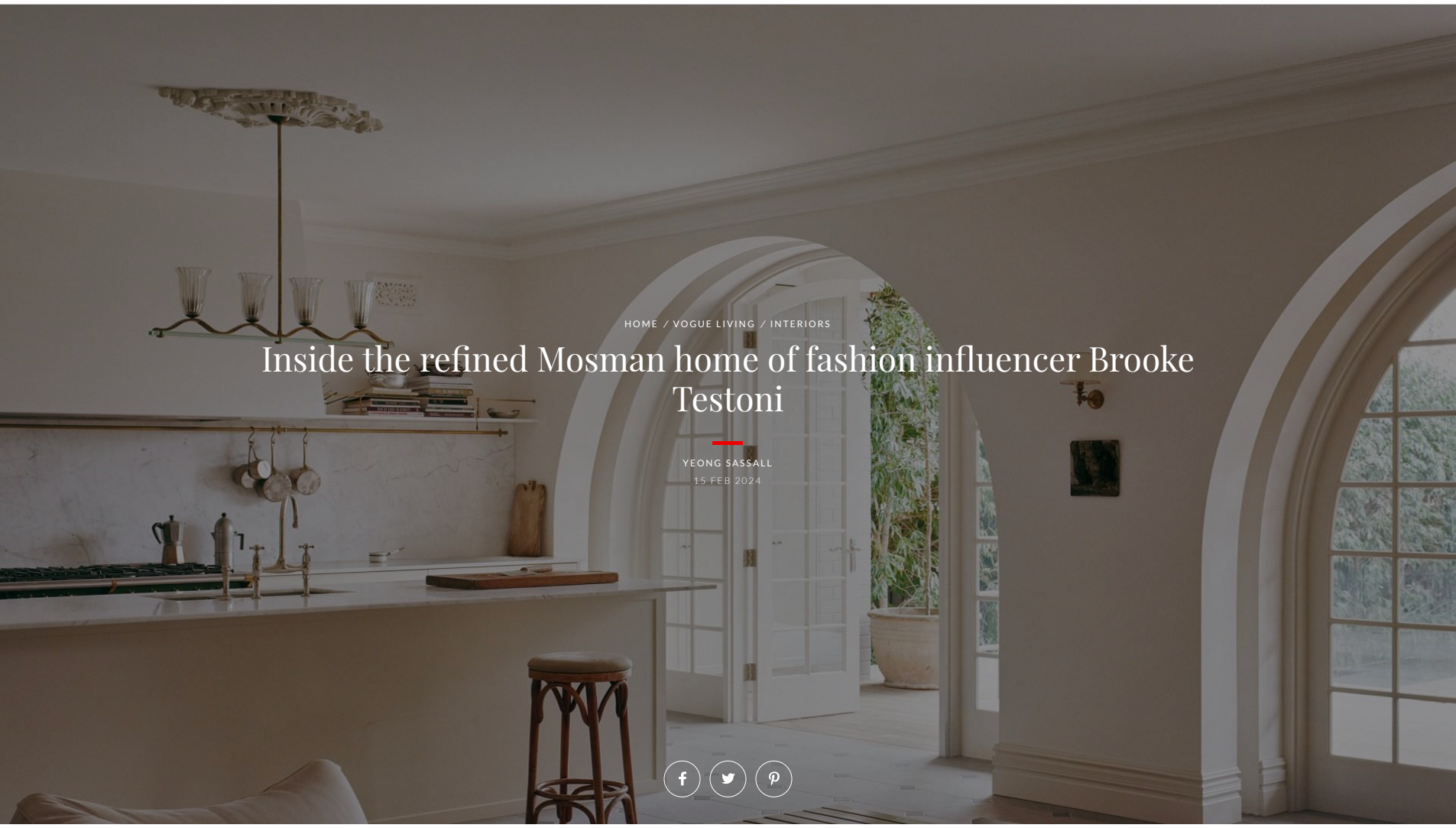


Inside the refined Mosman home of fashion influencer Brooke Testoni

YEONG SASSALL

15 FEB 2024

In the heritage Sydney home of fashion entrepreneur Brooke Testoni, traditional Arts and Crafts architecture merges seamlessly with classic yet contemporary design details, all guided under the masterful eye of designer Alexandra Ponting. *Photographed by Rory Gardiner. Styled by Joseph Gardner*

1 / 25

In the kitchen and living room of this Mosman home, Brazilian rosewood bench by Sergio Rodrigues from Vampt Vintage Design, four-shade pendant light from Nicholas & Alistair, vintage Thonet stool from Candela 27, upholstered in Alhambra linen.

