

# SOUTHERN CHARM

Sustainability shines in this welcoming country home, which showcases the best of the NSW Southern Highlands.

STORY *Lucie Clark* | STYLING *Olga Lewis* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Pablo Veiga*



The serene living room at the weekend of interior designer Graham Simmonds and his partner Cody Hanish is the perfect spot to sit with a wine in front of the fire. It features a pendant light that Graham made as "a DIY project". Walls painted Tint So Fresh and So Clean. Brass wall lights, Mooielight. Vintage armchairs reupholstered in James Dunlop Textiles 'Brooklyn' fabric in Chalk. 1960s pedestal side table, East Wing Studio. Chub coffee table, Sarah Ellison. Curtains in James Dunlop Textiles 'Simplicity' fabric in Parchment, DIY Blinds. Vintage floor lamp with custom shade by Paralume. Rug, Gray & Co Store. Blonde oak flooring, Flooring Online (throughout). Tibet checkerboard tiles, Skheme.

## H&G AT HOME WITH

**THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE TOP** Owners Cody Hanish (left) and Graham Simmonds relax with their Weimaraner, Mosby, in the living room. Vintage cabinet, Gray & Co Store. Shell cottage-format limestone fireplace, Limestone Australia. Vintage sofa upholstered in James Dunlop 'Lusk' fabric in Parched. Apogee and Longitude ceramics by Stephanie Phillips, The DEA Store. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** Many meals are enjoyed in this inviting space. Antoine dining armchairs and Farmhouse dining table, all from Eureka Street Furniture. Rina Menardi 'Lagoon' platter, Ondene. ▶



The kitchen balances urban chic and country comfort beautifully. Joinery finished in Porter's Paints Volcanic Ash and American oak veneer island by Kitchen Complex. Classic Calacatta quartz benchtop and splashback, Marable. Knurled Icon+ lever tapware in Urban Brass, Astra Walker. Glass Ball Disc wall lights, Fat Shack Vintage. Recessed cabinet pulls, HardwareBox. Bronte appliance pulls in Burnished Brass, Hepburn Hardware. Appliances, Fisher & Paykel.

Sydneyers have long been drawn to the charming NSW Southern Highlands as a weekend getaway destination. An easy 90-minute drive from Sydney, there's a host of picturesque villages and wineries to visit and glorious country walks to enjoy. The ideal place to relax and unwind.

