

Influenced by Thailand, Indonesia,
Arizona, New Mexico and, most
importantly, her mum, Wendy Taylor
has filled her house with colour

STORY: DEBBIE KRUGER PHOTOGRAPHY: SUZANNA CLARKE



traveller's tale

Wendy Taylor and her husband Ross bought this 1920s Queenslander in Brisbane then moved the whole house down to Byron Bay (a regular event on the NSW north coast nowadays). Since then, the old house has been given a bright new personality through sympathetic restoration and renovation, some intrepid paintwork, and an almost accidental decorating process that, for an unashamed collector like Wendy, is ongoing.

There were some logical changes that had to be made to the house as soon as it was grounded on the Taylors' property. "We turned it back to front so that the verandahs were on the northern side, then opened up the rest of the house. Queenslander-style houses can be quite dark inside, so I just had to get more light in there. Yellow and white is really light and bright and this area, Byron, says sunshine," Wendy explains.

The old lino and dowdy carpet were taken up to reveal beautifully preserved kauri pine floorboards. To create a new, larger bathroom, the ▶

These pages: Wendy's son Geoffrey, a landscape gardener, has created a pretty, easy-care garden around her colourful house. An old Queenslander, it was transported down from Brisbane to start a new life in Byron Bay.



Wendy's flair for colour is obvious: "Yellow and white is

◀ bi-fold doors from the old foyer were taken off and moved to the side of the house, where the spacious dining room now meets the garden.

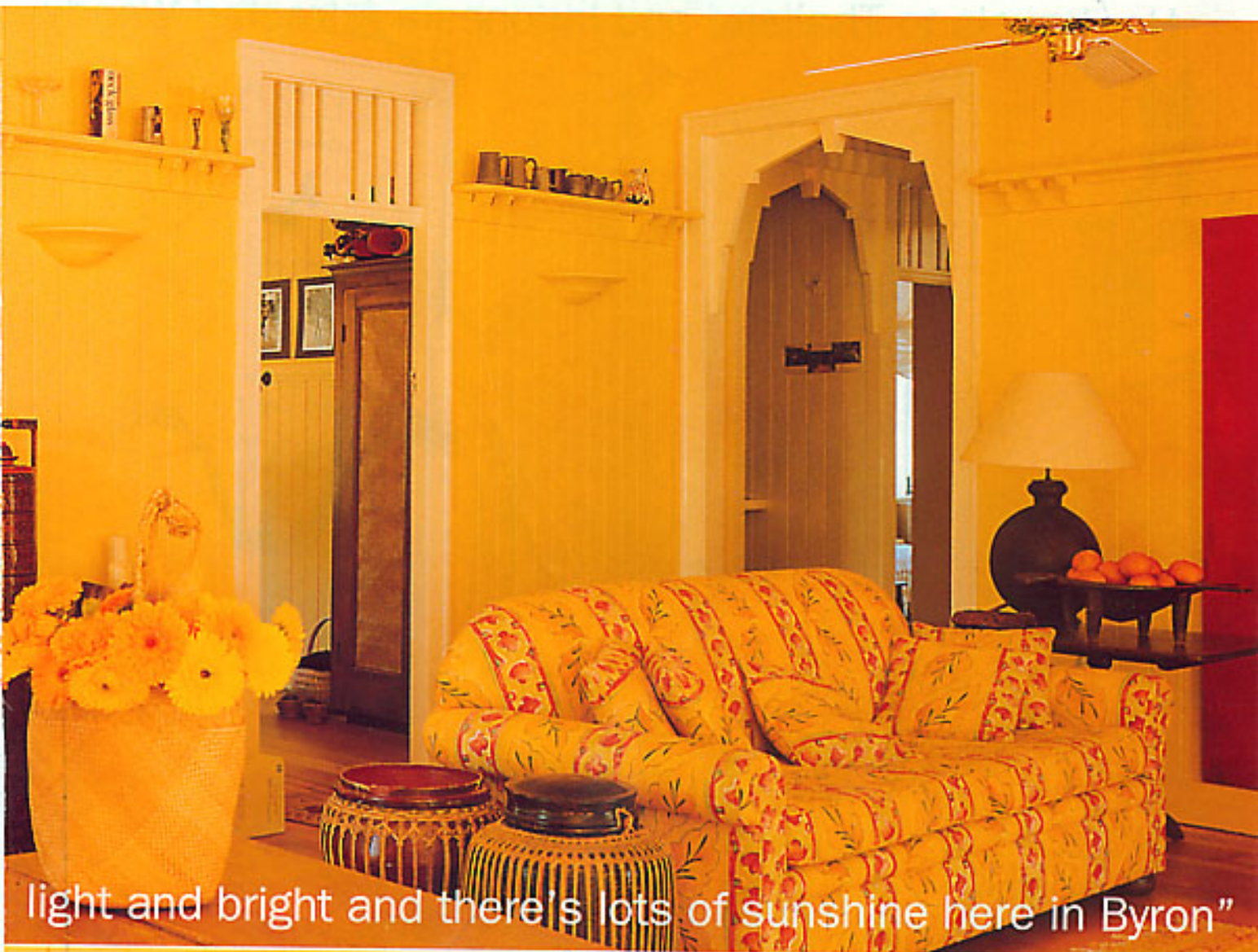
Not wanting to over-capitalise on the house, Wendy decided that making a statement with colour was the best route. Her travels to countries such as Thailand and Indonesia attracted her to the brilliance of bright pinks against rich greens and golden yellows. Exploring the American south-west, notably the desert landscapes of New Mexico and Arizona, brought additional influences, while sojourns to Italy are evident in the use of terracotta and the odd piece on the wall or shelf that invites further consideration.