There is a tendency among home owners to wax lyrical about the 'bones' and 'original features' of a home, but when it comes to crunch time, simply do away with these details altogether, in favour of something more streamlined and modern. Not Brooke Testoni. The fashion influencer and founder of luxury accessories label Rylan is a self-confessed minimalist and when it comes to her interiors, she's just as considered in her choices. "I subscribe to a less is more philosophy with the use of a soft palette and textures," she explains. "I love when the bones of a home truly speak for themselves, [and] I think this is why I have always been so fond of Federation homes."

2 / 25

Home owner Brooke Testoni in the sitting room of her Mosman home. Le Bambole 2-seater sofa by Mario Bellini for B&B Italia from 506070, Brazilian rosewood armchair by Luiz Laufer for Moveis Pailar from Vampt Vintage Design, vintage PK61 coffee table in Cipollini marble by Poul Kjaerholm for E. Kold Christensen from The Finery Company, Persian Mazandaran flatweave rug from Cadrys, Viabizzuno Minima terra argento hacca floor lamp from VBO Australia, pendant light from The Vault.

It's also why, when Testoni and her husband Leith landed upon a beautiful Art and Crafts Federation home in Mosman seven years ago, they fell swiftly fell in love. It helps that the five-bedroom property makes the perfect family home for son, Franco, daughter, Mila, and dog, Presley. “We wanted to restore the home, keep its beautiful traditional bones, but modernise it for a family,” adds Testoni.

3 / 25

Built in 1906, the house’s striking period details were also not lost on interior designer Alexandra Ponting of AP Design House, who applied her timeless signature to the project’s design narrative. Together with Hampton Architecture and Damien Lane of Revolution BC, the designer worked to transform the traditional home into something polished and classic, yet conducive to the demands of a young family.

4/25
In the living room, Le Bambole 3-seater sofas by Mario Bellini for B&B Italia from 506070, Daphine Terra LED floor lamp from Lumina, primitive timber side table from The Vault.

Ponting devised the interior architecture and worked hard to simplify some of the more dated elements, such as the ground floor layout. “Some rooms and spaces were generous and grand in scale, while the back section of the house along with the lower ground floor were small and not well thought out,” she says. “It’s funny, because the back of the house and bottom level take in the gorgeous garden views. It goes to show what was prioritised back in the day.”

5/25
In addition to five bedrooms, the home encompasses three bathrooms, a mudroom, powder room, two living spaces and a kitchen. Some adjustments had to be made to cater for these—the master bedroom was reduced in size to make way for the mudroom, a Juliette balcony was added to the rear for increased natural light and air flow, and the entire kitchen was relocated downstairs to the ground floor level. This meant that upstairs had to be configured for a new master bedroom, with two adjoining walk-in wardrobes and an ensuite.

