



When Julie Manfredi-Hughes and her husband, management consultant Larry Marlow, bought their Italianate-style terrace on Moore Park Road in 2002 they knew they were buying more than bricks and mortar.

It may not have been written into the contract of sale but a rich history was included with the property. It was built in the 1870s by Thomas Moore, a coachbuilder whose workshop produced carriages for the city's elite. Subsequent inhabitants included Joseph "Joey" Coates in the 1880s, the strict but esteemed headmaster of Sydney Boys' High School, and Lance Corporal David Ferguson McLeod, who died at Gallipoli at the age of 24.

"I wanted to work with the inherited house and bring it up to date with no architectural intervention," says Manfredi-Hughes. "I wanted the results to be timeless, to be enjoyed by the next generations. Our personalities come across through the furniture, objects and artwork."

Manfredi-Hughes, the business partner and former wife of Bells at Killcare chef/consultant Steve Manfredi, spent two years looking for a property that would accommodate her blended family – her daughter, Isabella Manfredi, 22, and Marlow's children, Jasper, 22, and Toby, 27. She fell in love with the stately home and its huge rooms and period features.

No stranger to breathing new light and life into tired restaurant spaces, Manfredi-



Hughes faced some challenges. The three-storey house had been refurbished several times: in the '30s, it was turned into a boarding house and didn't become a family home again until the '70s, while in the '90s, it was extended and modernised. By 2009, family life had taken its toll and the house was looking "shabby".

It was then Manfredi-Hughes brought in the "great colourist" Chrissie Jeffrey, owner of textile retailer No Chintz and her collaborator on projects such as the luxury Pretty Beach House retreat, Bells' sister property.

They took a long, hard look at the house, which includes a self-contained studio and rooftop terrace, and considered the original rooms' dark cedar timberwork. Then they

Clockwise from left

The custom-made Lyrebird wallpaper lines the hallway; contemporary furnishings such as the B&B Italia Maxalto dining table mix with antique pieces; the colour scheme and fabrics were chosen to bring the outdoors in; Porter's Paints Hot Springs was chosen for the internal walls.

made some tough decisions. Internal walls were painted chocolate brown (Porter's Original Paints Hot Springs). In contrast, the dark timberwork, including the staircase that runs three levels, got a lick of bright white. "Instead of ruining the timber, the paint has brought it to life."

Manfredi-Hughes says the colour works because it has brought the outdoors in. "I look out at the park across the road – at the browns, burnt oranges, the greens. These colours are carried through inside with the paint shades, upholstery fabrics, even artworks. Plus, I've lived in white houses; this one needed something dramatic."

For the foyer and hallway, Jeffrey used bespoke Lyrebird wallpaper by Oscar-winning



costumier and designer Catherine Martin, custom-made by special request in Porter's Malt colour. The wallpaper, says Manfredi-Hughes, references the decorative Victorian language of the house.

But there are concessions to her contemporary tastes, most evident in the lighting and some furniture: a floor lamp and drum-shade pendant lights from Fontana Arte; a B&B Italia Maxalto dining table and dining chairs; a painting by Utopia artist Polly Ngale and other striking modern artworks.

But there's still room for history. Recently, she and Marlow renamed the house. Its nameplate now reads "McLeod" – in honour of the lance corporal's ultimate sacrifice nearly a century ago.