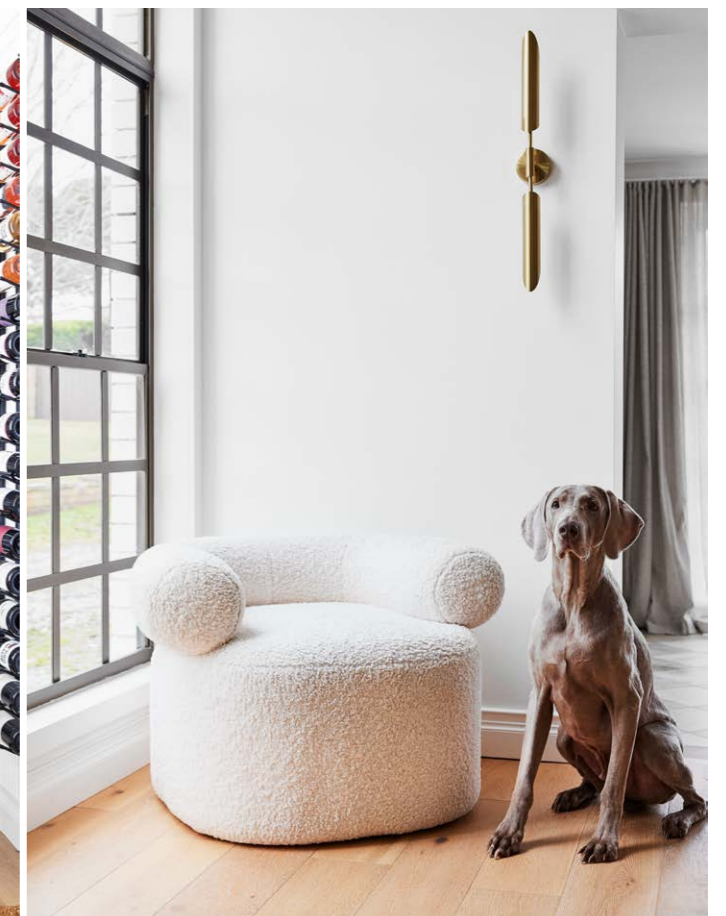
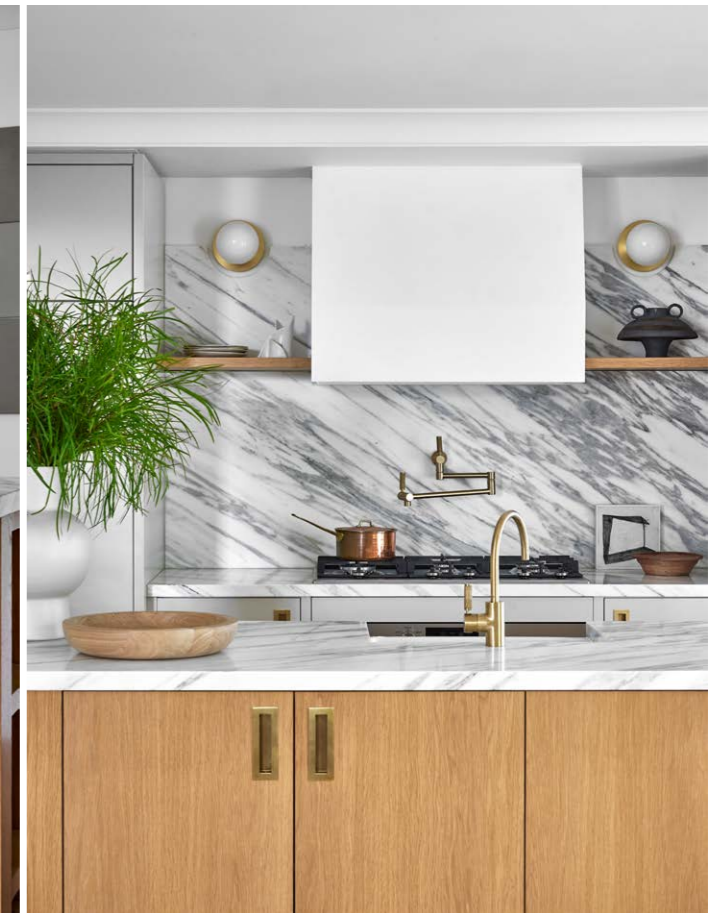
In 2020, interior designer Graham Simmonds and his partner, Cody Hanish, bought this 2500-square-metre property as an investment, with the idea of eventually transforming it into an idyllic country weekender where guests could "curl up and nest".

The house required a full "back to studs" renovation that took almost two years due to Covid-related delays. Graham, the principal and founder of Gray & Co, reworked the existing floor plan to create a sense of grandeur and open up the single-level, four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom home's layout. ▶





The breakfast nook serves up casual meals with a view. Matchstick blinds, Bunnings. Bench seat upholstered in Zepel Fabrics 'Assertion'. Cushions, Ikea. Classique dining table, GlobeWest. Brass pendant light, Gray & Co Store. **OPPOSITE TOP, LEFT AND RIGHT** Artwork by Graham Simmonds. Mixer tap and pot filler, both Astra Walker. Sink, Turner & Hastings. Wall lights, Fat Shack Vintage. Classic Calacatta quartz benchtops and splashback. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT** Wall-mounted racks from Wine Stash ensure the perfect drop is always within reach. Chair by Rachael Donath. Side table, Gray & Co Store. Door handle, Iver. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT** Mosby enjoys the light in the living room as much as Cody and Graham do. Huggy Montauk armchair, Sarah Ellison. ▶





“We manipulated the space to open up the floor plan and create a real sense of entry, making it feel more grand,” he explains. “It’s quite a sprawling house, in terms of it all being on one level.”

As part of the new layout, Graham added a well-stocked wine room. The answer to “a really awkward space”, it’s become an important part of the home, showcasing wines from the region. “We made the decision to make a feature out of the wine room,” he says. “I thought it would be really beautiful, considering the Southern Highlands is known for all kinds of wines, and our family really loves going to wineries. We thought it was a really nice touch.”