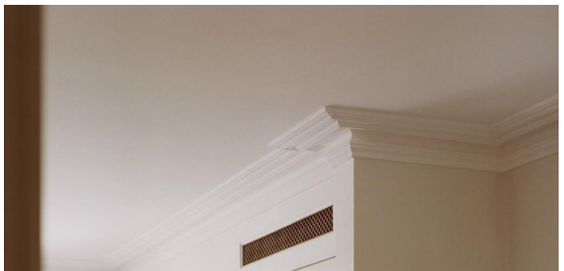
6 / 25

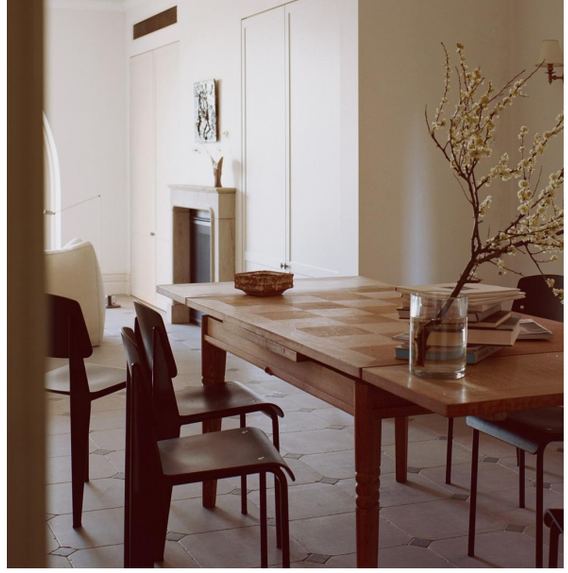
On the ground floor, which was opened up so that each space flowed seamlessly into the next, custom doors were added to the arches, which Testoni admires as “a true feature of the home”. That said, some rooms needed more care than others and Testoni was mindful of creating changes that would withstand the test of time. “There were some rooms where walls needed to be rebuilt so that the structure of the home would be sound for the next century to come,” she says.

---

7 / 25

But perhaps most importantly, the house had to be hard-wearing. Despite how clutter-free the house looks in photos, Testoni is adamant they are still a regular family dealing with food spills, and the creeping onslaught of mess that every parent battles with. “We have a five-year-old and a two-year-old, so no, they’re not neat at all!” she laughs. “It was important to change the configuration to make the home more kid-friendly. We opened up the lower ground level so we could see the kids playing inside and out, whilst cooking and entertaining.”

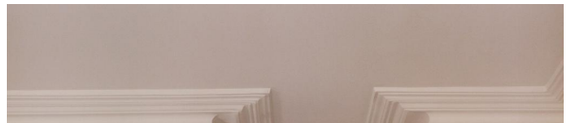




8 / 25
In the dining room passage, oak dining table from The Vault, Jean Prouvé Standard dining chairs from Vampt Vintage Design.

In the living room, the addition of cabinetry on either side of the fireplace and in the garage worked as extra storage space for the kids' toys. "In terms of finishings, we used flooring that was hardwearing and easy to mop up any spills," adds Testoni. "We used sisal instead of carpet. We love the look of it, plus it is great for everyday wear and tear."

9 / 25
While Testoni and Ponting worked hard to preserve the house's original features—the arched windows, staircase and intricate cornices—the kitchen received the lion's share of attention. Increasing the size of the space and ensuring it was integrated with the family and outdoor spaces was paramount, but there was one element of the design that Ponting stumbled on. "It was Alex's idea to feature a statement traditional floor," says Testoni.



10 / 25

Given the palette was overwhelmingly neutral, the designer had to push a little harder for her tile choice on the ground floor. “I did lose some sleep over the darker grey and charcoal floors on the lower level,” she admits. Luckily, the gamble paid off. “The tumbled marble cabochon tiles are so elegant and beautiful” enthuses Testoni.

11 / 25

The reconfiguration of the ground floor was transformative in more ways in one, giving a previously “wasted space” a newfound sense of utility. “This is the heart of the home,” explains Testoni. “It’s where we spend most of our time as a family. Now, the space is open featuring the large kitchen, butler’s [pantry], living room and dining in the one space, plus gives us access to the outdoor living, pool and yard. The custom arch doors let in a lot of natural light, so it’s a very warm inviting space.”

12 / 25

While the home's colour palette is inarguably stripped back and neutral, Testoni and Ponting chose to focus on materiality as a means of creating texture, and light and shade. Ponting points to the variance in natural stone and timber as key. "I like the fact these materials feel like they have been there forever," she says. "Nice and solid, and tactile. It would be sacrilegious to introduce anything mass produced or inferior to the original house structure."

