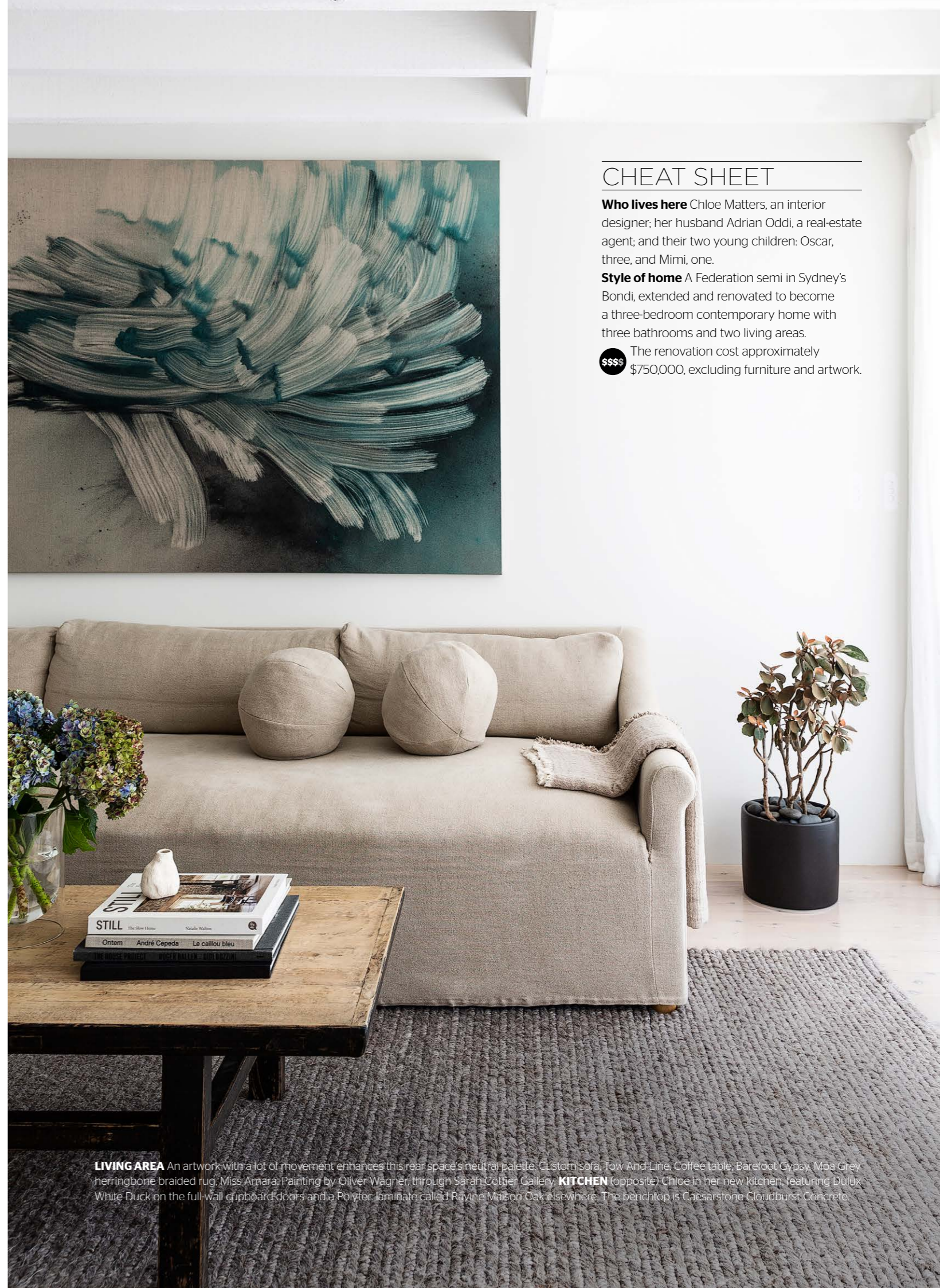




# MEMORY LANE

Chloe Matters transformed her small Sydney semi into a gorgeous family home by trawling through some very personal design references and literally plastering them on the walls

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## CHEAT SHEET

**Who lives here** Chloe Matters, an interior designer; her husband Adrian Oddi, a real-estate agent; and their two young children: Oscar, three, and Mimi, one.

