ORIGIN STORY

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT TURNED INTO THREE YEARS OF HARD GRAFT FOR
A COUPLE COMMITTED TO RESTORING A 19TH-CENTURY HOMESTEAD.

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Homeowners Heidi Goyder-Whicker and
Leigh Whicker love the serene surroundings
at their 1850s home in the Adelaide Hills. "It's
quite a magical place," says Heidi. "We've got
the best of both worlds – we're within an hour
of Adelaide, but up here on the hill I can't see
anyone or anything other than trees."

FROM THE MINUTE THEY LAID EYES ON SCOTTSBURN LODGE five years ago, Heidi Goyder-Whicker and Leigh Whicker had a clear vision for their future home, located near Woodside in the beautiful Adelaide Hills, SA. "From the very beginning the brief was to restore, not renovate," says Heidi. "I was really quite staunch on that."

The culmination of a two-year search, the storied property – built on the lands of the Peramangk and Kaurna peoples – wowed Heidi and Leigh, both 49, with every detail: from the driveway lined with century-old oaks to the home's original fireplaces. "We both fell in love," recalls Heidi. "When we drove out of the driveway that first time, we decided we just had to make this happen." And make it happen they did.

Built in 1850, Scottsburn Lodge is a six-bedroom, six-bathroom home that originally housed a wealthy English family who ran a 3000-hectare sheep station. Now, the 850-square-metre home sits on a modest 16 hectares but retains its grand proportions. "Two things really stand out about this property," says Heidi. "First, the family that had it in about 1920 put ensuites in every bedroom – that was very forward-thinking for 1920! The other thing is the lovely high ceilings and the fact that the rooms are all enormous."

What would've been a cutting-edge renovation at the time has given the home remarkable longevity, keeping it relevant well into the 21st century, and saving Heidi and Leigh the headache of making structural changes. "Apart from removing half a wall in the kitchen, we haven't changed the footprint at all," Heidi explains. "We've removed cladding – probably from the '70s – but the original floor plan is absolutely as it would have been well over 100 years ago."

Overseeing the restoration herself, Heidi left her career as a skin technician to take on the role of project manager without any experience in construction or interior design. >

CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT Leigh and Heidi love the history of their home; bar stools from Living By Design are tucked beneath the kitchen bench, with lights from Pottery Barn overhead; lavender, Japanese buxus and 'Crepuscule' climbing roses bloom by the entrance; the table and chairs from Provincial Home Living sit by the twin sinks. "They're so handy when we're entertaining," says Heidi. **FACING PAGE** "It was a well-known home – there were black-tie balls and weddings held here, and [Princess Anne's ex-husband] Captain Mark Phillips even stayed on a number of occasions for horse trials," says Heidi. The original windmill is still attached to an underground water tank.

"I have lived in old houses, which gives you a feel for what you can and can't do, but I haven't had formal training," she says. "I did grow up with a mother who was very clever with interiors, though; she always made everything look magnificent, even though in the country that's not always easy to do. Eventually, I fell in love with interior design too."

Heidi's approach was simple: she treated the interiors as if she were completing a jigsaw puzzle. "We did the interiors room by room," she explains. "We went from the worst room to the best room, which was good because you get a bit of practice in the smaller bedrooms and by the end, you have a pretty good idea of how everything fits together."

The next piece of the puzzle is finishing the landscaping, which is a work in progress. "We've been waiting for the opening rains to start our second round of landscaping, which has just begun," says Heidi excitedly. "I've got 100 trees to plant and almost 1000 hedging plants going in over the next couple of weeks."

Although it's been challenging at times, Heidi and Leigh's commitment to restoration over renovation has created a home that honours its past, preserving a slice of history while catering to modern life for a busy family of five. >

CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT "I started by choosing neutral colours – I didn't want to make it too tizzy," Heidi says of her decorating approach. The formal dining room and lounge features pops of colour with a still-life piece by painter Henry Cockington and pretty purple hydrangeas; relaxed dining in a rustic setting; an ornate chandelier from Lydie du Bray Antiques catches the light in the living room. Armchairs from Living By Design sit beside a wingback armchair from Interiors Online, which is covered in Iconic Leopard fabric by Schumacher; this former shepherd's hut was restored and turned into an outdoor bathroom. **FACING PAGE** The formal dining room seats 12 and overlooks the tennis court and paddocks. "I have been collecting the cabbageware for nearly 25 years," says Heidi.

