

True and Timeless



An Australian home showcases beautiful differences and similarities between American and Australian farmhouse style.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK LOVEL

STYLING BY VIBE DESIGN GROUP

There's more to this farmhouse than stunning views and architecture. The family has an impressive racing history. "A member of the Australian Racing Hall of Fame, as a jockey, Patrick Hyland rode more than 2,300 winners and took out the 'big four' races during his long and illustrious career on the Australian turf—the Melbourne Cup, Caulfield Cup, Cox Plate and Golden Slipper—as well as a host of other races," says designer Kathryn O'Sullivan.





Ever wonder what farmhouse style looks like on the other side of the world? Just east of Melbourne, Victoria, this farmhouse overlooks 100 acres of Australian countryside. The homeowners, Patrick and Maree Hyland, worked with Vibe Design Group to create a timeless space ready to host friends and family. Vibe's senior designer, Kathryn O'Sullivan, illuminates the core values of Australian farmhouse design.

CONTINUING THE LEGACY

Walking through the house, you might notice the sleek open-faced cabinet of trophies or the homeowners' collection of vintage equestrian artwork. These elements carry the family's rich racing heritage, which includes a win in Australia's most prestigious annual thoroughbred horse race, the Melbourne Cup. "This drove us to hero the northeastern aspect of picturesque rolling pastures and ranges beyond—soon to become the permanent backdrop for the living and entertaining heart of the home," Kathryn says.

Today, the homestead still swells with rural life. "The land to the

south and east suited grazing paddocks and running cattle, while Monterey Cypress to the west protects a flat parcel of existing fruit trees before dropping away to the road," Kathryn says.

TRUE TO STYLE

Crafting classic style immune to the quick passage of time is no easy feat. That's why resilient beauty is a shared trait of both American and Australian farmhouses. "For this home we were striving for a real longevity," Kathryn says. "Therefore we relied less upon current trends that might shift and more on an enduring elegance that has a timeless quality."

Vibe Design Group tailored every detail of the home's style into a neutral space capable of wowing guests. "The tongue-and-groove floors are new engineered oak boards, selected for their wide width and deliberate vintage weathered wave, which gives a nostalgic feel like they've been there forever," Kathryn notes. "We wanted to pay homage to the original farmhouse construction, as it exudes a certain type of calm—but with all the luxuries of modern finishes and modern living."



"Australian farmhouse style can tend to reflect the Australian character—pretty modest, first and foremost responding to the functions of the working farm." 

(top, left) With a lovely slatted pathway to the front entrance, guests have time to enjoy the landscape view to their left or the majestic oak tree to their right as they make their way inside.

(top, right) "It was a pleasure for Vibe to follow the project through to the custom furniture selections and interior styling, including the painting that adorns the home's entryway that has unique features from the farm painted into the piece," Kathryn says.

(bottom, right) The spacious, covered veranda creates an inviting space for friends and family to enjoy the view and each other's company throughout the day.





Every finish and piece of furniture in the Hyland house was carefully selected—down to minute details. “Just one example is how the timber legs of the chairs were chosen to match the veneer beams lining the coffered ceilings,” Kathryn says.





(top, left) **The enormous kitchen island provides ample room for treat-laden get-togethers and soirees. It's all about wanting to "comfortably host family and friends who love to get together and share the milestones," Kathryn says.**

(opposite, right) **The transition from window to door is so delicate you barely notice. The club chair with a tasseled throw is perfect for a sun-bathed reading nook.**

PAST AND PRESENT

So what are the differences between American and Australian farmhouses? According to Kathryn, it's more a matter of similarities. Both styles aim to reflect the unique characters of the families living in them. "Australian farmhouse style can tend to reflect the Australian character—pretty modest, first and foremost responding to the functions of the working farm," Kathryn says. It's the same with American farmhouse style, which combines beauty with practicality.

However, American farmhouse style tends to be centered

around the physical remnants of old West farm culture, often displaying galvanized steel buckets and reclaimed wood tables. The style of this Australian farmhouse revolves around the agricultural land itself. "It could be described as super-refined and sophisticated," Kathryn says. "But it's the definition of a traditional farmhouse that the Hyland house ultimately represents—a peaceful agrarian life that acts as a safe and comfortable base for daily activity."

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HERO *The View*

So you have a stunning landscape—what's next?

WINDOWS

Vibe wanted Patrick and Maree Hyland to enjoy their countryside views throughout the house. "A balanced break up of windows and doors with transom windows above wraps the whole space," Kathryn says. The seamless transitions from windows to glass doors allowed Vibe to capitalize on the natural beauty surrounding the farmhouse.

INSIDE AND OUT

"Zoning the different spaces (kitchen, sitting room, dining and lounge) of the large main room is directed not by interrupting walls, but with the design of coffered ceilings," Kathryn says. Vibe used painted lining boards (a variation of tongue and groove) and exposed timber beams to echo the broad openness of the outdoors. "This was the design method we employed to make the most of the views," she says.

FURNITURE

Furniture placement can make or break a flawless view. "The furniture is proportionate to the room but is also positioned well inside the glazed walls," Kathryn says. This way, Vibe's indoor designs never cut views of the Australian landscape. Position furniture so you can enjoy every sunset and sunrise the horizon has to offer.



WHAT'S IN A Farmhouse?

These staple elements create the modern Australian farmhouse. Notice any similarities to your own home?

RIVETING ROOFTOPS. "The corrugated bell-cast roof is a very Australian farmhouse feature," Kathryn says. These metal rooftops can last longer than asphalt roofs and add traditional charm to modern layouts. In this case, it's as though the wavy metal roof mirrors the wind currents in the Australian countryside.

WIDE VERANDAS. The Hyland house immediately captivates with a wide wraparound porch, a classic in Australian farmhouse style. "We see many of the Australian farmhouses sit single story on rural landscapes with deep-set verandas and veranda posts," Kathryn says. "Wrapping around every orientation, the veranda serves its traditional purpose—a transition space between home life and farmyard that allows you to sit and experience the property within the safeguard of the house."

CLASSIC OVER CURRENT. What's hot on the market today might be old news tomorrow. Kathryn and the team at Vibe dug deep into traditional Australian farmhouse style to create a lasting impression. "We feel that a true commitment to the style has longstanding appeal," Kathryn says. "It was also important to respond to the land and vegetation that surrounded the home—a unique response to the features on the land."



The style of this
Australian farmhouse
revolves around the
agricultural land itself.



A two-toned palette and minimal décor makes this bathroom a relaxation haven after a long day of riding through the Australian countryside.

(opposite, top) Australian farmhouse style is not meant to cover up the land, but to embrace it wholeheartedly. Lit from within, this welcoming farmhouse combines honest country living with the luxuries of modern amenities.

(opposite, bottom) Coupled with Midcentury Modern furniture and a chic trophy cabinet, the vintage-framed horse photo hangs on the wall as a tribute to the family's equestrian lineage.

