

# MOODY CLUES



Bold architecture transformed this interwar home into a glam family pad that is at one with its Sydney Harbour views.

STORY *Chris Pearson* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Tom Ferguson*

**KITCHEN** Oak benchtop. Rangehood surround in Cosmic Black granite, CDK Stone. Dekton Sirius splashback. Ovens and coffee machine, all V-Zug. Metrica Thomas barstools, Space. Kitchen design by SJS Interior Design and Michael Robilliard & Associates, made by Debrich Custom Joinery. BSP Sabbiaata floor tiles, Bisanna Tiles. Wall-side joinery in Polaris Noir Pol laminate, Abet Laminati. **DINING** Sideboard by SJS Interior Design, made by Debrich Custom Joinery. Artwork by Bogdan Molea. Bowls by Caroline Blackburn Ceramics, Spence & Lyda.





A bay window with two plush swivel armchairs is a favourite nook for the owners of this home on Sydney's Lower North Shore. Ensncoed in these front-row seats, they can soak up views of the calming waters and nearby bushland - perfect for taking time out. Turn 180 degrees in those chairs and the sitter is back in the thick of the action.

When the owners - a couple with a son, 15, and daughter, 11 - bought the property in 2016, they were drawn to its leafy setting and, just steps away, a sandy beach. But the steep site was dominated by a two-and-a-half-storey interwar home, which had discrete living spaces that shunned the view. So they hired architect Michael Robilliard and Sarah Jayne Marriott of SJS Interior Design to open the property up to the landscape and accommodate the family's diverse needs.

"We wanted Michael to make the most of the aspect and provide fun spaces for everyone to enjoy," says the owner. "We also wanted an open-plan kitchen/living/dining room and ensuites for each bedroom." Sarah Jayne's role was to bring all the elements - the architecture, furnishings and art - together to create a layered, luxurious whole.

First up, Michael gutted the original home, retaining only its solid-brick walls on the lower level. In its stead is a light-filled house with walls of glass to the east, north and west. He also shifted the living areas from the middle level to the top.

Embracing his love of the curve, Michael designed a soaring vaulted ceiling on the top level inspired in part by the Oscar Niemeyer Auditorium in Ravello, Italy. Under that vaulted void are all the living options the family could want: that much-loved seating alcove, family and dining areas, and a showcase kitchen. On the middle level is the main bedroom suite, a music room and children's sitting area; the children's bedrooms and a games room occupy the lower level. ▶

**"WE WERE DEMOCRATIC AND GAVE EVERYONE A WATER VIEW."** MICHAEL ROBILLIARD, ARCHITECT

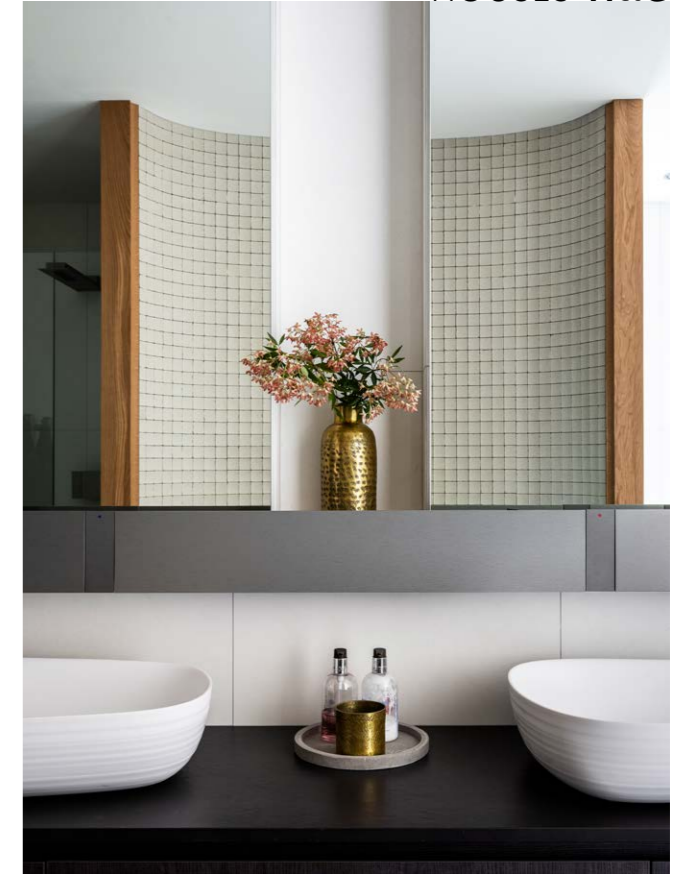
**KITCHEN** *This page* Benchtops in solid oak (meals zone), Cosmic Black Granite, CDK Stone (island) and Dekton Sirius (wall side). Cooktop, V-Zug. Metrica Thomas barstools, Space. Custom sideboard. **DINING** Who dining chairs and Codex dining table, Hub Furniture. Colossal light fitting, Est Lighting. Curtains by Ozshade. Limewashed silvertop stringybark flooring. **BAY WINDOW** Bell side table, Anibou. Ottoman chairs, Domo. Custom sofa. Phoenix coffee table, Hub Furniture. Caroline Blackburn Ceramics bowls, Spence & Lyda. Rug, Hali Rugs.



