

CREATURE COMFORTS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
SHANNON McGRATH

THIS CREATIVE'S SEASIDE
SANCTUARY HAS SURPRISES AROUND
EVERY CORNER

WORDS BY
KATE LANCASTER

STYLING BY
SHARON PATSIOTIS

A striking Fortuny lamp
by Venetia Studium is
a conversation-starter
in the living room

SHARON PATSIOTIS WAS LOUNGING BY A POOL IN FIJI when she discovered her dream house had come on the market. "I knew the building well – it ticked all the boxes and then some," she explains. "I couldn't wait to get back to Australia to see the interior. The moment I laid eyes on it, I knew it was perfect."

For Patsiotis, founder of luxury linen label Hale Mercantile Co, and her husband, the property's South West Victoria location fulfilled their wish for a country bolthole to escape the busy city. "We met in the country, so it was inevitable we would buy a home there," she explains. "We were warned about the long commute, but our drive through the western district always brings a feeling of belonging." >



"I LOVE the CHARM of a SMALL SPACE for SHOWCASING DECORATIVE PIECES"

One of the only tweaks to the original post-office building was a new kitchen



A Vox Populi ship lamp by Pascale Palun sits alongside ceramics by Astier De Villatte



Patsiotis (below, with her moodle Aytron) has a "fetish" for taxidermy, which she commissioned to Mat Anthes (talons_odt)



Originally constructed as the town's post office in 1881, the building stands in the centre of the small seaside town of Port Fairy. Before the couple and their 12-year-old moodle, Aytron, took residence in the abode (with their two sons visiting in the summer), they set about renovating the interior. "We wanted to make it more functional to live in," Patsiotis explains.

Given the historic roots of the property, restorations were kept largely cosmetic and the solid bluestone façade was left untouched. "We added an extra bathroom, opened some of the walls, restored all the plaster work and fire places, and built a new kitchen," she says.

Minimal tweaks to the layout allowed for a spacious, light-filled flow throughout the rooms, but it was important to Patsiotis that the structure retained its cosy atmosphere. "Today's families are drawn to open-plan living, but I've always loved the charm of a small space for showcasing decorative pieces that don't work in large living areas," she says. >





TOP FIVE
SHARON'S MUST-HAVE
STYLE BUYS

Light, \$4,540,
PORCELAIN BEAR,
porcelainbear.com

Mirror, \$165,
THE SOCIETY INC,
thesocietyinc.com.au

Table, \$POA, CASSINA,
spacefurniture.com.au

Chair, \$2,290, HALE
MERCANTILE CO,
halemercantilecolinen.com

Plates, from \$110 each,
ASTIER DE VILLATTE,
lilypond.net.au



All linen, including the
shower curtain, is by
Hale Mercantile Co

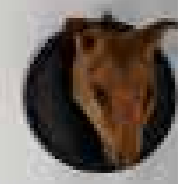


Artwork throughout the
house is from Wishart
Gallery, Port Fairy



"Our slip-
covered LINEN
BEDHEADS
MEAN I can
CHANGE THE
COLOUR on
a WHIM"

Hanging light
pendants by Porcelain
Bear frame the bed



Settling on décor was the easiest part for Patsiotis. She tapped Hale Mercantile Co's list of homewares stockists for inspiration, as well as sourcing ideas from her business trips to Europe. Patsiotis has a penchant for taxidermy, and intriguing specimens decorate her home – sourced through accidental or natural death. Despite her love of art and antiques, Patsiotis wanted the architectural details to be the focal point. A colour palette of white walls and lime-washed floor boards lends a calm backdrop.

In keeping with the aesthetic of her brand, Patsiotis gravitated towards timeless, high-quality pieces with a touch of imperfection to add character. And while the creative doesn't favour one specific style ("I don't like things to be too uniform"), Hale Mercantile Co's artisan linen is featured throughout each room – albeit due to its versatility. "Our slip-covered linen bedheads are so easy to wash and I can change the colour on a whim, without needing a whole new piece of furniture," says Patsiotis.

With restorations now complete, the home acts as a refuge from the trappings of hectic metropolitan life, especially during the cooler months. "Even though it's a coastal town, my husband and I enjoy the calm and quiet of winter, when the deep sea fisherman fill the dock with their plentiful catch," Patsiotis explains. During her downtime, you'll find the designer taking a moment to read or draw in the dining room, or simply gazing out at the peaceful surrounds. "I love looking over the town's rooftops from my window," she says. E