

HOME LYONVILLE VIC

For the dining room, homeowners Sasha and Tim von Ess chose a vintage table from Family Founded and chairs from Found in Daylesford. A vintage portrait on the mantel completes the scene. **FACING PAGE** Tim and Sasha spent hours stripping back the tumble of wild growth in their garden. "We've cleared it all out and have a vision," says Sasha. "It's a work in progress. We've also added a kitchen garden."



A KIND OF ENCHANTMENT

A STORIED COTTAGE IN LYONVILLE, VIC, EVOKES SIMPLER TIMES AND AN ENVELOPING FEEL.

WORDS JESSICA BELLE PHOTOGRAPHY LEON SCHOOTS
STYLING BELLE HEMMING BRIGHT

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The kitchen cabinets are painted in Haymes Paint Comfort 6. The sink is from Ikea, while the raw brass tapware is from CB Ideal Tapware. Sasha and Tim chose a Newport Ceramic Dish Ceiling Pendant from Emac & Lawton, and a Fisher & Paykel Induction Freestanding Cooker. Tim and a friend installed the kitchen. "There's not a straight line in the place, which made it interesting!" he says, laughing. **FACING PAGE** The leather loop pendant above the dining table was sourced from IEFrancis Minimalist Goods. Antique and vintage furniture bestows a sense of history throughout.



"We are on a generous piece of land and you can look out and see Babbington Hill and the forest."



AT PHOEBE'S COTTAGE IN Lyonville, 10 minutes from Daylesford on Dja Dja Wurrung Country in Victoria, the past and the present merge peacefully. The neighbour's flock of sheep and a blackberry-nibbling goat named Jerry add to the sleepy pastoral ambience, and the surrounding cottages match Phoebe's in age and look. Edged by the Wombat State Forest, the township of Lyonville was established in the 1860s to support the bustling timber milling industry.

Phoebe's Cottage dates back to 1875 and is owned by Tim and Sasha von Ess, who reside in Melbourne with their children Drew, 14, and Audrey, 11. The family has been visiting friends in Lyonville for many years, a connection that was strengthened in 2017 after they bought a deconsecrated church and lovingly converted it into a holiday retreat (The Church at Lyonville was featured in the November 2020 issue of *Country Style*).

When the opportunity arose to purchase Phoebe's Cottage at the end of 2021, the couple couldn't pass it up. "It just had so much character and such a great feeling, and we both felt it could be something really special," says Tim, who works in the not-for-profit sector.

Diving into the history of the half-acre plot, the couple discovered the cottage is named after Phoebe Elizabeth Elliot, who owned the property and lived there with her husband and seven children in the mid-1880s.

"We love the idea of Phoebe owning the property in the 1880s. How many women would've been on the title of the property back then? It would have been rare," says Sasha, a small business owner with an affinity for heritage builds.

While the couple's church conversion is flooded with light and blessed with a soaring vaulted ceiling, the two-bedroom cottage is humble and intimate in contrast. "Back in Phoebe's time, it would have been dirt floors – a single room with one fireplace and no insulation. The house is now beautiful and cosy, but it's been added to over the years," Sasha says. The previous owner had mended and reinforced the crumbling elements and added insulation. "For us, this project was very much about the finishing touches and getting it right. We really wanted to honour the history," Sasha adds.

A spellbinding sense of nostalgia has been skilfully woven into the scheme of contemporary designs under the guidance of interior decorator and stylist Belle Hemming Bright. Belle worked closely with the von Esses on selecting complementary colours and finishes, curating furniture and lighting, and adding the all-important final flourish of soulful, storied decor. The kitchen and two bathrooms are newly installed by Tim and Sasha, but the brick fireplace would have been standing in Phoebe's era.

Deep, dark hues play a vital role in the enveloping effect of the spaces. In the bedrooms, the ceilings are painted >

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In the living room, the walls and ceiling are painted in Natural White by Dulux. The cosy sofa is from Indigo Love Collectors, while the coffee table is from GlobeWest. Sasha and Tim sourced the television cabinet and armchair from Provincial Home Living, along with a linen pendant from Imprint House, and a Ravine Handmade Rug in Quarry from Armadillo & Co. Vintage paintings reflect historical figures and the landscape.

ABOUT THE HOUSE:

- Stylist Belle Hemming Bright was enlisted to revive the interiors. "One of the amazing aspects of working with Belle was having someone who helps you be brave and push you in directions that you might not have naturally otherwise gone," says Sasha. thebellebrightproject.com.au
- Vintage furniture was scooped up at places such as: The Mill Markets in Daylesford and Geelong; Nook Vintage in Collingwood; Butlers Vintage Depot in the Dandenong Ranges; and Family Founded in Geelong.
- The kitchen cabinets and lower panelling in the dining and living spaces are painted in Comfort 6 from Haymes Paint.

