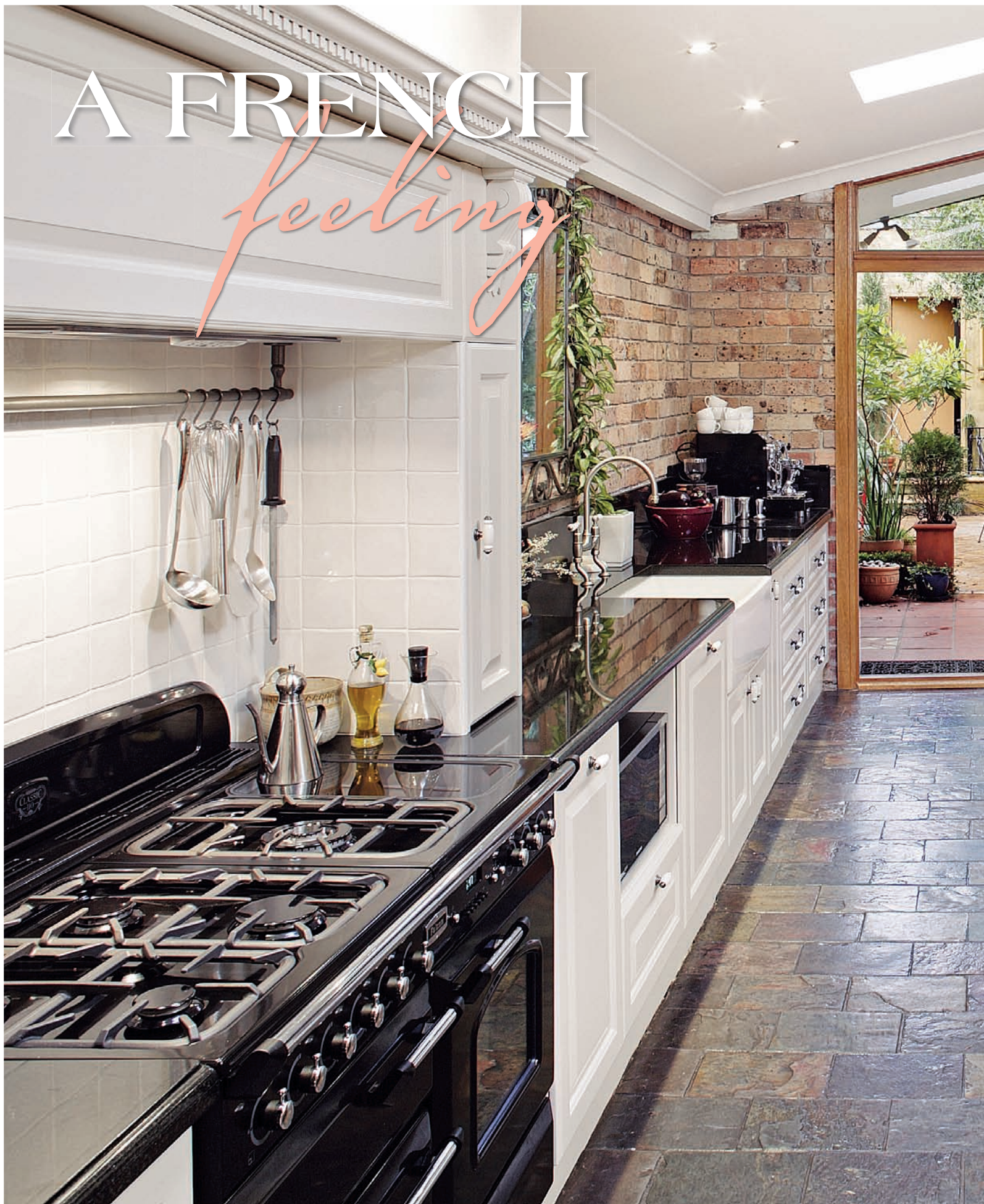


# A FRENCH

*feeling*





A desire for a warm, provincial-style kitchen turned an old house extension into the perfect area to entertain and spend time with family.

Story by Katy Scott



The new kitchen is a warm, welcoming space where family and friends can gather together.

