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TRUE BLUE

CELEBRATING THE BEST OF AUSTRALIAN STYLE

GRAPHIC EXPRESSION

Strong lines and geometric patterns enlivened by splashes of colour provide plenty of personality in this harbourside home.

PHOTOGRAPHS ANSON SMART WORDS CHRIS PEARSON



SYDNEY HOME

THIS PAGE Following the contours of the site, the dual-level living area drops to a conversation pit. Jonathan Adler 'Danner' sofa and daybed, 'Drayton' chair, 'Richard Nixon' rug, and cushions. Coffee table from Off the Wall Antiques, Los Angeles. Eero Saarinen side table from De De Ce. Travertine floor tiles from RMS Natural Stone and Ceramics. OPPOSITE PAGE With vibrant yellow curtains and carpet, the study is like a burst of sunshine. The Louis chair, which the clients already owned, was recovered in Rubelli 'Pisana' from South Pacific Fabrics. Ceramic vase and dog figure from Jonathan Adler.



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT The living room soaks up the harbourside setting, while the striped yellow motorised awning provides Palm Springs-style whimsy. Jonathan Adler 'Meurice' side table. Tom Dixon 'Beat' brass vessels from De De Ce. Modus 'Tubo' lights from JSB Lighting. Awning from Ozsun. Emu 'Piano' table and 'Veranda' outdoor chairs from Ke-Zu. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP RIGHT Looking back to the house where the main bedroom on the top level enjoys premier harbour views. BOTTOM The lap pool seems to extend into the harbour.





The humble, federation-style facade of this house in Sydney's inner west coyly guards what lies beyond. While planning regulations meant its grey-and-white frontage had to be modest, walk through the entry at the side and such limitations – and allusions to heritage style – instantly evaporate. The house sheds its shell, opening up to the harbourside setting, while the flamboyant interiors, by Greg Natale of Greg Natale Design, are glamorous and anything but low key. Also, contrary to that first impression, the four-bedroom, three-level home is a new build from the sandstone bedrock up.

The owners lived for some years in the duplex next door, eyeing off this prime site for its potential. Eventually they bought it, but the old federation house on the lot wasn't part of their plans.

"We wanted somewhere we could live forever, a family home with at least three bedrooms, a study and two-car accommodation," says the owner. "We also wanted a large open-plan living space, a lap pool and a grassed area that would make the most of the view." Planning regulations also meant they had to keep to the existing roofline, while somehow accommodating three levels where a single-level house once stood. Excavations into the sandstone created a basement level, while a gable at the front enabled them to build into the roof.

Entry is on the middle level. Off a hallway to the left is an open-plan living room, kitchen and dining area, with expansive views of Sydney Harbour. To the right is a study and powder room. Up cantilevered travertine stairs are four bedrooms, the main with an ensuite overlooking the harbour, guestrooms and, tucked under the gable, the bedroom of the owners' year-old son. Two-car parking is provided by a car stacker. Down a second flight of cantilevered stairs is a media room, gym and laundry.



SYDNEY HOME

THIS PAGE In the foreground, 'Caprice' table with walnut veneer top, 'Woodhouse' chairs, 'Ventana' single-tier chandelier above island bench, and Jere 'Raindrops' sculpture in hall, all from Jonathan Adler. Black-stained white oak veneer kitchen joinery from Briggs Veneers. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP 'Baxter Loveseat' in leather, 'Chippendale' chairs, 'Caprice' cafe table, 'Trousdale' floor lamps, all from Jonathan Adler. Besser blocks from Besser Block Centre. BOTTOM Guestroom has bedhead from Zanzibar Furniture. 'Brocade' wallpaper in Tobacco, and 'Concentric' cushions from Jonathan Adler. Bedlinen from Restoration Hardware.



“WE HAD AN AFFINITY WITH GREG’S STYLE. WE WANTED SOMETHING FUN AND PLAYFUL AND ALSO ELEGANT. NOT PLAIN WHITE, SOMETHING DIFFERENT.”

The architecture, by Greg Natale Design architect Victor Wong, is “minimal and clean and pared back”, says Greg. While the staircase, with its precast cantilevered treads connecting the three levels is an architectural standout, the home’s distinct personality is in the detail, such as the joinery and the bold decoration.

“It was a case of more is more,” he says. “If I showed the client something boring, she said ‘no’. She hates beige. And clients don’t come to me for beige. This house is black and white, with pops of yellow and turquoise.”

“We had an affinity with his style,” says the owner. “We wanted something fun and playful and also elegant. Not plain white, something different. Greg knew what we were after.”

Greg sums up the home’s style as Palm Springs or Hollywood Regency, popular in California during the 1950s and 60s. “It’s a layer of glamour and decoration over a minimalist base.” The Besser block, a distinctive feature of the living and barbecue areas, is perhaps its essence: ornate, geometric pattern forged in a raw, earthy material.

“It’s all about adding details,” says Greg, obviously referring to the flamboyant light fittings, the mouldings and other flourishes on the joinery, and the bold, geometric wallpaper. Gold and black are used throughout – “gold is warmer and more glamorous than chrome”, he says – for glamour and sophistication.

The black kitchen and main bedroom with its black ensuite are “really glam”, says Greg. “In the kitchen, we had to eliminate silver. We were looking for the glamour of the black, with black granite on the benchtop and black-stained American oak.” The appliance handles were powder-coated in black. And, he says, “the kitchen had to look like a piece of furniture. The island is like a credenza with the tapered legs echoing the pendant light above.”

Embodying the Hollywood Regency style, furniture and accessories by US designer Jonathan Adler, known for his fresh and often whimsical take on familiar themes, are peppered throughout.

But despite its West Coast allusions, this house is still rooted in Australia. Massive sliding doors in the living room open to the lap pool and the barbecue area with its spectacular harbour setting. “The motorised awning with yellow and white stripes is very Palm Springs,” says Greg. “The California and Sydney so much – our sun and our climate is like LA and California. We are very outdoors oriented. With the 3.4-metre-high doors, all the panels slide right back and stack, creating a magical indoor-outdoor space.”

What’s the owner’s favourite room? It’s actually at the front of the house, immediately behind that unassuming facade. “I really love the study,” she says. “It’s beautiful and reminds me of sunshine. With its beautiful colours and textures, it’s a really happy place.”





SPEED READ

+ Having demolished a federation house in Sydney's inner west the owners built a sleek three-level family home that soaks up the prime harbourside location. + The interiors by Greg Natale Design allude to the Hollywood Regency style, with flamboyant decoration layered over minimalist architecture. + Concrete Besser blocks and travertine floors are earthy counterpoints to the sophisticated patterns, detailing and colours.

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT The ensuite has an enviable view. Jere 'Raindrops' mirrors and 'Anemone' light (also opposite) from Jonathan Adler. The owners' son's bedroom includes a mezzanine play area. Kartell 'Ghost' chair from Space. Rug from Designer Rugs 'Ropes' wallpaper from Jonathan Adler. The dressing room and main bedroom (opposite) have Jonathan Adler 'Nixon' wallpaper and 'Richard Nixon' rug. The Louis chair was stained black and recovered in a Jonathan Adler fabric. OPPOSITE PAGE Geometrics add sophistication to the main bedroom. 'Woodhouse' bed, 'Channing' bedside tables, and horse-head lamps, all from Jonathan Adler.