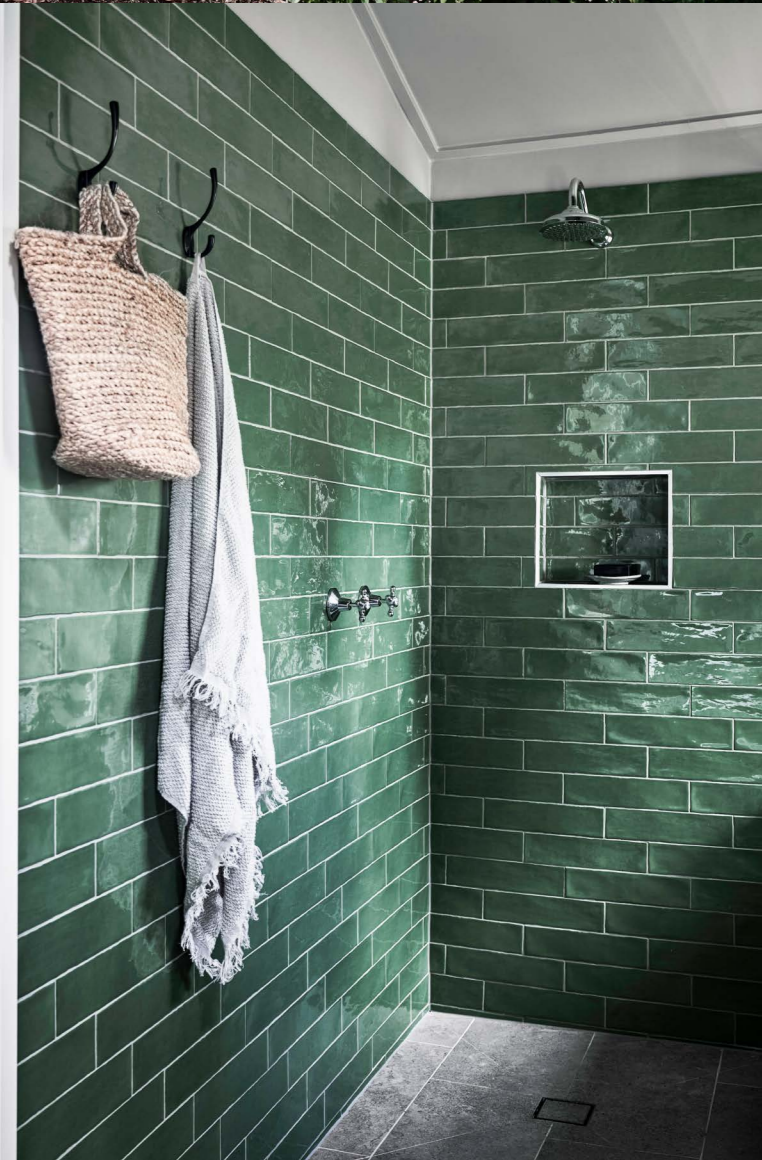


the same shade as the walls – “which I would have never thought of until Belle suggested it,” says Sasha. “Because the ceilings are low, it gives you that all-encompassing feeling.” The previous owner installed French doors and large windows, which temper the moodiness and open the rooms to the greenscape beyond. “We are on a generous piece of land and you can look out and see Babbington Hill and the forest. So you’ve got all of that cosiness inside, and then you have a sense of space outside,” Sasha says.

If the von Esses weren’t travelling to the South Coast of New South Wales this Christmas to visit extended family, they would be enjoying a festive celebration at Phoebe’s, with a juicy roast cooking in the extra-large oven and sweet breezes wafting in through the open doors. “You can have Christmas lunch and then spill out onto the grass out the back with lawn games and drinks under the shade of the old walnut trees. It’s a really great place to bring the family together,” says Tim.

Time slows down in the tranquil village that features a pub, a community hall, and not much more. Peaceful forest walks, board games and pottering in the cottage garden help the family decompress from city life. “It just makes you think of those simpler times, so you do simpler things,” Tim observes.

Phoebe’s Cottage beguiles with a cocooning atmosphere and modern-day comforts that its namesake and her kin could have hardly imagined. “It’s just magical at Phoebe’s Cottage – inside, outside and all around,” Tim adds. *CS* For more, visit thehousesdaylesford.com or follow @phoebes_cottage on Instagram.



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT The Claremont basin is from Turner Hastings; Blackthorn wallpaper by Morris & Co in the ‘Garden Room’, and a bedside table from Butlers Vintage Depot; vintage art, vases and classic novels; a Pleated Plaster Wall Light from Lighting Collective; festive greenery. **FACING PAGE, FROM TOP** “The cottage was one of the earliest buildings in Lyonville,” Tim says; Earp Bros subway tiles.





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A timber feature wall in the master bedroom, made from the original floorboards, conjures a snug cabin feel, while the walls, painted in Porter's Paints Toffee Brittle, "glow in the afternoon light," says Sasha. "It's magical." A custom-made bedhead from The Upholstery House is teamed with bedding by Cultiver and a Creswick wool blanket. The bedside table is from Provincial Home Living. **FACING PAGE** The walls of the main bathroom are painted in French Green from Porter's Paints. The pendant light is from Ivory & Deene, while a sweet vintage painting adds charm. "The cast-iron bath is a real centrepiece – it's deep and oversized," says Sasha.

