

FAMILY VIEWING

Elegant yet robust enough for a clan of six, this new cliffside home in Sydney's north revels in its generous spaces and glorious ocean outlooks.

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ENTRANCE Rachel Defina enters her newly built northern beaches home. 'Twiggy Egg' pendant light, Spence & Lyda. Granite floor tiles, Surface Gallery. Artwork by Sophia Szilagyi. **LIVING AREA** Floor-to-ceiling windows take in a large chunk of the coast. Custom cabinetry in E veneer Chinchilla timber veneer. 'Frankie' modular sofa, Fanuli. Gervasoni coffee table, Space. Basket (on coffee table), Ondene. Tray, Fred International. Vase (on cabinetry), Dinosaur Designs. Stucco wall finish by Hermosa Painting Finishes. **Designer buy:** 'Laguna' abaca-fibre wall-hanging, \$295, Marmoset Found. ▶



FEATURE TREES & PLANT

- Kentia palm (*Howea forsteriana*)
- Cabbage tree palm (*Livistona australis*)
- False cardamom (*Alpinia nutans*)

KITCHEN Light bounces off the handmade tiles of the splashback, drawing attention to the work zone. An open shelf and island base in E veneer Chinchilla breaks up all the white joinery. Hansgrohe 'Focus 240' mixer, Winning Appliances. 'Casa' ceramic splashback tiles in Carrara White, Onsite Supply+Design. Granite island benchtop, Worldstone. Rina Menardi platter (on island), Ondene. Canisters (on shelf), Haven & Space. 'Drop' pendant light (left), Hub Furniture. 'Pipeline' lights (top), Tovo Lighting. European oak tongue-and-groove floor, Precision Flooring. **Designer buy:** Muuto 'Nerd' bar stools, \$810 each, Living Edge. **BALCONY** Rachel chills out with Will and Sarah. LouvreTec operable roof with aluminium louvres, installed by Louvreland. MDF Italia 'Rock' dining table, Hub Furniture. Feelgood Designs 'C603' chair, Stylecraft. Gervasoni 'Ghost Out' sofa and 'InOut' side tables, Anibou. Decking in tallowwood from Coach House Timbers.

Great escape

The family spends a lot of time on the balcony extending from the living room, gathering there for breakfast or to chill out whenever the moment strikes. "With its louvred roof and comfy couch, we just love it," says Rachel. "There's always plenty going on down at the beach to look at." And when the adults, teen and younger children want some 'me' time, they have their own living zones to retreat to.



For the first time, Rachel Defina has a coffee table in her living room. "Before, with three young sons and Lego everywhere, there just wasn't room," she says, a sweep of her arm taking in the new open-plan dwelling on Sydney's northern beaches. With several sitting areas, including a rumpus room for the kids, plus five bedrooms across three levels, space is clearly in abundance here.

When Rachel and her husband Andrew chanced upon the property in 2011, they'd just renovated and settled into what they imagined would be their home for many years, in a nearby suburb. But they had a special affection for this particular area, where they'd both grown up, and loved the aspect of this block. "We were blown away," says Rachel. "We'd always dreamt of a view like that."

Sitting on the site was a weatherboard bungalow, which the Definas rented out until 2015 - right around the time they approached architect Mark Korgul of Watershed Design and interior designer Sarah Marriott of Sarah Jayne Studios to create a new home. "We wanted a laidback family home with rugged surfaces for our active children, and spaces where they could relax with friends as they grew older," says Rachel.

Peter Best Constructions razed the bungalow and excavated the rock to create a home with three levels where there had

This is the life

Having people over is easy here as many areas can expand and contract according to the family's needs. In the living room, wall-to-wall sliding glass doors open up completely so the large balcony can become a continuation of the space. Meanwhile, guests who need to be accommodated are welcome in the parents' retreat, where the study (with its sliding fourth wall) can be quickly converted to a bedroom.



been two. As a result, the couple and their (now) four children - Will, 14; Lachie, 12; Sam, nine; and five-year-old Sarah - have all the space they need, now and into the future. "The levels effectively create three zones: open-plan living spaces on the middle level; a parents' retreat with sitting area and a study on top; and the children's zone on the lower level, with their bedrooms and media space all enjoying the northern aspect," says Mark.

Vast walls of glass allow the family to connect with the outdoors even when they're inside, while the cantilevered outdoor space adjacent to the living room appears to hover over the breakers. Its slatted roof and louvres keep the sun exposure under control.

New stone walls built in a freeform, dry-stacked style feature inside and out. They connect the house firmly to the site and its heritage sandstone walls and steps, which were retained in the redevelopment. Meanwhile, horizontal strip windows and judicious screening ensure privacy from neighbouring houses sitting right on the boundary.

Interior designer Sarah says her brief was not to cut corners in the finishes and detailing. "Rachel and Andrew wanted the

spaces to feel warm, liveable, friendly and relaxed, not Hamptons beach-house style but a little more bespoke and Scandi in style."

A palette of light oak flooring and stone throughout reflects the coastal location, with expanses of white and cooling greys to temper the prevailing warm, sandy hues. "It's a neutral, pared-back look, with pops of blue and green," says Sarah. Texture also plays a huge part, with clever choices such as the woven pendant lights and accessories. Setting it apart from other beach homes are some more sophisticated elements: marble-like stucco on select walls in the living and sleeping quarters, and pearlescent mosaics in the main ensuite.

Luxury finishes aside, this is very much a family home, with a relaxed northern-beaches feel. The Definas love it - and their close-up view of the rolling waves. "It's so unusual taking them in from that angle," says Rachel. "We know it's special."

Watershed Design, Manly, NSW; watersheddesign.com.au.