“It was important not to over-indulge in all that provincial style has to offer as this can detract from achieving a sense of ease in a narrow room,”



From the moment Bronwyn Fry walked through the terrace house for sale in the Sydney suburb of Marrickville, it was her dream to buy it and give it the kitchen it deserved. After living in places where she'd inherited previous owners' kitchen mistakes, she knew it was time to have a kitchen that suited her own family's needs perfectly.

The terrace's last owner had built the kitchen as an extension onto the existing house, and it featured outdated cupboards and an unpredictable oven. Three years ago, Bronwyn and her husband Richard installed a new roof and put in large bi-folding doors that open out to the adjoining courtyard, making the room feel a lot bigger. Next on the agenda was a new kitchen with a French-provincial feel.

“Wherever I've lived, here and overseas, I've found the kitchen is where guests like to congregate,” says Bronwyn. “And in our everyday life, the family spends a lot of time in this space – so I wanted the ambience of the room to reflect my passion for cooking and entertaining, and to be welcoming to our guests.” Richard and Bronwyn enlisted the help of Kitchener's Kitchens, a company that both designs and custom-builds kitchens. Owner Michael Kitchener sat down with the couple to discuss exactly how their new area would look, and as Bronwyn had already researched the style she wanted, it wasn't long before they – along with designer Erika Forster – had decided on a new concept for the space.

**LEFT:** The butler's sink was one of the main elements Bronwyn wanted in order to create a French farmhouse atmosphere. Richard purchased the taps from England and carried them in his hand luggage through four other countries.



The black granite benchtop provides a beautiful contrast to the white cabinets and exposed brickwork.

## BROADENING HORIZONS

Like many classic Sydney-style terrace houses, the kitchen in Bronwyn and Richard's home is quite long and narrow. Michael took this into consideration, putting measures in place to ensure the new layout would maximise the space. "It was important not to over-indulge in all that provincial style has to offer as this can detract from achieving a sense of ease in a narrow room," he explains. "I decided to do a relaxed version of it so the kitchen wouldn't dominate the whole space."

Anything that made the room look wider, especially at eye-height, was a positive. "We didn't use wall cabinets in the half of the kitchen towards the back of the house, where the room closes in further," says Michael. "It was vital that we opened up the width of the room from the bench up." Below the bench, drawers were installed instead of cupboards to make up for the lack of storage above it. Other space-saving factors included placing the fridge behind cabinet doors, and having the food neatly stored in the six large pantry drawers under the espresso machine. "Microwaves are another appliance that can easily bulk up a room at eye height," says Michael. "Making a space for them under the bench means they're further out of sight while still being easy to access."

The monochrome colours of the new design were chosen to complement the grey of the already-existing grey slate floor and exposed brickwork, and the black granite benchtop suited the look perfectly. Bronwyn had always wanted two ovens, so when she spotted a large Falcon model with all the right features in an old-fashioned style that suited the kitchen, she knew she'd found a winner. "Now I can cook a tagine and a lemon tart at the same time!" she laughs.

**KITCHEN ESSENTIALS**  
**Kitchen design** – Kitchener's Kitchens  
**Cabinetry and doors** – Kitchener's Kitchens  
**Benchtops** – EMG granite, in colour Nero Absoluto  
**Oven/stove** – Falcon  
**Refrigerator** – Liebherr  
**Dishwasher** – Miele  
**Sink** – Malcolm St. James, Drummoyne  
**Faucet** – Perrin & Rowe  
**Dresser** – Recollections, Leichhardt  
**Hardware** – Marina Aisles, Castle Hill

## A TOUCH OF HOME

A few personal touches made the new kitchen truly feel like home. Bronwyn repainted one of her old dressers and modified it to match the new cupboards, and her son bought her an old ladder to hang pots and pans from. As there are no windows along the length of the room, Bronwyn bought a mirror from Le Forge in Camperdown and hung it above the sink. "It gives you a feeling of 'looking out' into the reflected garden," she says. "It also gives my hoyia plant somewhere to climb!"

After years of making do with unsuitable kitchens, Bronwyn and Richard finally have the ideal space in which to cook meals, entertain their friends and spend time with family – and the dream that Bronwyn had when she first saw the kitchen has at last finally come true. ■