



The original cottage was built almost 100 years ago.



Chris and Tegan's new home is set spectacularly in the midst of some of the Tyrrell family's oldest vineyards. **From top right:** The new addition extends the cottage without mimicking its style; the generous new outdoor living space at the back; the new entrance with old timber posts from the winery; **Below:** the old cottage's iron fencing received a complete overhaul.

# Living history

When Avery Tyrrell returned from fighting in World War I he built a cottage a few hundred metres from Tyrrell Wines' cellar door. Now the fifth generation of Tyrrells in Australia have made the cottage their family home.

Story: Cornelia Schulze, photography: Matt Shearer; pre renovation photo Samantha Stibbard

In 2015, when Chris and Tegan Tyrrell had the chance to live in the ancestral cottage they jumped at it. Loving the idea of extending it and turning it into a home for their young, growing family, they were also conscious and respectful of its rich history and knew it was crucial to get the balance right. They aren't sure whether Avery Tyrrell built the original

cottage in 1919 or 1920 – suffice to say its 100th birthday is just around the corner. Next to the cottage is the NVC vineyard, first planted in 1921 and still in use today.

Back then, Avery Tyrrell was the viticulturist and his better-known brother Dan Tyrrell was the winemaker. Their father, Edward Tyrrell, had immigrated to Australia and started the family

wine business in 1858; one of the most prestigious wineries in the Hunter and beyond. Avery and his family lived in the cottage for decades, but once his wife died in the 1980s, it was used as either staff or guest accommodation.

Once more a home to the Tyrrell family, the cottage has been carefully revived and updated.



Chris says, "I kept wondering what are we going to do with the old house and in the end we decided to keep the old house looking 'old'.

"From a distance you don't really see the difference between the old and the new parts, but as you come closer the house begins to reveal itself, and we really like that," he adds.

The couple engaged architect and designer Neil Albert from Stibbard Homes to recreate their home. Neil says, "We had a very clear brief for an extension that would complement the old house but not try to mimic it. The window configuration and window frames, for example, are very different. We also used Cemintel Barestone as building material instead

of trying to match the original cladding. It has a similar colouring and creates a connection with the old house but you can clearly see where the old house ends and the extension begins, which was intentional."

Neil adds, "Cemintel Barestone isn't the cheapest option but it is practically maintenance free, comes in lots of colours >



and doesn't need painting." Chris and Tegan had heard great things about Neil Albert and Samantha Stibbard and were even more impressed when they met. "They were just exceptional listeners," says Tegan. "They really understood what we wanted and as soon as we saw their drawings we knew we had made the right decision."

As is often the case when taking on the renovation of such an old building, there were a few unexpected issues. "When we started putting ducted air conditioning in and had to cut holes into the roof, we discovered asbestos, which meant we ended up gutting the whole inside of the old house. Initially, we'd only planned to give it a lick of paint and do smaller repairs, but in the end, it was for the best," says Tegan. "It allowed us to put in new insulation which made a huge difference, and we still managed to pretty much stay within budget. Basically, we got a completely new house for the price of a renovation," she smiles.

They did however keep the ceiling height and had the carpenters rebuild the beautiful ceiling details. The original part of the home doesn't hide its age but has been beautifully restored to its former glory with a few modern touches that make for a seamless connection to the extension.

Taking up the entire extension, the kitchen, dining area and main living space are completely open plan. Possibly the most striking features are the floor to ceiling windows and sliding doors which allow the sunlight to stream in from three sides. The view of the vineyards is breathtaking and the perfect backdrop for a family with wine running through its blood.

The dark window frames were the starting point for the home's pared back colour scheme. "We were both keen to keep everything pretty matte and didn't want anything too blue or crazy," Tegan says. "We chose matte cabinetry and flooring and added industrial touches here and there. We realised we both loved polished concrete and the interiors just flowed from that."

The couple made a conscious decision not to choose a French Provincial or Country look: "We didn't want to lock ourselves into a style; This is our forever home and we wanted to have the option

## THE KITCHEN

*Osbornes Kitchens did a wonderful job with the kitchen: the highly functional layout is perfect for the young family. A walk-in pantry and a generously sized wine fridge are hidden away in the back.*

*The beautiful benchtop is Cesarstone Fresh Concrete. The pendant light is from Tigger-Hall in Sydney.*



## DINING ROOM

*The dining room table and side table are custom made from beautifully seasoned western red cedar. The timber adds wonderful warmth and the rug helps define the dining area within the main living space.*



From left: the kitchen boasts a second dishwasher and wine fridge; Chris chose Bertazzoni appliances.