**Style of home** A Federation semi in Sydney's Bondi, extended and renovated to become a three-bedroom contemporary home with three bathrooms and two living areas.

**\$\$\$** The renovation cost approximately \$750,000, excluding furniture and artwork.

**LIVING AREA** An artwork with a lot of movement enhances this rear space's neutral palette. Custom sofa, Tow And Line. Coffee table, Barefoot Gypsy. Moe Grey herringbone braided rug. Miss Amara. Painting by Oliver Wagner through Sarah Cotter Gallery. **KITCHEN** (opposite) Chloe in her new kitchen, featuring Dulux White Duck on the full-wall cupboard doors and a Polytec laminate called Rayne Maison Oak elsewhere. The benchtop is Caesarstone Cloudburst Concrete.



“My style is using raw and tactile materials to create a calm, soothing atmosphere”

CHLOE MATTERS, INTERIOR DESIGNER/OWNER



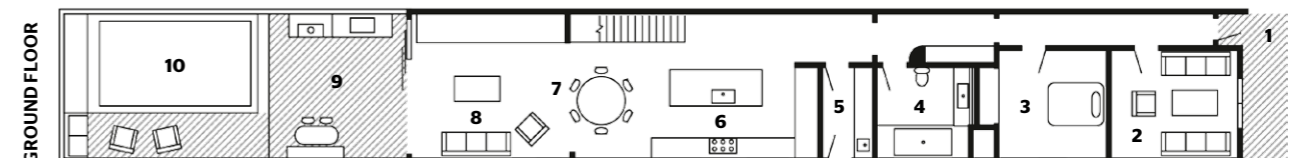
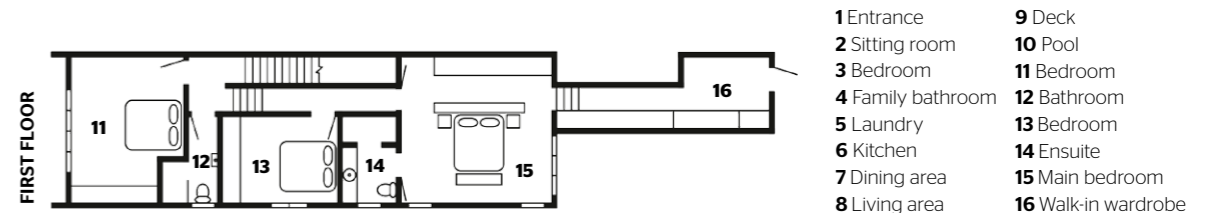
**H**er own magical wedding in an Italian *masseria* [country house] among the olive groves, complete with white plaster walls and bleached timbers, inspired interior designer Chloe Matters in the renovation of her Sydney semi. And every time she turns her key in the door, the happy memories come flowing back.

Yet these serene rooms belie the home’s chaotic rebirth. In late 2019, on the day Chloe and her husband Adrian Oddi settled on the Bondi property, she was heavily pregnant, already with a toddler, and setting up her own business – the perfect time to start demolishing a wall! Patience, she admits, is not one of her virtues, so she literally took matters into her own hands. What followed was a whirlwind eight months, which included the arrival of her second child as she steered the home’s transition and made a major change to the plans along the way.

When the couple bought the two-storey Federation home, it was a mishmash of additions and alterations. “Not one thing was consistent,” Chloe explains. “The previous owner was a builder and had added bits here and there, such as odd cornices and skirtings, and panelling in some rooms but not in others, without thinking of the bigger picture.” Instead, she wanted a family-friendly home with a smooth flow. “Storage and the usability of spaces, especially in the kitchen and laundry, was crucial,” she says. “It needed to have at least three bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs as having the kids close to us at night was key. We also wanted a second living space, to double as a study.”

