

HOME OATLANDS TAS

"The garden didn't exist when we bought the cottage in 2014," says homeowner Sophie Weeding. "It was a stone cottage surrounded by paddock, so the landscaping is an ongoing labour of love." Today, catmint, English box hedge, 'Capital' pear trees and *Daphne odora* 'Alba' flourish in the front yard.

MEMORY LANE

A GEORGIAN SANDSTONE COTTAGE ON LAND FARMED BY ONE TASMANIAN FAMILY FOR TWO CENTURIES HAS BEEN GENTLY UPDATED TO SUIT ITS YOUNG OCCUPANTS.

WORDS SUE RAMSEY PHOTOGRAPHY NATASHA MULHALL



BOASTING AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST COLLECTION of Georgian homes, the township of Oatlands in Tasmania's Southern Midlands region oozes charm and history. It's also home to seventh-generation farmer Nick Weeding, who lives with his wife, Sophie, and their sons, William, five, and Archie, four, at Woodbine Cottage on his 3000-hectare family property, Weedington, just on the edge of town. The family's connection to the area dates back to 1823, when Nick's ancestor, James Weeding, arrived in Tasmania and received his land grant soon after.

Nick, 37, grew up on the farm, but the Georgian sandstone cottage that he and Sophie, 38, have recently renovated hasn't always been owned by his family. Initially built in the 1830s for the local doctor, Woodbine Cottage has seen several different owners and incarnations. "One of my father-in-law's relatives restored it in the 1980s. At that point, it was overrun with possums, so they did a full overhaul of the house," Sophie explains. "However, the

home was sold off not long after the restoration and it went through a number of external owners before we bought it back in 2014." When Nick and his brother, Anthony, returned after university to work with their parents on the merino and mixed-cropping farm, Woodbine Cottage just happened to come up for sale. "Nick and I were looking for somewhere to move in together and it's right in the middle of the farm, so it was fate," adds Sophie.

When the couple moved in nine years ago, the decor and layout hadn't changed much since that 1980s renovation. "There were heritage colours throughout – the reds and greens, and cream carpets and walls, with a simple pine kitchen and lino floor," says Sophie. "It was like a rabbit warren – just a little hallway with rooms leading off."

Plenty of work was needed to create a space suitable for their young family. "There was just the existing original sandstone cottage in front and, as we started having children, we felt like we needed to make it open-plan >



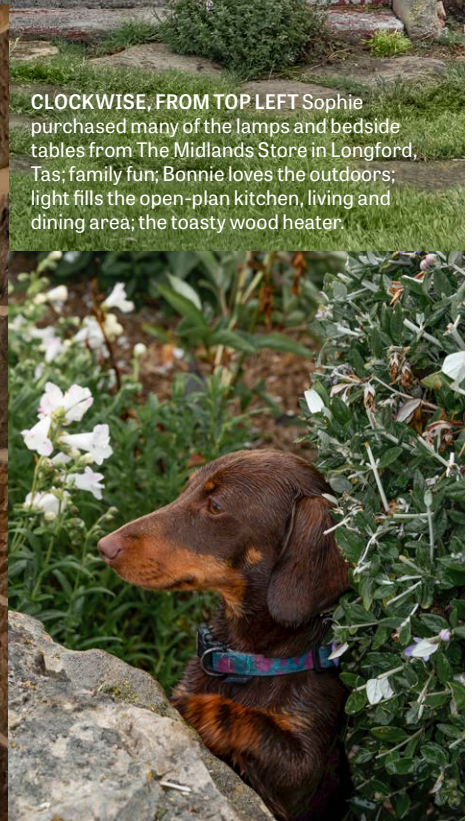
Sophie and Nick with their sons, William and Archie, plus miniature dachshund Bonnie. "The dry stone walls surrounding the house are all paddock rocks," says Sophie. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** Botanical prints from The Jardin Room; the boys enjoy a snack with Dad; Missmith Interiors paired taps from Brodware with a sink from Schots Home Emporium; Sophie enjoys gazing out from the window seats; merino sheep roam the paddocks.



