

## Cover Story Sally-Ann Jones

PICTURES: MICHAEL O'BRIEN

# Ugly duckling turns to seaside swan



Blue sofas and limestone walls reflect the seaside mood in the makeover.

A house nobody wanted is now a highly desirable residence.

**S**pending your year's annual leave renovating a house might not sound like everyone's idea of fun but Matthew and Sasha Dehretton-Gordon not only enjoy it, they've discovered it's economically sound too.

On the day HABITAT visited their new Trigg home it was wild and woolly outdoors, with the wind almost flattening the Norfolk Island pines across the road and whipping the ocean up into a boiling, white-peaked froth. Indoors it was pure serenity.

This is the sixth house the couple have restored and, with its sandstone, soft blues and aquas, pearly silvers and pale coffees, it's their favourite to date.

"We've done the old English cottage and the wild bronze with very bright colours but with this one, Sasha's definitely waved her magic wand," Matthew said.

Sasha explained she did a short interior design course and has been confident about choosing colours,



Serial renovators Matthew and Sasha Dehretton-Gordon.

They transformed the exterior by rendering it with limestone teamed with a grey slate roof. Sasha set about choosing colours for the interior before Matthew had even begun to strip the old tiles, wallpaper, carpets and doors, bang holes in walls and pull out the existing kitchen.

Because the big family room window overlooks the park and the ocean across the road, Sasha brought the view's greens, whites, blues and sandy tones indoors while determining which interior walls would be limestone-clad.

"The ocean theme is very calming," she said. "I wanted it to look clean, simple and free."

She found white sofas and scattered sea-coloured cushions over them, then chose tall lamps with cylindrical white linen shades and plain white Roman blinds for all the windows.

She had fun sourcing romantic wall prints which reflect the marine mood and was glad that two mid-blue sofas on stainless-steel legs (which had been in their bronze and bright house) could easily be accommodated in their seaside home.

Sasha had fun in the bathroom, where she used floor-to-ceiling mosaic tiles that have a silvery mother-of-pearl shimmer.

When they ran out of the same tiles

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Square tiles of pressed steel give a subtle, chequered effect in the kitchen.



Sasha brought the view's greens, whites, blues and sandy tones indoors.



Now and before: the red brick with a tiled roof was replaced by limestone teamed with a grey slate roof.



The kitchen in its two incarnations: before the makeover and the polished, finished version.

Matthew installed new doors, many with frosted glass panes to maximise the light.

The couple took five weeks to strip and restore their home and are enjoying their first taste of winter in it.

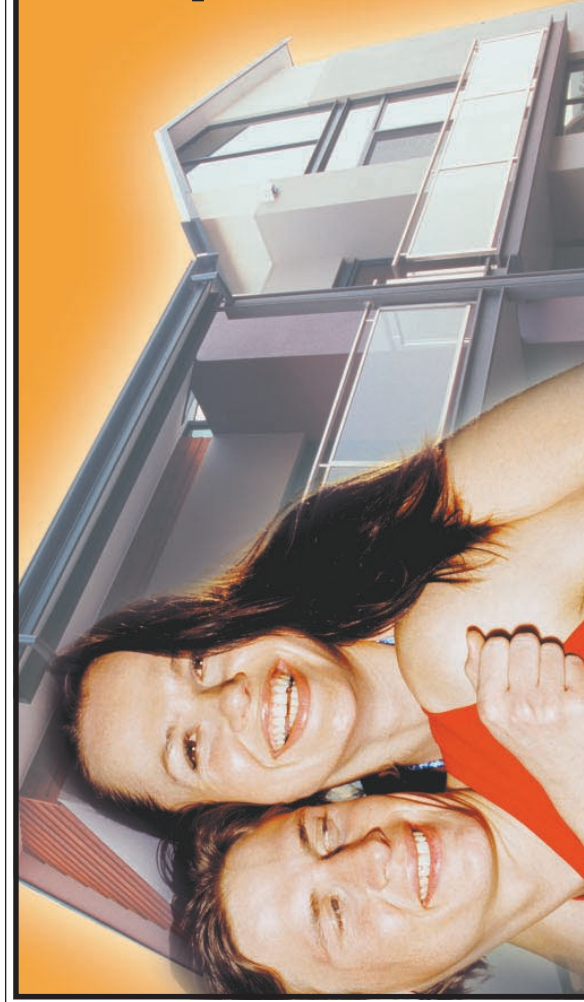
Their daughter, Georgia, loves the beach but, said her Dad, she's more interested in the occasional wedding that is performed in the park.

If she's anything like her parents, she's probably already planning her first house.

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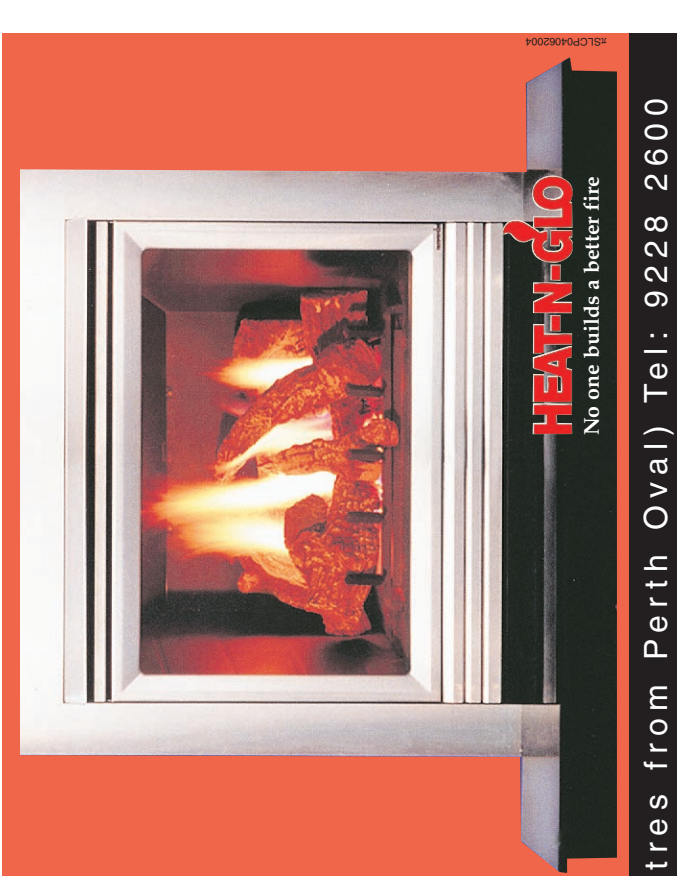
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