



HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

A STORIED COTTAGE IN EDITH, NSW, HOLDS SPECIAL MEMORIES OF YESTERYEAR FOR LONG-TIME LOCALS.

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Vintage artworks, op-shop finds and vases of fresh flowers fill Bimlow Cottage with cosy familiarity. **FACING PAGE** "All we could really afford to do when we first got the cottage was paint it white and do some gardening," says owner Georgie Stuart.



“Bimlow is so humble, but it feels really homely.”

Rustic wares rest on the marble benchtop and simple shelf in this corner of the kitchen. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** An old table and bench seats from Matt's mum look as though they've always belonged together in the dining area. The Indian fringing over the door was a market find, while the couple's neighbour Susan Sheridan painted the artwork; Georgie with Ada, Mali and Donny; a timber sleigh bed, handed down from Georgie's parents, is teamed with a green chair found in an op shop.



TUCKED BEHIND CONIFERS and golden elms, Bimlow Cottage is one of a handful of homes that make up the quaint hamlet of Edith on Gundungurra land in NSW's Central West. A modest wattle and daub structure built in 1890, Bimlow charms with its wonky angles and uneven surfaces. “I call it a pauper's house, and I think it was added to over time,” says Georgie Stuart, 40, who bought the cottage in 2011 with her partner Matt Quigley, 39.

At the first inspection, Georgie, a formally trained artist working in business development, spotted the rustic tin roof and ‘Bimlow’ sign on the timber fence and “knew in my heart of hearts it was the one for us”.

She and Matt, an industrial designer at an engineering firm, were living in a beachy Sydney suburb at the time, but it wasn't long before they turned their little country weekender into their full-time home and started a family, which now includes children Donny, 10, Ada, seven, and Mali, four, plus a spirited cocker spaniel named Jimmy.

The pair have intervened minimally with the interiors, first addressing the necessities – replacing the flooring where gaping holes met dirt – and then updating areas over the years as their family grew. They gave the kitchen a light refresh with new marble benchtops and revamped cabinetry, and enclosed the verandah with windows that Matt found on Gumtree – they were the perfect fit. >

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The original pink and burgundy living room was revived with an ornate mirror, a coffee table found on Facebook Marketplace and a rug from The Rug Shop in Bangalow. Vintage artworks sit alongside pieces painted by Georgie and several of her art school friends. **FACING PAGE** The kitchen cabinets are painted in Dulux Natural White, with handles from The Society Inc. The rug is from Lunatiques, while the pendant light is from Ikea. A pretty rosette by Tasmanian artist Tara Badcock is displayed on the wall.



ABOUT THE HOUSE:

- Coats of Dulux Natural White freshen the interiors and exterior of the cottage.
- The artworks in the cottage include rosettes by Tara Badcock, a painting by local artist Susan Sheridan, Georgie's own butterfly artworks, and framed illustrations taken from old books.
- Georgie loves adding shades of red to her spaces, as seen in the chequered bathroom floor tiles from Jatana Interiors and the striped blinds from Blinds Online in the kids' bedroom.
- Lighting selections include Fat Shack Vintage wall lights in the bathroom, and a fabric lantern by The Society Inc in the bedroom.



"I like aged patina and things you don't see everywhere else."

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FROM TOP An antique African djembe drum is repurposed as a side table in the bedroom, which also holds a rug purchased online, and a cosy second-hand armchair; the light-filled bathroom was updated with a bathtub from Early Settler, Fat Shack Vintage lights, tiles from Jatana Interiors and fixtures found on Facebook Marketplace.



The most significant renovation occurred in the bathroom, a project that kept the couple busy during the pandemic lockdowns. As well as updating the fittings and tiles, they added a larger window and removed plasterboard to reveal the original brick. “You can see where the walls were patched up with tin and where a fireplace once was. You can see the history,” says Georgie.

The couple have learnt more about their idyllic little pocket of Edith via the stories shared by long-term villagers. During the 1960s and '70s, the plot contained a caravan park with a petrol bowser out the front – an essential stop for people driving to the Jenolan Caves, just 20 minutes from the cottage.

“People couldn’t take their caravans down the hairpin bends to the caves, so they would park them in the paddock next to Bimlow,” Georgie explains. “A couple called Bob and Dolly ran the petrol bowser, and the front room off the verandah was their shop. A local who supplied the gravel for our landscaping said he used to come to the shop to buy lollies when he was a kid.”

In 2019, Georgie reinstated the little store, creating an open-by-appointment treasure trove of second-hand curios and locally crafted pieces. She is a vintage-lover through and through, and constantly fossicks in op shops, online marketplaces and the local tip store.

Aside from the bed linen, it’s rare for anything new or mass-produced to make it over the threshold at Bimlow. “I like aged patina and things you don’t see everywhere else,” says the eagle-eyed treasure hunter, whose penchant for old wares weaves through her family tree.

Georgie’s grandmother once owned an antique store in the Riverina region of NSW, and her mother is also a dedicated vintage shopper. “Nan would go to deceased estates and travelled far and wide to source interesting pieces,” says Georgie, adding that she holds fond childhood memories of visiting her grandparents’ property where they farmed sheep, wheat and canola.

“Bimlow is so humble, but it feels really homey,” Georgie says. “I love all my things, but home to me is more about how it makes you feel and how it makes other people feel when they visit.”

While the family moved out of the cottage in 2018, they didn’t venture far. They now live in a century-old weatherboard homestead, which was transported 200 kilometres from Mudgee and repositioned on the paddock beside Bimlow.

Georgie opened Bimlow’s doors to holiday-makers in 2019 and ran it as a successful Airbnb until the beginning of this year. She plans to transfer her bijou vintage store online and has an inkling she will share Bimlow with others again in the future. The evolution of this sweet little cottage and its thoughtful caretakers continues. *cf*

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CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Framed butterfly artworks by Georgie hang above twin beds topped with green kantha quilts from Etsy; Donny and Mali cuddle Jimmy the cocker spaniel; a corner of the kids’ bedroom includes a rosette by Tasmanian textile artist Tara Badcock and various preloved gems. “It’s rare for something to be bought new – I much prefer not to do that,” says Georgie; a view to the shady garden; Georgie’s by-appointment vintage store was located in a room off the front verandah.



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"We enclosed the porch, which I was dubious about at first, but I do feel like that space is a lot more usable year-round now. It gets the winter sun, and you can sit and have cups of tea and it's not completely freezing," says Georgie. Windows found on Gumtree were a perfect fit, while a sweet velvet-upholstered lounge set was bought on Facebook Marketplace.



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