Family photos add to the homely atmosphere of the dining area.

to change things up later on. We also knew that we wanted to start a family so we didn't want to spend excessively on lifestyle items that we knew would get a bit of a workout. But we tried not to compromise on quality fixtures and finishes."

Chris is a keen cook, so he researched the kinds of kitchen appliances and tools

professional chefs use in their homes. As a result, he chose a six-flame cooktop, and two ovens and a range hood from Bertazzoni. And it's no surprise that the COO and chief winemaker of Tyrrell Wines chose to have three (yes three) bar fridges in the kitchen. "I wanted to have the really good stuff close by rather than racing down to the cellar door all the time," Chris

laughs. He says his mum Pauline also weighed in on the kitchen design: "She said 'you can do anything you like, but the only thing I will never forgive you for is not having two dishwashers and two sinks. I promise, you will never regret it.'"

"And she was right," Chris adds. "We use them all the time and, for us, it makes the kitchen so much more functional.

The space works and flows beautifully and is often a topic of conversation when we have friends over." It was designed and built by Osbornes Kitchens, who, the couple agree, did a great job. "There is literally nothing we would do differently," says Tegan.

The table is the star of the dining area and its top was custom made out of an

impressive piece of western red cedar from a friend's property. "The carpenter was fantastic and said it was just magic to work with such well-seasoned wood," says Tegan, who loves the warmth the wood brings to the space. The carpenter also used this wonderful timber to make them a side table and two bedside tables. The dining chairs were one of their well-considered 'lifestyle' purchases: "They are beautiful and look as if they have been salvaged from the old home, but we had actually been sitting on them in a café and found them really comfortable. With two young kids we didn't want fabric, so we thought 'let's find these,'" she smiles.

Creating the perfect connection between old and new, a single wooden step in the hallway links the polished concrete floor of the extension to the carpet in the original home.

The rooms in the original cottage are a lot smaller yet provide a wonderful balance to the open space of the extension. The original kitchen on the left has become the kids' room and the old bathroom to the right, which had no storage and a window that required blinds for privacy, has been renovated. The couple were able to keep the overall layout, but they put in a new vanity and combined a heritage style sink with modern subway tiles. ▷

## TALKING TRADES

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The experts from **Osbornes Kitchens** designed and built the beautiful kitchen in Chris and Tegan's home. Established in 1977, they are a prestigious manufacturer of kitchens, vanities and interior furnishings.

**Osbornes Kitchens, 02 4932 7656, [www.osborneskitchens.com.au](http://www.osborneskitchens.com.au)**



## LIVING ROOM WITH A VIEW

The view from the living area is stunning. Chris and Tegan kept the layout simple and chose fabrics that are durable and fit well with their overall colour scheme. The floor-to-ceiling glass doors make for a perfect indoor/outdoor connection.



The old section also houses a study, laundry, second living area, guest bedroom and the master suite, complete with ensuite and walk-in-robe. Tegan and Chris also kept the original entrance to the home. A stunning wooden church pew in the hallway (there's another one in the master bedroom) is a real statement piece. "Unfortunately, there isn't much of a story there," Chris laughs. "Dan Tyrrell found them and brought them to the winery and we have had them for ages. But as far as we know, there is no connection to William Tyrrell, who was Edward Tyrrell's uncle and the first Anglican archbishop of Newcastle."

With a house that's been in the family for generations, it's only fitting that major renovation milestones coincided with major moments in the couple's life. Tegan says, "I went into labour with our first son, Henry, on the day Chris signed the contract with Stibbard. And the day we brought him home was when the excavators arrived." With Henry now three years old and their second son, Edward, eleven months, Chris and Tegan are ready to write the next chapter in the story of Avery Tyrrell's winemaker cottage. ◇



The original entrance to the home: the wrought iron fence around the verandah has been sanded and repainted. The pared back colour scheme of the home fits well with the period details that have been carefully restored.