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The living room features a gallery wall with a commissioned landscape piece by Edie Atkins, a beautiful owl painting by Sam Field, watercolours by Sophie and Nick's son William, and various works collected over the years. Nick and Sophie selected a Freedom sofa, while Missmith Interiors sourced blinds by Peter Meyer, a custom-made Tasmanian oak coffee table, Elliott Clarke Textiles linen cushion with Inge Holst fringing, Diane Bergeron cushions, and a custom sisal rug from Natural Floors Melbourne. The scalloped bowl is from Alice Bell Ceramics.



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Sophie purchased many of the lamps and bedside tables from The Midlands Store in Longford, Tas; family fun; Bonnie loves the outdoors; light fills the open-plan kitchen, living and dining area; the toasty wood heater.

"Everything we have planted can withstand arid conditions of snow, frost, howling winds and intolerably dry summers, along with the wallabies, rabbits and possums that move in every season," says Sophie.

living and bring it into the modern day," says Sophie. Her vision of a contemporary, combined kitchen, living and dining area was brought to life courtesy of Tasmanian building design company Woodbury & Co. And although the property has been extended overall, they now have one fewer bedroom – but for good reason. "We've actually removed a bedroom, as we've converted one of the original bedrooms into a bathroom. So, it's still a four-bedroom, two-bathroom home with two guest loos," says Sophie.

Having already completed the restoration of two other historic Tasmanian residences – Raffah House and Millingtons House – which she runs as Airbnbs, Sophie was well prepared for designing the interiors for her own home: "We don't know if we'll be here forever, so we needed to keep it as minimal as possible with the interiors and the style of the house. It's more country-style and a bit contemporary."

Towards the end of the renovation, Sophie sought the expertise of Sheila Smith, founder of Missmith Interiors, to pull everything together, including the soft furnishings, blinds and tapware. "We've been friends for quite some time, so it was a natural selection," says Sophie. "We have a good working relationship and could be honest with one another about the direction I was taking."

As for Sophie's favourite part of the house? "I love the open-plan kitchen and living area, which opens onto the terrace," she says. "We live in an arid landscape and the window seats at either end of the new extension welcome the sunshine into the home – they're wonderful spots to watch the change of seasons."

The sandstone wall behind the wood heater, which warms the house through hydronic panels, is another stand-out feature. "It was the external wall of the cottage and we've built it up to go to the top of the ceiling," Sophie says. "It has lights shining down that make it look really striking with the wood heater in front of it. Under the heater is a slab of sandstone that we had on the farm; we've been able to use it as a hearth, so it's also really special."

Sophie and Nick love their updated home and wholesome farm routines. "There's nothing better than a warm day out, mustering sheep with your dogs – it's a humbling existence and not one I take for granted," Nick says. *For more on the family's Airbnb properties, follow @raffahouse, @brunyboathouse and @millingtons.house on Instagram.*

ABOUT THE HOUSE:

- Tasmanian company Woodbury & Co Building Design completed the house extension; woodburycocom.au
- The bedheads, soft furnishings, window coverings, cabinetry hardware and tapware were sourced by Sheila Smith at Missmith Interiors; missmith.com.au
- The Tasmanian oak floors were installed by DTS Flooring; 0448 008 348; while the joinery was by Ideal Kitchens Tasmania; idealkitchentasm.com.au
- The wallpaper installations were completed by Adorn Interiors; 0430 848 304.



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE Vintage prints add a floral touch in the master bedroom, which has a bedspread by Made in Tangier, a bedhead by Diane Bergeron, and Elliott Clarke Textiles cushions; the upstairs landing features Bosky wallpaper by Lewis & Wood, and Grasscloth by Missmith Interiors; garden glimpses; kelpie Belle rounds up the sheep; Franklin wallpaper by Sibella Court brightens the bathroom.

