

It's hard not to be mesmerized by the marble island that takes center stage in Australian designer Tamsin Johnson's home in Sydney. Carved from a striking hunk of gray Bianco Gioia stone,

the audacious design features a gravity-defying counter perched on plinths of marble stacked in a jagged-edge arrangement. The result may look like minimalist sculpture, but it's not just for show. The island is fully kitted out with everything from drawers to power outlets. "I love spaces that are equal parts functional and beautiful," Johnson says.

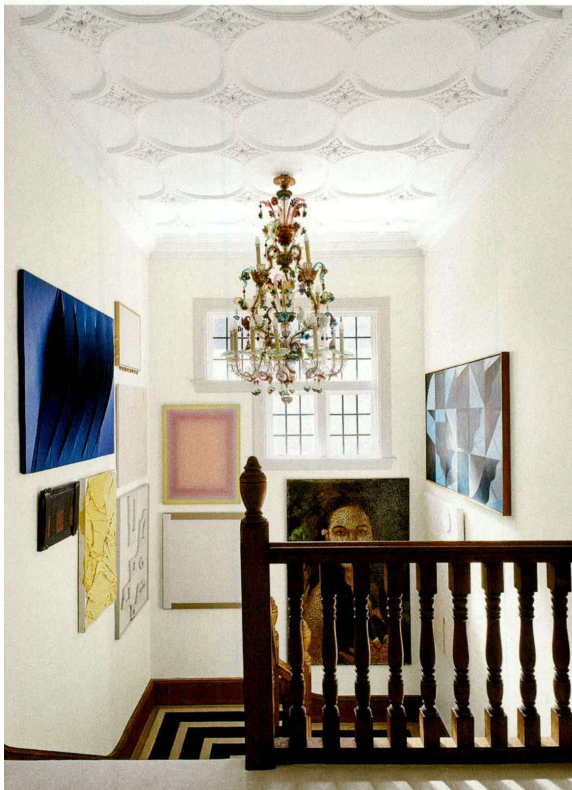
If her home has a fashionable feel, it's by design. Both she and her husband, Patrick Johnson, have roots in fashion. Tamsin studied the subject in college and then interned with Stella McCartney in London before pivoting to interior design. The daughter of Melbourne antiques dealer Edward Clark, she has a showroom in

Sydney where she sells vintage furnishings, mostly from Europe. Patrick, who grew up in Adelaide, worked as a tailor in London before founding his own custom tailoring business, P. Johnson Tailors, with showrooms—designed by his wife—in London, New York City, Sydney, and Melbourne.

When the pandemic started, the couple were living in Tamarama, a cove wedged between trendy Bondi and Coogee, not exactly looking to move.

Why would you when your front yard is the beach? But knowing they'd be marooned at home with their young children, Arthur and Bunny, for the indefinite future, they were eager to throw themselves into a new project.

In Sydney, soaring apartment blocks have gradually replaced historic neighborhoods, and antique houses aren't easy to come by. But the Johnsons got lucky, finding one for sale in Darling Point, a residential neighborhood overlooking Sydney Harbour. Built by a British army colonel, it had good bones but needed extensive work. Several rooms, including the kitchen and upstairs bathrooms, had been remodeled in the 1970s and were entirely gutted. Others required painstaking attention like stripping doorframes and floorboards that had been coated with varnish. "Anything that was original, we wanted to restore and bring back



At home with Tamsin Johnson

The kitchen's custom island is in Bianco Gioia marble. Sink fittings, Perrin & Rowe; vintage pendant and sconce by Gio Ponti.

OPPOSITE, LEFT: In the stairwell, a Murano chandelier by Striulli Vetri d'Arte hangs from the original decorative ceiling.

OPPOSITE, RIGHT: An 18th-century Spanish dining table is surrounded by Louis XV-style chairs in C&C Milano slipcovers in the dining room. 1940s chandelier, Seguso; Art Deco French baker's stand.

