

FIELD OF DREAMS

An Italian design aesthetic mixes with functional farmhouse form in this revamp of a 70s house in *Victoria*.

Photographs JAMES GEER Words CARLI PHILIPS



COUNTRY HOMES



This page BD Barcelona 'Showtime' chairs surround a custom-made dining table with a concrete top. Opposite page Nexus Designs and Sally Draper Architects collaborated on the makeover of this contemporary country home.



This page 'William' three-seater sofas by Zanotta face off across a 'Geometrie' coffee table by Poltrona Frau. The red sideboard is a Cappellini 'Plan' unit. Artworks are *The Mighty Gum* by Leonard Long (centre), and *The Valley Farm* by Robert Johnson. Opposite page BD Barcelona 'Showtime' chairs and a custom-made dining table with concrete top that echoes the fireplace. Artworks are *Boating on the River* by Will Longstaff (left, top) and *Sydney Harbour Scene* by James R. Jackson (bottom).

Victoria's Goulburn River and its national park is home to a teeming array of fauna, from freshwater fish and musk ducks to royal spoonbills. Looking over the Great Dividing Range, it's quintessentially Australian. It's also the local habitat for this couple who, in recent years, have increasingly retreated from Melbourne in favour of a more rural lifestyle at Tallarook.

"Their heart is at the farmhouse," says Lucy Marczyk of Nexus Designs who worked alongside Sally Draper Architects on the renovation. The brief was for a practical, working farmhouse that was also a family home, a place to accommodate colleagues and host friends in a warm and inviting environment.

"As the clients had spent time at the house prior to the renovation they had already trialled how it worked, forming strong ideas of where their ideal spots were for reading or afternoon tea, so the project was a collaborative process."

Originally built by eminent Australian architect Neil Clerehan in the 70s, the heart of the house was "completed blasted open". Lucy says the "revised spatial planning maximised natural light and established a much stronger connection to the landscape in the kitchen, dining and living zone".

The hub of the house is split by a fireplace separating the kitchen and meals area from the main living room. Large sliding doors lead to a pergola and a serene pool set among the natural vegetation. Taking cues from the home's timeless origins, simple detailing and enduring finishes, Nexus started by polishing the existing concrete floor and adding a raw finish to the fireplaces. Tasmanian ash joinery provided warmth in the kitchen and mudroom.

The house keeps its farmhouse 'unfussiness' despite sophisticated furnishings. "The interior scheme contrasts natural elements with striking Italian design," says Lucy. "It's a beautiful, functional, contemporary country home."

For more go to nexusdesigns.com.au; sallydraperarchitects.com.au.





This page, clockwise from top left BD Barcelona 'Showtime' chairs and a custom-made concrete-topped table. B&B Italia 'Harry' sofa and armchairs with a Simplicite 'Xilos' coffee table by Maxalto in light oak. Side tables are 'Tempo' by Zanotta. Flos 'Tab' floor lamp. Kyoto artwork by Peter Cole. The house enjoys an easy connection with the outdoors and is flooded with natural light.