With the country escape plan in mind, Graham collaborated with his favourite suppliers to fulfil his vision. He combined classic style, such as board-and-batten details on the bathroom walls, with brass tapware and hardware, as well as timeless luxury in the form of marble benchtops in the kitchen, bathrooms and laundry.

However, it was Graham’s stepmother’s role as a sustainability consultant that ultimately informed the overall design approach. “Sustainability is always important, which is part of the reason a lot of the furniture is vintage,” he says. “I just love buying second-hand furniture and restoring and reupholstering it to give it a new life.”

“We did buy some new things as well, but we really did want to introduce a lot of vintage so the house felt warm and characterful, like the interior had evolved over time... even though it hadn’t been. We wanted to give the property a sense of history. I think that’s part of its appeal as holiday accommodation - it feels like a family home rather than a showroom.”

Although the house was initially planned to be used primarily as an investment property, it’s so inviting that Graham’s parents are currently living in it full-time. With Graham, Cody and Mosby, their beloved ▶

**TOP LEFT** The powder room is all soft curves and moody tones. Le Sirenuse mirror, Lucy Montgomery. Vanity in Arabescato Grigio, Marable. Walls painted Bauwerk Colour Tumble. **LEFT AND OPPOSITE** “The Green Room” makes for a cosy hangout. Walls painted Tint Kong. Sofa upholstered in Zepel ‘Suggestion’. French Modernist armchairs, Larkwood Furniture. Carnaby rug, Tribe Home. Agra coffee table, Eureka Street Furniture. Floor lamp and cushions, Gray & Co Store. Curtains in James Dunlop Textiles ‘Balance’, DIY Blinds. Vintage oil paintings, artists unknown. Throw, Ondene. Prowler #6 sculpture by Korban/Flaubert (on coffee table). Spiral Stair sculpture by Natalie Rosin (on piano), Curatorial+Co. Stone face sculpture, Orient House.



“We did buy some new things, but we really did want to include a lot of vintage pieces.”

GRAHAM SIMMONDS, OWNER & INTERIOR DESIGNER

“We manipulated the space to open up the floor plan.  
It’s quite a sprawling house now.” GRAHAM



Weimaraner, frequently spending weekends there too. “We love getting together and sitting by the fire,” says Graham.

He says it’s difficult to pick a favourite space, but they tend to gravitate to the family room - also known as “the green room”- more than they expected. “We didn’t think we would use the family room very much,” he says. “It has the only TV in the house and it’s super cosy in there. In the morning, natural light floods in from both sides and it’s just a really beautiful place to be. We’ll often set a giant cheese platter on the coffee table and sit on the carpet and just chill together as a family.”

*Gray & Co Interior Design, Potts Point, NSW;*  
[grayandco.com.au](http://grayandco.com.au).

**ABOVE** Symmetry reigns supreme in the main ensuite, with its matching Southold vanities by Vanity By Design. Lindbyn mirrors, Ikea. Wall lights, West Elm. LB 35 wall panelling, Intrim Mouldings. Curtains in James Dunlop Textiles ‘Balance’, DIY Blinds. **LEFT** Neutral tones in the main bedroom prescribe rest and relaxation. Walls painted Tint Inhale, Exhale. Bed, cushions and floor lamp, all Gray & Co Store. Huggy Montauk armchair, Sarah Ellison. 100 Lines rug in Silver, Four Corners Rugs. Artwork by Kathleen Simmonds. Helsinki door hardware in Brushed Brass, Iver. Curtains in James Dunlop Textiles ‘Simplicity’, DIY Blinds.

In this guestroom, all the creature comforts are accounted for. Vintage bedhead reupholstered in James Dunlop Textiles 'Keystone' fabric in Sand. Malroy wall lamp, Fat Shack Vintage. Pièrre side table, Sarah Ellison. Cushion, Lucy Montgomery. Abode sculpture by Natalie Rosin, Curatorial+Co. ▶



“We wanted to give the house a sense of history so it felt like a home, not a showroom.” GRAHAM



**ABOVE** A beautiful pot from Water Tiger on a vintage table from Gray & Co Store is a welcoming sight at the entry. Exterior painted Tint No Battery. Piccolo wall lights, Mercator. **BOTTOM LEFT** The laundry cabinets are finished in Dulux Black Caviar. Bench and splashback in Arabescato Grigio, Marable. Cuisine sink, Turner Hastings. Appliances, Bosch. Vintage painting by unknown artist. **BOTTOM RIGHT** In the ensuite, wall lights from Ikea illuminate the Southold vanity from Vanity By Design. Tate mirror, Temple & Webster. Vase, Planet. Hand wash, Santa Maria Novella. *For Where to Buy, see page 190.* ▶