In the end, they moved walls in every room, bar one, with the exception of a bedroom near the front door, although that was repurposed, switching places with a sitting room/study on the first floor to fulfil that need for three upstairs bedrooms. Keeping largely within the existing footprint, Chloe moved the

**LIVING AREA** (above) Chloe designed the cabinetry with a finish by Venetian Plaster Sydney. iSpace Solutions built it, and the sandstone piece under the EcoSmart fire is from Gather Co. Wall colour, Dulux White Exchange Half. Artwork by Danica Firulovic. **HALLWAY** (above left) Rounding off the storage cupboard was a stroke of genius as it opens up the passage to the living areas. The Contemporary Plaster LED wall lights are from Lighting Collective. Runner, Grounded Rugs.



 good news

Chloe's renovation included a number of environmentally friendly innovations, including double glazing, hydronic heating, a bioethanol fireplace, and using recycled bricks and timber.


stairs from the living area at the rear to opposite the kitchen in line with the hallway, which, as with most semis, forms the home's backbone.

Meanwhile, although not on the original plans, she decided to extend the first-floor main bedroom suite. "Heavily pregnant mid-renovation, I decided to enter a manhole into the ceiling to check out the space," she says. "The builders loved me! So, halfway through the project we extended the main bedroom into the roof at the front to create a walk-in wardrobe." And in pursuit of simplicity, she removed all the cornices, skirtings and architraves and replaced the original windows front and back.

For the interior design, Chloe's inspiration came from the couple's white wedding in Puglia, southern Italy. "I immediately felt at ease in that country house. It was clean and simple yet so tactile, created through layers of texture, not colour or pattern. The white textured walls and oak timbers played off the surrounding olive groves, with their gnarled trunks and sandstone outcrops. I am naturally drawn to tonal colours derived from natural elements, like stones, olive trees and water," she says.

Chloe also tapped into the work of her muse, Belgian architect Vincent Van Duysen. "I use pure tones and textures to develop a timeless interior. For me, it's about the feeling when you enter a space – the tactility, the light and the use of natural elements, which creates a sensuality and a connection. Van Duysen does this beautifully."

The potpourri of finishes Chloe eventually settled on includes traditional Tadelakt lime waterproof plaster (see box on the final page), sandstone, hardwood floors, exposed timber beams, hand-treated joinery finishes and stone-hued paints. "All these materials have an organic shape or texture and generate an emotional response," she says.

Now, as the mother of two children, Chloe admits that her favourite furniture pieces not only have clean profiles, they are very practical. "I love my Tigmi Trading dining table and chairs, and my sofa. They are tactile, simple, stunning designs that will stand the test of time and trends – and hopefully my kids!"  Find Chloe Matters' work at [chloematters.com](http://chloematters.com) or [@chloematters](https://www.instagram.com/chloematters)

**LIVING AREA** (top) This is the left side of the fireplace. Vase, Barefoot Gypsy. Art piece (on wall), The Visuals. **KITCHEN** (left) Wilton door pulls from Mother Of Pearl & Sons go with the new black metal window. Wall light, Est Lighting. Linen rug, Coppola Home. Flooring and stair treads, whitewashed Cypress pine. **DINING** (opposite) The Organic round table and Pierre Jeanneret chairs from Tigmi Trading are Chloe's favourites. Cosydar raffia pendant, Smallable. Leather cone pendants (above bench), Bisque Traders.