## CHRIS TYRRELL'S WINE PICKS

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Top: The pendant lights in the main bedroom are from Beacon Lighting. The bedside tables were custom made from the same timber as the tables in the dining room. The beautiful ceiling details were rebuilt after the asbestos removal had been completed. Left: The main bathroom is in the original part of the house. Chris and Tegan were able to keep the overall layout.



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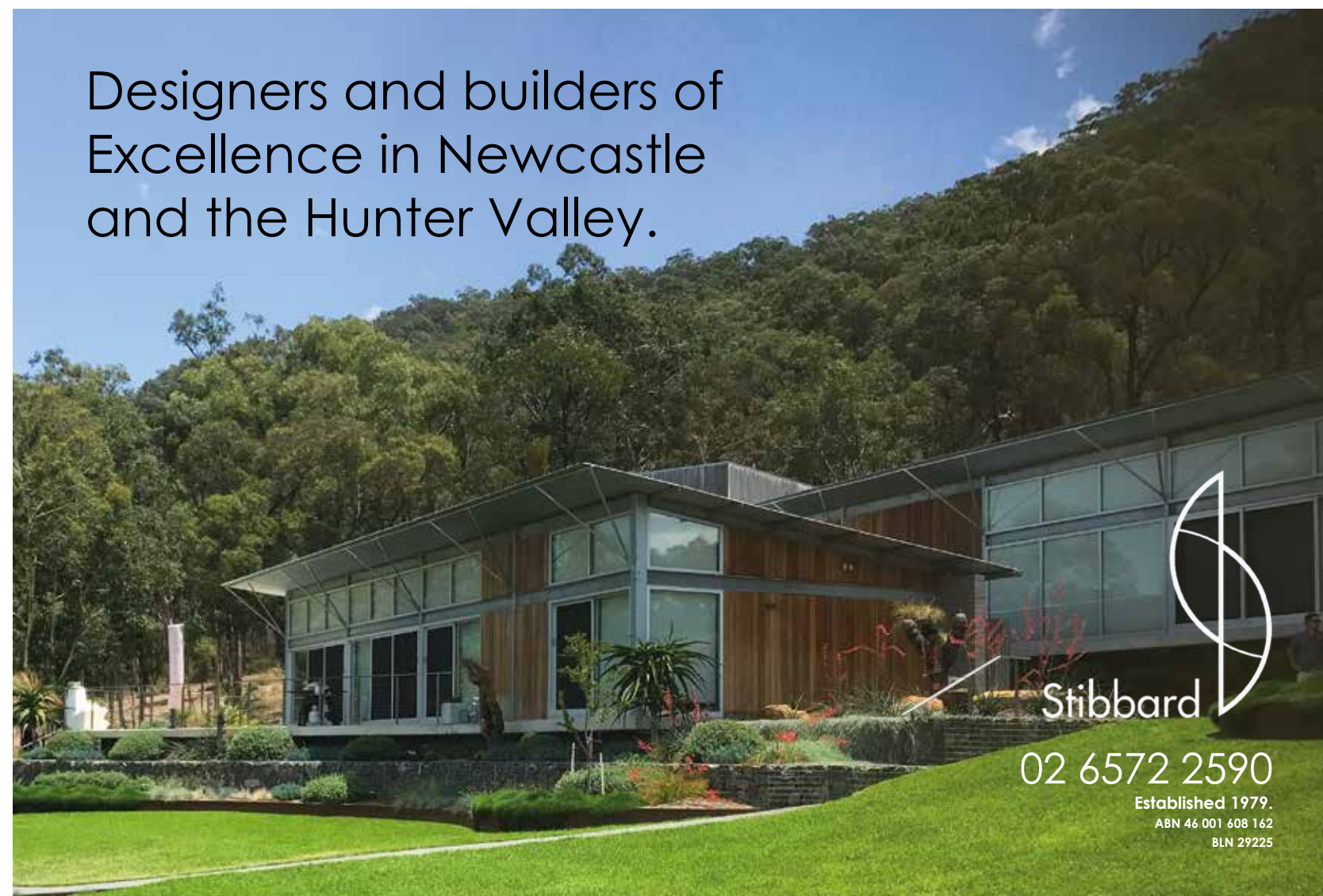
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