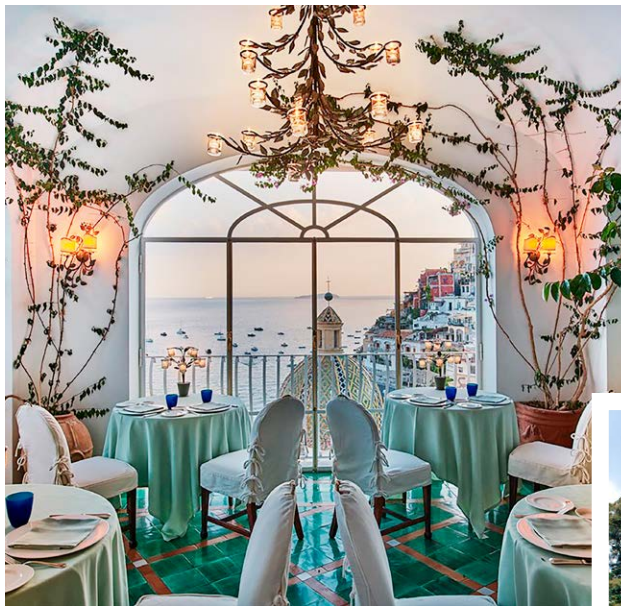
# LIFE & STYLE

Graham Simmonds shares some firsts and favourite things...

1



“I ADORE GOING SHOPPING. WHO DOESN'T LIKE GETTING NEW THINGS?”



2



3



4

5



6



7



**FIRST ADULT HOME?** I was 19 and had just moved to Sydney after a failed attempt at living in London during the global financial crisis. I rented the smallest studio ever in Paddington, just off Oxford Street. It was only 25 square metres, but it was all mine. It had rendered walls painted ballet pink and travertine floors, so it was freezing in winter. The bathroom was basically a hallway with a toilet down one end and shower on the other but it was “fully renovated”.

**BUCKET-LIST DESTINATION?** I'm longing to go to Giraffe Manor in Nairobi, Kenya (7). Google it.

**DREAM RESTAURANT TABLE?** La Sponda Restaurant (2) in Positano, Italy. You can Google that one too.

**DREAM CAR?** I'm not really a car person, but the 1955 Porsche Speedster in black with a tan interior (5).

**FAVOURITE DOWNTIME PURSUIT?** Shopping. Who doesn't like getting new things?

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS?** [Dutch photomosaic artist] Nemo Jantzen (1) and New York-based Australian artist, C] Hendry.

**INTERIOR DESIGNERS WHO INSPIRE YOU?** Amber Lewis, Jake Arnold, Nate Berkus and Jeremiah Brent.

**I LOVE TO COOK...** Pasta. All day, every day.

**I'M CURRENTLY READING...** *Do You Mind If I Cancel?: (Things That Still Annoy Me)* by Gary Janetti.

**FAVOURITE SCENT?** Fresh jasmine, because that means it's starting to warm up and summer is coming. Or, if we are talking fragrance, Jazz Club eau de toilette by Maison Margiela (3).

**FAVOURITE PODCASTS?** *More Than One Thing* with Athena Calderon.

**I LOVE A VASE FULL OF...** Any white flowers – peonies are a particular favourite. But I also like something simple like three large Monstera leaves (6).

**FAVOURITE MOVIE?** I don't really have a favourite. But I do love '90s movies like *Father Of The Bride* (1991) or *The First Wives Club* (1996). The physical comedy in both is amazing and it doesn't matter how many times you watch them, you still laugh.

**NEXT MAJOR PURCHASE FOR THE HOME?** We will be gutting our apartment in March so there is too many to list. Storage – like this Zuster 'Embellish' cocktail cabinet (4) – will be up there.

**I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT...** Sunshine, design and cocktails. **H&G**

Casablanca artwork by Nemo Jantzen (1), reproduced courtesy of the artist; nemojantzen.com. Photography courtesy of Le Sirenuse Positano (2), Alamy (7).