

INSIDE

DECORATING & RENOVATING GUIDE

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design solutions: kitchen

SIMPLE TOUCH

BUILDING A KITCHEN AROUND A LIGHT WELL HAS CREATED A SPACIOUS FRENCH PROVINCIAL FEEL WHILE KEEPING TO A TIGHT BUDGET

HOW

BACKGROUND It was love at first sight when Natasha Marshall saw a heritage-listed 1910 corner-shop-cum-home for sale in Sydney's Leichhardt. "I loved the feel of it – it somehow reminded me of a country house." The front rooms needed little attention, but the rear "was a 'dog box', with one addition haphazardly added to another over time."

BUDGET With only a very modest budget, Natasha, who works for architecture firm Hosking Munro, had to fit out her kitchen as economically as possible. "I saved on joinery by using products from Ikea and spent money on the oven, dishwasher and sink mixer."

SOLUTION Natasha wanted to create a light-filled space that would be sensitive to the building's history. "I couldn't change the plan of the house, so I had to work with existing walls." The key to the success of her design was to bring natural light into this centralised zone via a light well. "The light well came first, then decisions about the surrounding spaces followed," she says. "Because the layout of the house was unusual, with the main living spaces located in the front of the home, the typical solution of opening up the back wouldn't have worked here."

Once part of a windowless interior room, the light well works to open up the kitchen and create the illusion of space. Natasha discovered the French doors that open out into the well in her father's shed in Berry, NSW, and had the side windows made to match them. The 19th-century French shuttered windows within the well were sourced locally from Architectural & Antique Elements, (02) 9560 3067. "The height of the door and window elements adds a sense of elegance," explains Natasha. The pale-green Vietnamese concrete tiles that line the floor of the light well cost around \$52 per sqm from Aena Country Floors, (02) 9326 2444. →



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FINISH LINES The walls had been previously rendered and the ceiling lined with pine boards, which Natasha chose to extend down one wall. Blackbutt was selected for the floor and marine-quality hoop-pine ply for the midriff shelf. Sleek stainless-steel accessories were added to complement the provincial feel. Udden console (left), \$159; and console with sink, \$269, both from Ikea, (02) 8002 0400, www.ikea.com.au. Smeg dishwasher, from \$1670, and oven, \$2670, both from Winning Appliances, (02) 9498 8099. Program Plus, \$977.03 sink mixer, \$447, from Brodware, (02) 9421 8200. Doors painted with High Gloss Acrylic in Avocado, \$34 per 1L, from Porter's Paints, 1800 656 664.



CORNER PIECE What looks like a galley kitchen is actually an L-shaped design – along the corridor is a wall of storage featuring a broom cupboard, bookshelves, pantry and fridge. "Not having the fridge in the galley zone helped create the open feel," says Natasha.

Under the window runs a hoop-pine ply bench, with decorative items on top and storage baskets below. Walls painted with Wash & Wear 101 Advanced Semi Gloss in Antique White USA, \$32 per 1L, from Dulux, 13 23 77.



ACCESS ALL AREAS Open shelves fill what was once a doorway and feature neatly arranged cups and glasses. With space at a premium, items on display were selected for both their function and design aesthetic. "An open kitchen works well, as you can get your hands on everything," says Natasha. Unsightly pieces are stored below the kitchen consoles in baskets sourced from Ikea.



ON A ROLL Extra storage and preparation areas come in the form of hardwood-topped stainless-steel cabinets, which neatly wheel away under the benchtops when not in use. Originally hospital drawers, Natasha found them at Art + Soul Furniture in Gerringong, NSW, (02) 4234 2322. →

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