

Romance Restored



OATLANDS HOUSE

DESIGNER KW Interiors
 PRODUCTS Symphony Rock 'n' Scroll Backstage Beige
 Josephine Charming Beige and Oyster
 Casbah Berber
 SUPPLIER Baresque



Loved by brides, a new and refurbished Oatlands House has been unveiled after a \$6 million refurbishment. Michelle Wranik talks to Karen Wallace, the interior designer behind the modern revival

As any modern bride will attest, it's not only the dress, the ring and the groom that matter. The setting for the big day is of utmost importance.

Oatlands House, a historic property in Sydney's south western suburbs, has helped scores of brides realise their dream wedding, setting the scene to hundreds of romantic nuptials.

Situated on five acres of pristine gardens with wide views across the Oatlands Golf Course, the house was built in the 1830s by Captain Percy Simpson who later sold it to James Bringdley Bettington. In fact, the first bride to be carried over the threshold was Bettington's wife Rebecca.

Some 180 years later, the tradition lives on. Today, the house has become one of Sydney's most popular wedding venues, the French-Georgian accents and sculptured gardens loved by bridal parties searching for a traditional, elegant atmosphere.

The property's six opulently appointed event rooms

and exquisite gardens cater to intimate weddings for only a handful of guests right through to large scale European affairs hosting many hundreds of people.

"The house is quite unique to other function centres because it's a heritage building and it has many beautiful original qualities which have been maintained both internally and externally," says Karen Wallace, the director of KW Interiors.

For the past 20 years, the Sydney-based design firm has worked closely with Giovannino and Sal Navarra, who own Oatland House along with a portfolio of function centres including Conca D'oro, Le Montage and Curzon Hall.

In the early months of 2012, the Navarras entrusted Wallace to restore Oatlands House, dedicating \$6 million to carry out the refurbishment.

The project was completed in September, KW Interiors updating the property with modern 21st century decor and flair, while at the same time, preserving its romantic, Georgian architecture and vestiges of original, yesteryear sophistication.

While many designers would cringe at the first mention of the words "heritage listed", maintaining the property's charming history was a

welcome challenge to Wallace.

“Oatlands House holds so much history and it was extremely important for us to embrace and hold on to as much of it as we possibly could,” she says, adding that the heritage restrictions on the building required careful planning. “We couldn’t replace the front door, the architrave and some pressed-metal ceilings,” she explained. “And at one point we had to get archeologists in when we pulled up the floor, just to make sure there wasn’t anything deemed an archeological find.”

However the overall vision and design for the venue was unaffected. Among the changes were new floors and ceiling in the foyer, new cornices, skirting and lighting in all rooms. The designers also opted

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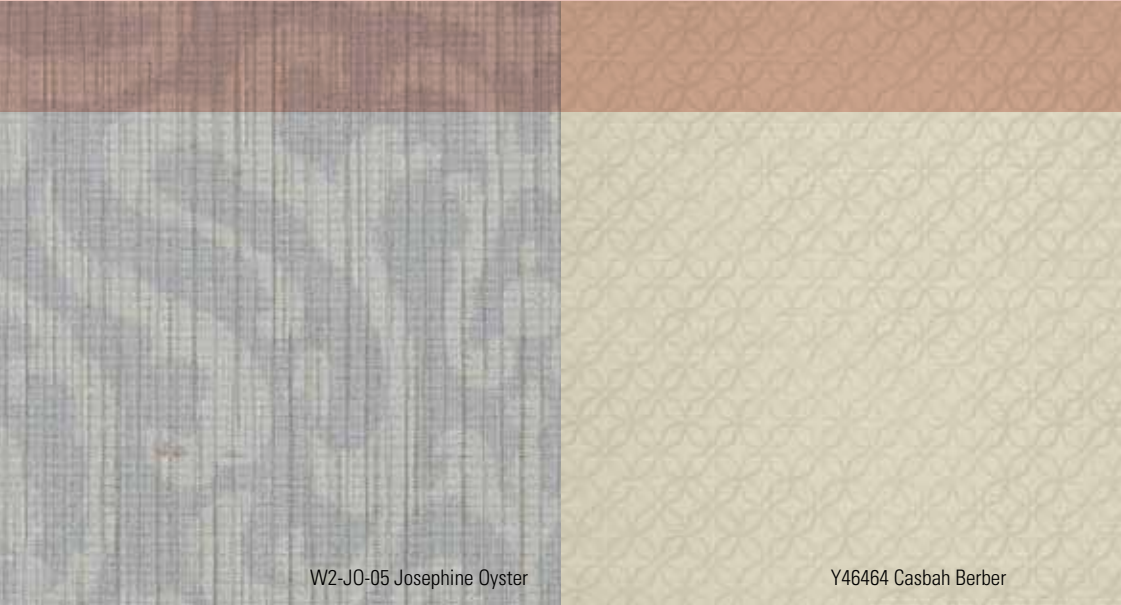


“...The beautiful soft beiges are subtle, while still acting as a feature, and compliment the custom designed carpet.”



AZ52468 Rock N Scroll Backstage Beige

W2-J0-03 Josephine Charming Beige



W2-J0-05 Josephine Oyster

Y46464 Casbah Berber



for custom-designed carpet and Baresque wallpaper as the finishing touches to the elegant, modern atmosphere.

When choosing wallpaper, Wallace elected to stick with neutral shades of greens, taupes and chalks with “soft curves and floral elements” to reflect the property’s heritage and surrounding gardens.

She chose five Baresque wall coverings to obtain the look: Symphony Rock ‘n’ Scroll, Backstage Beige, Josephine Charming Beige, Casbah Berber and Josephine Oyster.

“We were sympathetic to the heritage by selecting wallpaper that looked quite traditional in both design and colour,” says Wallace. “The resulting aesthetic is a rich elegance. The beautiful soft beiges are subtle, while still acting as a feature, and compliment the custom designed carpet.”

According to the designer, it was important to stick with a neutral palette to suit varying tastes, as well as providing the all-important

background to wedding photographs.

“If, for example, the bridesmaids wore pink or green or blue, we needed the background to be quite versatile,” she points out.

However, the team did opt for a subtle hint of colour in the form of a greyed-off blue, by using Josephine Oyster wallpaper in the Elizabeth Suite, an intimate room, mostly used for boutique gatherings of 50 guests.

“The soft blue and grey tied in beautifully with the Elizabeth Suite’s colour scheme and was a nice way to introduce some colour into the space,” says Wallace. “We could see small weddings and high teas going on in there.”

As well as visualising the way wallpaper would appear in bridal photos, Wallace says that durability was essential to her selection.

“When using wallpaper commercially, not only do we want it to look beautiful, it still needs to be serviceable,” she says. “I’m not

suggesting people throw food on the walls, but it needs to be practical as well as beautiful.”

Baresque’s vinyl wallpaper ‘ticks all the boxes’, she adds, with regard to durability, fire compliance set by the local council and the sheer range of styles to choose from.

“We’re always overwhelmed by the selection,” she says. “It’s fantastic.”

With the project now completed, Wallace says she is “100 per cent pleased” with the result. “The Navarra family have given us very positive feedback, and sent us some lovely emails thanking us for our input,” she says.

No doubt many blushing brides will too.

Written by Michelle Wranik
Photography by
kwinteriors.com.au