"Behind the walls it's state-of-the-art, but when you look at it from the outside, it's 1850," says Heidi. "It's actually quite a feat to get that balance of old and new right."
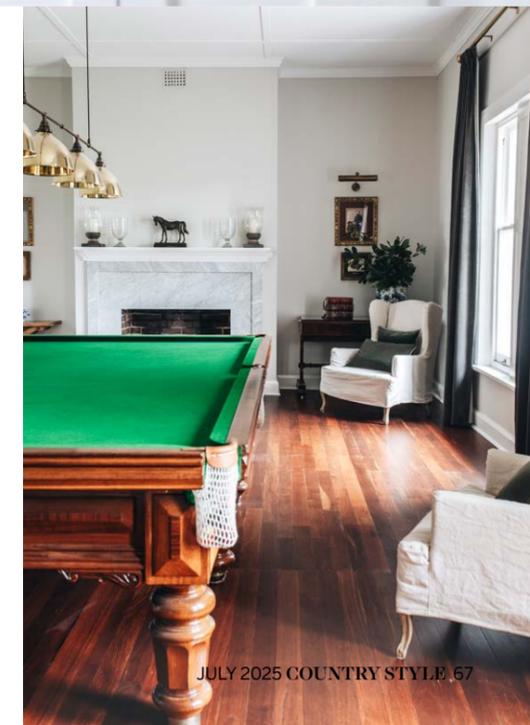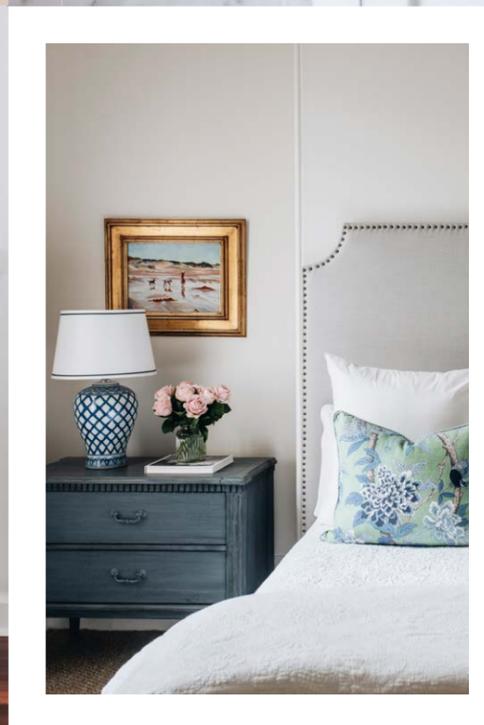
Blessed with a country lifestyle within commuting distance of Adelaide's CBD, Scottsburn Lodge is a refuge for the whole family, but especially for Leigh, who works as a business development manager in the space and energy industry. "Leigh has quite a full-on job; he travels interstate and overseas often, so this is his private little bit of paradise," says Heidi. "He comes up that driveway, sheds his suit and tie, and he's a changed man within 10 minutes."

Their daughters Ellie, 23, and Annabelle, 21, periodically retreat to the family home, while son Angus, 13, who is at boarding school, recharges at home in the school holidays.

Always a woman with a mission, now that the house is done and the final stages of landscaping are in motion, Heidi is moving on to her next project. Renowned for its glamorous soirees and garden parties of the past, Heidi plans to reinvigorate Scottsburn Lodge as an event destination – and for a good cause. "I can't keep this place a secret, it's too beautiful," she enthuses. "I'm hoping to host a fundraiser for multiple sclerosis next year. I have MS myself, so what better way to share what I have than a long table lunch to raise money for a cause close to my heart?" *CS*

Follow fundraiser details at @heidi.whicker on Instagram
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CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE Heidi says the Battle of Valmy wallpaper by Brunschwig & Fils in the guest bathroom is a talking point; an antique mirror fit the bill in the bathroom; the billiard room is a favourite gathering space. "It's great at the end of the evening, where we can enjoy a tipple and a friendly game," says Heidi. The walls hold family photographs, including images of Heidi's great-great-grandfather George W Goyder, who was South Australia's surveyor-general in the late 1800s; soft blues and florals create serenity; the antique cloth-print Empress and Emperor pieces were bought in Hong Kong. **FACING PAGE** For the master bedroom, Heidi chose elegant linen from Polite Society and added a chaise gifted by her parents.

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT
Bearded iris stands out amid the greenery; 'Lamarque' climbing roses scale the stone wall; throughout the year, the vegie beds hold broccoli, tomatoes, zucchini, carrots, garlic, parsley, mint, basil and fennel; each season brings colour to the gardens; creamy David Austin 'Bathsheba' roses. **FACING PAGE** "The house was left for so long that it was dilapidated," says Heidi. "When we moved in, there were bats living in the chimneys – we've got 16 – so when we started turning lights on and opening up the rooms, all these bats started flying around in the house!" Outside, red gums surround the shed, along with salvia, lavender, irises and buxus. "We've planted about 2500 buxus to form hedges around the garden," says Heidi.