming Lan faced a dilemma typical to many home renovators: what to do when you have expensive taste, but not the budget to match?

Their answer was to spend money on the "big structural stuff" and let Carol's penchant for bargain hunting take over when it came to interior design. And the big stuff was huge. "It became clear that we'd have to do everything at once," says Carol. "Doing it in stages wasn't going to work because there were lots of different ceiling heights and floor levels throughout the house. It was never going to be 'right' without starting all over again."

So they took off the back half of the house, added in the large bathroom and put the master bedroom on what used to be the deck. "We opened up all of downstairs and created a void in the hallway, so there's pretty much not a square inch of the house that is original, excluding the front ▶

This page: against the backdrop of Porter's Paints Chalk, used quarter strength, homeowners Carol Hudson and Xiaoming Lan have amassed a rather eclectic furniture collection. A wooden Chinese horse from Corso de' Fiori looks over an armchair that was bought at auction by a friend and re-covered with white canvas. The set of two white coffee tables pushed together were bought on sale at Space. A three-seater sofa from Mobil is topped with Vixen silk and velvet cushions from Stern. A crystal chandelier (also shown right), bought from an antique centre that has now closed, adds a touch of glamour. In the foreground, a wooden ottoman base from Orson & Blake was covered by Carol in fake fur from Spotlight. For stockists see Buyer's Guide.



This page: polished concrete, from D. Raffin and Company, provides a pleasing shine in the kitchen/dining area. A Fios Fucsia pendant, designed by Achille Castiglioni and bought from Lightwise, takes centre stage above a dining table with a Toscana base from Ke-zu (the top was made with polyurethane to match the kitchen cupboard doors). Two Philippe Starck Dr No chairs (white) and two Philippe Starck Cheap Chic chairs (transparent), all from Space Furniture. Vase on the table from David Jones. For stockists see Buyer's guide.



◀ facade." Such a massive make-over required a lot of conceptual assistance. It wasn't just money Carol wanted not to waste – she also wanted to conserve space.

So she put her mind to co-designing the galley-style kitchen with Woolahra-based interior designer Sally McBean. "It made sense to use the space under the stairs for the kitchen," says Carol,

"otherwise it would have been wasted. It has drawers instead of cupboards. We have a deep stair width – 900mm – so it's easier to get into drawers, they're more practical."

Xiaoming and Carol also collaborated with landscape designer Volker Klemm. While Volker came up with the original plans for the Chinese inspired backyard and side garden, it was ▶



DESIGNER DEALS

The secret to grabbing the best designer deals is to be pro-active. Ask in-store, call your favourite retailers, and sign up for mailing lists to get all the latest updates on end-of-season specials and one-off clearances. Check your city newspapers – for Sydney-siders there's a sale calendar in each Saturday's *Sydney Morning Herald* – for weekly lists of promotions. Below right, we've listed a few of our favourites, and it's a great starting point for any dedicated bargain hunter ...



Above left: Xiaoming's broken teapot art is 'installed' behind the dining table. **Above right:** the kitchen features a Caesarstone benchtop from New World Marble. The two Parvus stools are from Design Warehouse. **Below left:** rather than using cupboards, Carol and Xiaoming opted for drawers tucked under the stairs. With a width of 900mm, kitchen items are readily accessible. For stockists see Buyer's Guide.



it's sale time

BOND COLLECTIONS: 55 Camberwell Road, Hawthorn, Vic; 164 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide, SA; 680 Military Road, Mosman, 188 Oxford Street, Paddington, and opening soon in Willoughby, NSW. **Sale dates:** Christmas sale starts Dec 29 and ends Jan 9 (excluding public holiday). There's also a second annual sale in mid-May. All stock marked down 30% to 60%.

LIVING EDGE: Showroom, 345 Bridge Rd, Richmond, Vic. **Sale dates:** annual sales in January and June.

CORPORATE CULTURE: Unit 17, 32 Beaconsfield St, Alexandria, NSW. **Sale date:** Once-a-year, one-day sale on Nov 27, 10am to 4pm.