**THIS IS THE LIFE**  
This house, with its vast, jaw-dropping top floor, is a great entertainer. But there are plenty of spaces for the owners to enjoy their own interests. "There's easy access to the harbour for kayaking plus space for workout machines, should we want to be active," says the owner. "The children love the games room, pool and the garden. I'm glad they enjoy the house so much but I do sometimes wish they spent more time in the study!"

**“AS YOU CLIMB THE STAIRS, THE ELABORATE CEILING  
FANS OUT. IT’S NOT THE USUAL PERSPECTIVE.”** MICHAEL

**LIVING** Moroso ‘Phoenix’ coffee table, Hub Furniture. Small rug, Tappeti Fine Handcrafted Rugs+Carpets. Throw, Shackpalace Rituals. Modernica Case Study Cylinder planter, Spence & Lyda. Foscarini Bahia LED sconces, Space. Big Bug armchair, Poliform. The walls are finished in Venetian stucco and wax (throughout). **STAIRWELL** Silvertop stringybark steps. **BSP** Sabbaiata floor tiles, Bisanna Tiles. **MAIN ENSUITE** *Opposite, top right and bottom left* Terrarossa mosaics and Agape Sen tapware, all Artedomus. Basin, Rogerseller. Bath, Apaiser. Drum stool, Bisque Traders. Comet vase, Tribe Home. **MAIN BEDROOM** Platner armchair, Dedee. Belize mirrors, Domo. Wall covered in Phillip Jeffries ‘Abaca Harvest’ fabric, The Textile Company. Cruz basket, L&M Home. Rug, The Rug Establishment. ▶



*The palette*

Dulux  
Natural White  
(dining)

Dulux  
Very Cherry

Porter's Paints  
Cygnet

Sarah's task was to create a house fit for a family but also an impressive space for entertaining. "It had to be sophisticated and contemporary, muted and rich in texture. Nothing too out there or bright, out of respect for the architecture," she says. The owners already owned an impressive collection of art and furniture, which Sarah wove into the scheme to create a cohesive picture of old and new.

Throughout the living spaces, mostly neutral tones offset the champagne hue of the ceiling; black granite in the kitchen, joinery and furnishings ground the spaces. Bronze highlights, including on the dramatic island bench, add warmth and

glamour. "The owners cook and entertain a lot, so it was important for the kitchen to be a showpiece," says Sarah.

The main bedroom is likewise "a bit dark and luxurious", she says. "The freestanding wardrobe, grasscloth wallpapers and surfaces in Calacatta Viola marble combine to create a sanctuary feel."

The major exception to the refined neutral palette is the children's sitting room, where a David Bromley artwork provided the starting point for the decor. Other happy surprises are peppered throughout. Twin Foscarini lights in the living room function like wall sculptures, while dark joinery provides handy storage

and conceals the TV when not in use. Below is a simple slatted-oregon bench, devised by Michael. "It adds character to the space, where everything else is so sharp and contemporary," says Sarah.

Like the owners, a favourite spot for Sarah is that bay window. "It's a showstopper," she says. "Cantilevered into the landscape, you feel you are part of that water view." It seems there's plenty of competition for the best seats in the house.

H&G

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Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

**MAIN BEDROOM** Platner stool, Dedee. Dressing table in honed Calacatta Viola marble from CDK Stone. Bud vase, Zakkia. Custom bed, bedhead and side table. Bedlinen, Hale Mercantile Co. Lee Broom 'Mini Crescent' bedside pendant lights, Space. Sylvia rug from The Rug Establishment. *For Where to Buy, see page 176.*