



# Retro FITTED!

Story by Jacqueline Taylor  
Photography by Saul Goodwin/  
Propertyshot Photography

**Traditional kitchen stylings plus retro-modern appliances add up to a multi-award winning look.**

Like so many other homes in the beautiful village of Bangalow in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, this weatherboard-style cottage surfs the line between classic homestead and Byron Bay chic. Designer Chenoa Watson, head of Solid Kitchens 'n' Cabinets, was briefed by his client to achieve a unique blend of traditional and retro with a warm, homely feel – all offset by a stunning centrepiece, the startlingly colourful AGA cooker.

## NUTS ABOUT COLOUR

“The AGA is an all-electric model made in the UK,” Chenoa explains. “The colour is a standard colour from their range, called Pistachio. The client’s retro items such as old juke boxes, studded leather lounges and old Coke machines work really well with the AGA

**LEFT:** The natural granite of the benchtop was worked with intricate 'lamb's tongue' edging.



“This weatherboard-style cottage surfs the line between classic homestead and Byron Bay chic.”

**ABOVE:** The custom-design mantel conceals the rangehood, ducting and spice drawers while creating instant ‘wow’ factor.

**BELOW:** Weighing almost 500-kilograms, the AGA required extra bracing under the sub-floor and two days assembling on site.

oven and Smeg fridge and dishwasher.” The AGA had already been selected and ordered by the client, as well as the cool retro fridge and dishwasher, so the cream and aqua/turquoise part of the colour scheme was already set. “With the home having white walls and floors,” Chenoa continues, “I didn’t want the cabinets to be lost in all this, so I selected ‘Mocha’ as the cabinetry colour to provide a smooth contrast.”

The etched Caesarstone splashback is also one of Chenoa’s favourite features, being a subtle and elegant counterpoint to the AGA; however it’s the custom-designed chimney breast that frames the cooking zone, while artfully hiding the Qasair rangehood that takes top honours with both himself and the client.

“I designed the mantel as a feature to frame the oven,” Chenoa details, “but from a practical point of view it conceals the rangehood and the ducting. It also incorporates spice drawers to utilise all of the available space. It was probably the most important part in my overall plan for the kitchen, as I wanted a ‘wow’ factor when you enter the room.”

### BLUE RIBBON

There’s little doubt that word of that ‘wow’ factor has spread well beyond those cottage walls. The kitchen became a finalist in the 2012 KBDI Designer Awards, and ended up taking out the gong for ‘Kitchen Design of the Year’ at the HIA Shiro Commercial Northern NSW Housing and Kitchen & Bathroom Awards. It has become something of a showcase for the extra attention to detail that Chenoa and his fabulous team of manufacturers employ when bringing this kind of vision to life.



**ABOVE:** Although the kitchen is relatively compact, it features high-end fixtures throughout.

“I design and manufacture kitchens with a traditional style, but few with as much detailing as this particular kitchen,” Chenoa admits. “All the doors and handcrafted mouldings are hand-finished by Farmers Doors, which provide a nice personal touch, too.”

There’s plenty more hidden within this surprisingly compact space. From only one initial consultation, the client provided quite an unusual brief requesting wine rack, plate rack, appliance cabinet and a display area for their collectors’ items. The ultimate outcome needed to be functional, yet pleasing to the eye.

“The kitchen doors were chosen to compliment the house’s style, along with the decorative features and intricate ‘lamb’s tongue’ edge of the granite benchtop,” Chenoa remembers, praising the outstanding granite work done by Luke Saad at Stone Inspirations. As for the tapware, it is a Perrin & Rowe Phoenician with spray rinse and porcelain levers in a pewter finish; the sink is a fireclay butler style – both supplied by The English Tapware Company. “These were both meticulously sourced to meet the client’s brief of high-end fixtures,” Chenoa says proudly, “and to further enhance the traditional feel.”

### HIDDEN EXTRAS

Despite the obvious and unique aesthetic appeal of the room, the kitchen is nonetheless packed full of functional features, cleverly hidden through the integration of some wonderful Blum hardware. Soft-closing doors and drawers, integrated bin drawer and appliance cupboard hide bulky or unsightly items to make life a little easier and more beautiful day to day, as do integrated paper towel, foil and film dispensers and easy-clean stainless-steel cutlery drawers.

Behind the traditional façades that make this kitchen appear so seamless lies an intelligently designed framework of modern conveniences. The look is effortless and fun, since Chenoa and his team have taken care of the hard work in the design of the kitchen – perfect for an easygoing Northern Rivers home. ■

“I design and manufacture kitchens with a traditional style, but few with as much detailing as this particular kitchen.”

### KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

- Kitchen** – Solid Kitchens ‘n’ Cabinets
- Fridge** – Smeg FAB32LB 330L Retro upside-down fridge in Light Blue
- Tapware** – Perrin & Rowe Phoenician lever tap with spray rinse in Pewter
- Sink** – Perrin & Rowe Aquello single Fireclay butler-style in Glazed White
- Stove/oven** – Two-burner AGA 1000mm electric oven in Pistachio
- Rangehood** – Qasair ducted twin motor
- Benchtop** – Natural Granite in Antique Brown from Stone Inspirations
- Dishwasher** – Smeg 600mm BLV1C Retro dishwasher in Cream
- Water filter** – Alkaway water alkaliser in White