SPENCE & LYDA: Showroom, 16 Foster St, Surry Hills, NSW. **Sale dates:** late Jan and again in late July to early Aug. Sign up at www.spenceandlyda.com.au to receive dates for upcoming clearances.

SPACE FURNITURE: Showrooms, 84 O'Riordan St, Alexandria, NSW; 629 Church St, Richmond, Vic; 10 James St, Fortitude Valley, Qld. **Sale dates:** Bi-annual sales in Jan and July.

HUB FURNITURE: 63 Exhibition St, Melbourne VIC 3000. **Sale dates:** Sign up at www.hubfurniture.com.au for the latest on clearance items.

TOP 3 BY DESIGN: Showroom, 391-393 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest, and opening soon at Bondi Westfield, NSW. **Sale dates:** Sign up at www.top3.com.au for regular clearance updates.

AERO DESIGN: 534a Bridge Rd, Richmond, Vic; 479-493 Bourke St, Surry Hills, NSW. **Sale dates:** Check www.aeroplus.com.au for dates.

KE-ZU: Showroom, 179 Harris St, Pyrmont, NSW, and distributors Australia-wide. Go to www.ke-zu.com.au for a comprehensive list of local distributors. **Sale Dates:** Ke-zu has an online sale that runs every day of the year. Visit the Ke-zu website see which items are currently sale-priced.



"I'll always wait for the sales"



COLOUR CODE If you like the colours used in this home, these paints will appeal:

1. Covered in Paint Tempest Brown; Dulux Pawn Broker; Taubmans Belgian Chocolate 2. Bristol Crystalline; Taubmans Minimal White; Resene Sea Fog 3. Bristol Big Red; Taubmans Poinciana Red; Resene Dynamite 4. Resene Double Ash; Porter's Paints Old Stone Wall; Dulux Barnfloor

Above: white bed linen from Myer is topped with a brown mohair rug from Country Road and red cushions from Ruby Star Traders.

Above right: a classical Chinese poem calligraphy by Xiaoming's father hangs above a white bowl from David Jones that's filled with Tsé et Tsé string of cube lights from Wabi Gallery (now closed).

Right: tall papyrus plants lend a tranquil air to a small side garden, located off the kitchen area. Aluminium-framed sliding doors from Traditional Windows.

Opposite, top: colourful coi carp in their garden 'lap pool', designed and made by Xiaoming. The pool is surrounded by low-maintenance dichondra grass. **Opposite, bottom:** the bathroom vanity was designed by Carol and built by Doors with Backbone. Gunmetal floor tiles from Fred Pazzotti. Parisi basin from Cass Brothers. For stockists see Buyer's Guide.




◀ Xiaoming and Carol who developed and implemented them, with Xiaoming making the 'tap pool' for the coi carp himself.

Back inside, the home is dotted with pieces by French design guru Philippe Starck, which Carol prefers not to pay full price for. She may hunt at top-notch design stores such as Sydney's Space Furniture, but only gathers when the sales are on. "I wait for the sales then buy the pieces, which is why we have a bit of an odd collection of chairs, but I quite like that."

"I try to find less expensive ways of doing things and use my imagination instead of relying on off-the-shelf purchases. I've also bought a few student works from the College of Fine Arts, where I teach design," says Carol.

Perhaps the cheapest and most interesting objet d'art is Xiaoming's "broken teapot installation" which takes pride of place in the dining area's feature wall. As its name suggests, it was created when a Chinatown-bought teapot found itself a moving-house casualty.

The home has a lovely zen atmosphere, with much of the downstairs area opening out onto garden. The use of white attracts light and acts as a blank canvas onto which the quirky furniture comes to life.

"What I love is the contrast of the hard edge and clean lines of the benchtop with the softer, freeform shapes," says Carol. "If you had all rounded shapes it would look too homogenous. It's a common design approach, and in tune with the Chinese principles of yin and yang." 

McBean and Co, Woolahra, NSW; (02) 9327 7999. Volker Klemm
Landscape Design and Construction, Newport, NSW; (02) 9979 3433