And then there are her childhood influences. "My mother's house was painted cream and trimmed with burgundy and lime green. Back then, everyone was shocked by these colours. When she came to visit here, I said, 'Mum, this is the house that I was brought up in'," Wendy recalls.

Wendy had the sofa specially made and covered with brilliant yellow Samarkand fabric by Designers Guild. "When we ordered the house we ordered the sofa, because I thought by the time we put the house together we might not be able to afford a beautiful sofa," she explains.

The main bedroom is another impromptu combination of colours and materials, and Wendy admits it is the least feminine part of the house. "You have to give in sometime," she says, grinning. The curtains ▶

Above: the kitchen is the centre of activity in this open-hearted house. **Near right:** artefacts collected during her travels through Asia decorate Wendy's home. **Far right:** Designers Guild Samarkand fabric dresses her new sofa.



light and bright and there's lots of sunshine here in Byron"



Her travels to Thailand and Indonesia attracted Wendy



to the brilliance of bright pinks against greens and yellows



Above left: towels and accessories lend colour and variety to the essentially simple bathroom scheme. **Above right:** a sumptuous net adds romance to the main bedroom. **Left:** native flowers dress a quiet corner.

are made from fabric bought in Thailand, and the mushroom pink paint on the walls was from a tin Ross "found in the shed". The bedcover was made from an old sheet that had the right mix of mushroom, blue and cream, and the cushions are from Heart Over Heels in Byron Bay.

While she has always found shopping overseas a very rewarding experience, Wendy is equally devoted to a handful of Byron Bay shops, such as Private Life, which both imports furniture and sells locally hand-crafted pieces. The four-metre dining table, seating up to 18 people, came from Byron Designworks, and is made of recycled local timber. A generous soul and wonderful cook, Wendy believes a dining room table is for feasting. With an 11-metre long expanse to fill from the kitchen to the garden, finding the huge table was a blessing. She and Ross felt that there were no dining chairs that could possibly match. "You just had to have that lovely clean line," she explains. Eventually they found some suitably simple benches at an antique shop in the nearby village of Bangalow.

With its large terracotta workbench and terrazzo top, the kitchen is always the centre of activity in the house. Wendy holds cooking classes at home under the auspices of the Byron Bay Cooking School and the Joy Lunch Club, where her expertise in running Taylors' Country Guest House, also on McGettigan's Lane, can be shared with local novices. □