13 / 25

In the hallway with a view to the main bedroom, Model 31 rare edition chair in Karelian birch veneer by Alvar Aalto (1932) from Composition.

Even the floorboards on the middle ground floor were roasted in an oven to achieve a particular shade of brown. "Everything has a story," says Ponting. "I found the tiles for the stone splashback in the powder room in Italy—reclaimed from an old building, originally laid in the 17th century. I love how you can see the thickness of this stone and all the imperfections."

14 / 25

Upstairs in the bathrooms and on the Juliette balcony off the main bedroom, Ponting chose tiles with a miniature cabochon pattern that would riff on the larger-sized tiles downstairs. “We also mixed up the palette across the board,” explains Ponting. “Decorative ceiling rosettes, a sandstone fireplace, hand-painted joinery, doors and windows are among other new additions—all custom designed in response to the original architecture.”

15 / 25

With all elements working in perfect harmony, it’s little wonder the home has become a sanctuary of sorts for the family. “It is elegant and grand, but at the same time—cosy and casual,” agrees Ponting. “We love how central the home is,” adds Testoni, who finds the harbourside location both idyllic and practical for family life. “You can walk to all the stores and delis in Mosman, down to Balmoral Beach, [it’s] close to our kids’ schools, and moments from the ferries if you need to get across to the city.”

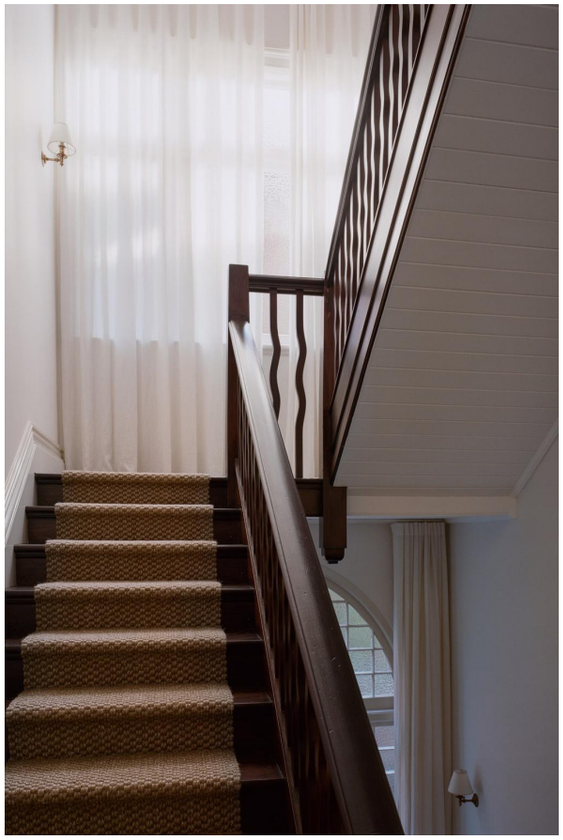
16 / 25
Another view of a bathroom.

17 / 25
The entrance to a bathroom.

18 / 25
The main bedroom, wool rug from Anibou, Art Deco burl tall chest made for the Savoy Hotel from

Vampt Vintage Design.

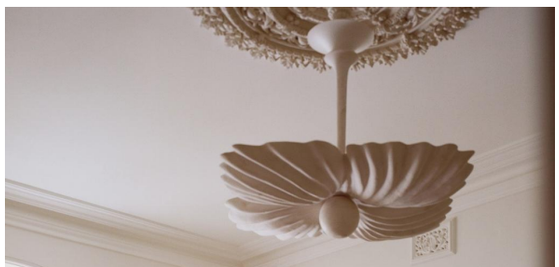
19 / 25
The hallway.



20 / 25
The original staircase.

21 / 25
Testoni's son, Franco.

22 / 25
Another bathroom.



23 / 25
A living area.

24 / 25
The powder room.

25 / 25
The front door.

Want more *Vogue Living*? Sign up to the *Vogue Living* newsletter for your weekly dose of design news and interiors inspiration.