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 Chloe's kitchen design tips
 

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Functionality is key in a kitchen. I design with a place in mind for everything from the outset (such as a spice rack to hang on the inside of some pantry doors). Storage is crucial, so I design my kitchens with low drawers instead of cupboards, so you don't have to bend over to find things and can easily access everything from above. In every kitchen, I include:

- + A dishwasher and bin on either side of the sink
- + Ample bench space on either side of the sink and cooktop
- + Hidden space for electrical items
- + A golden triangle design, with the oven, fridge and sink at the points of the triangle
- + Bench space to load and unload the fridge
- + Powerpoints in several locations.





lessons learnt

“TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS WITH DESIGN AS YOUR FIRST CHOICE IS USUALLY RIGHT”  
CHLOE MATTERS, DESIGNER/HOMEOWNER

“Don't be in a hurry to start your renovation. Take time to get the design right and gather quotes before you start. However, time was not on my side in this case, so I changed some things on the go, which is a budget no-no. In general, you should always work out where to save money and where to splash. If a quote comes back too expensive, ask questions, because if you understand how the trades propose to build something and with what materials, there could be a cheaper way to achieve the same effect. Then, make sure you brief your trades with visuals so they understand your vision. And remember, contrary to what many people think, reclaiming hardwood floors and staining them is usually harder than laying new flooring.”



**HOME OFFICE** (above) More beautiful joinery by iSpace Solutions defines this room. Tse & Tse 'Comet' wall lamps, Smallable. Chairs (as in dining area).

**OSCAR'S ROOM** (below left) The niche structure created by the roofline makes a great spot for the Hideout canopy bed from Freedom. Linen, Adairs. Rug, Planet Furniture. **FAMILY BATHROOM** (below right) Complementing the Tadelakt wall finish are white surfaces, grey tiles and black details. Custom mirror, iSpace Solutions. Tahitian Geometric wall sconce, Lighting Collective. **BEDROOM** (opposite) In this elegant yet relaxed space, the wall colour is Porter's Paints French Blue, a gorgeous neutral that cossets the sleeper. Most of the bedding is from West Elm. Gras wall light, Spence & Lyda. Horse print by Mark Tweedie.





GREAT FINDS



**CLOCKWISE** (from above) Folded stainless-steel **plinth piece** (40cm x 38cm x 46cm), \$880, The Visuals. *Removed Painting 20* housepaint-dust-on-linen **artwork** by Oliver Wagner (127cm x 117cm), POA, Sarah Cottier Gallery. Custom roll-arm linen **sofa**, POA, Tow And Line. Azizah marbled wool **rug** in Grey (200cm x 100cm), \$529, Miss Amara. Hideout **bed**, \$1399, and **canopy cover**, \$300, Freedom. Cosydar parasol raffia **pendant lamp**, \$198, Smallable. Waffle **bath towel** in Real Grey, \$123, Oliver Thom. Lampe Gras No303 **wall light**, POA, Arrival Hall. Contemporary plaster raffia **wall light**, \$79, Lighting Collective. Palissade lounge **chair**, \$635, Cult. Organic Round micro-cement **dining table**, \$3900, Tigmi Trading. Ferm Living 'Vulca' mini **vase** in Off-White Stone, \$29, Designstuff. De Crécy taper **candle**, \$120, House Of Heras. Potted olive **peace tree**, \$130, Growing Gifts. Eggshell **paint** in French Green, \$130 for 4L, Porter's Paints.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON

tadelakt for beginners

Chloe used Tadelakt, a waterproof plaster originating from Morocco, to spectacular effect in her main bathroom. The lime plaster is rammed and treated with a soap to make it water-repellent. Applied as a paste, it's perfect for curved surfaces, but is labour-intensive to apply. Here are her suggestions for using it:

- + Tadelakt is not cheap (about \$150 per sq m) but worth every cent, so save it for a powder room or feature space your guests will see
- + The material is organic in its application and no two areas will look the same – this is the appeal
- + Suppliers use different methods to apply the plaster. Find out about these before deciding. Ask about maintenance and colour and get a sample board to check before installation. Make sure supplier and installer provide warranties.



**MAIN BATHROOM** Chloe opted for a Kaldewei Puro Duo bathtub from Reece. Milani brushed-nickel mixer and spout with Dana showerhead, ABI Interiors. Sleek Grey tumbled marble floor tiles, Surface Gallery. Thermogroup towel rail, The Blue Space. **POOL AREA** "The only thing I'd do differently is retile the pool, which our budget didn't allow," she says.