Peter Best Constructions, Roseville, NSW;

peterbestconstructions.com. Sarah Jayne Studios, Woolloomooloo, NSW; sarahjaynestudios.design.

LIVING AREA An abstract artwork by Mark Elliot-Rankin has pride of place. Custom cabinetry in E veneer Chinchilla. 'Delta vase' (on cabinet), Papaya. 'Twiggy Egg' table lamp (next to window), Spence & Lyda. NAU 'Nest' side table, Cult. Australian House & Garden throw, Myer. **MAIN ENSUITE** Indulgent soaking is easy in the Apaiser 'Sublime' tub, with the views filtered through automated aluminium louvres. Bath filler, Brodware. Faucet Strommen 'Doccinox' ceiling shower and Hansgrohe 'Raindance' rail shower, both Just Bathroomware. Tiles, Di Lorenzo Tiles. Pendant lights, Marz Designs. **DINING** The American ash table from Beachwood Designs is a great match for the 'C170' oak chairs from Stylecraft. Paris au Mois d'Août pendant lights, Hub Furniture.



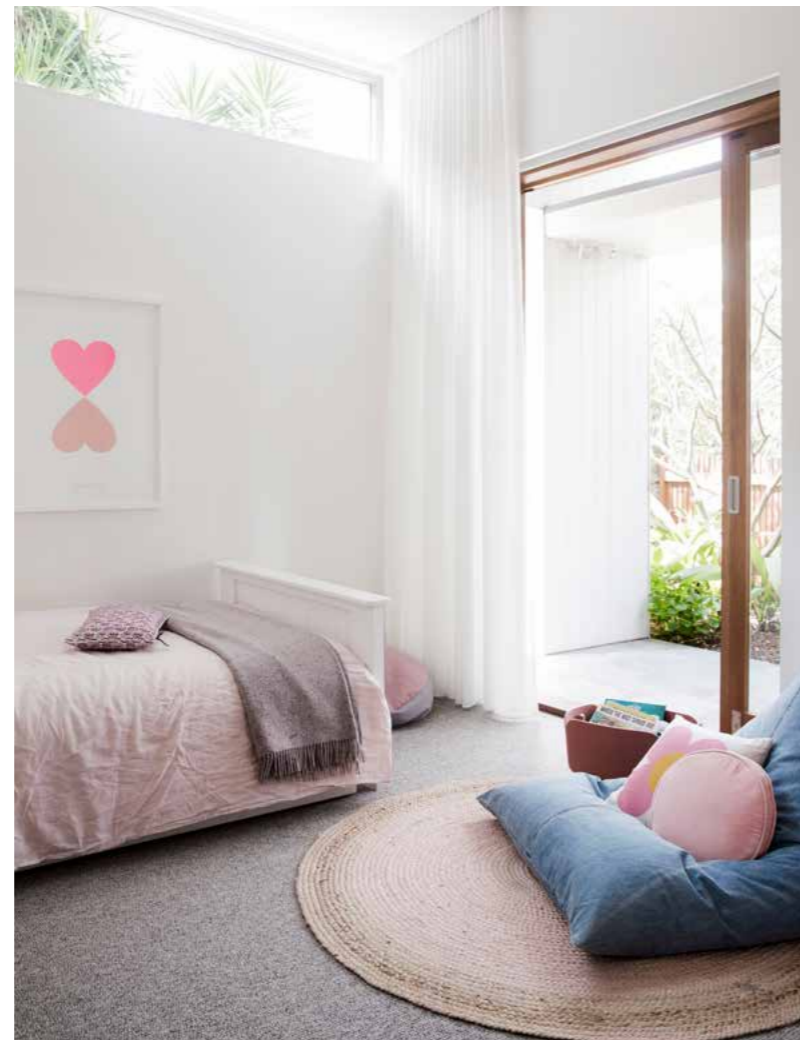
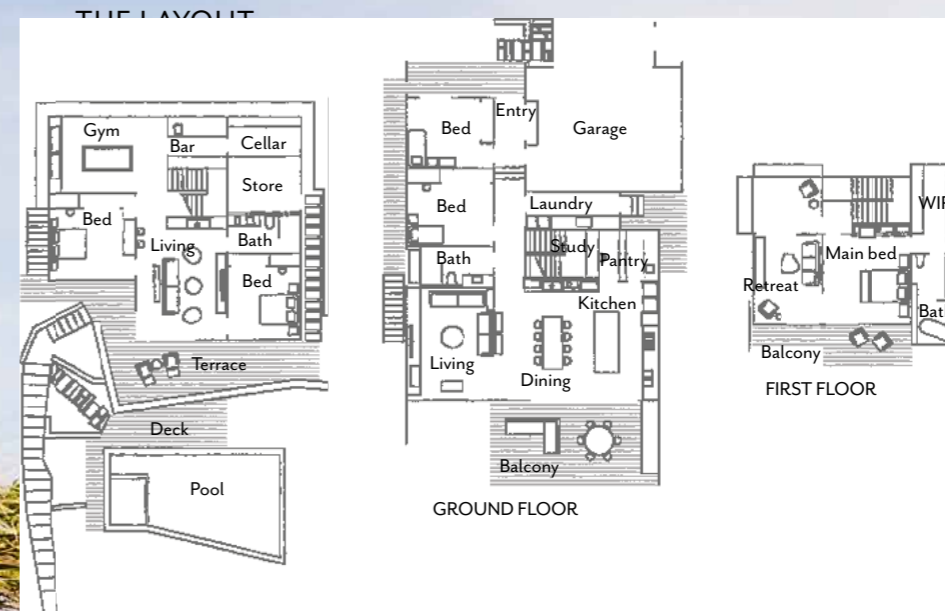


THE PALETTE

Dulux Natural White (kitchen joinery and living)

Grey Marmorino stucco wall finish (hallway)

Dry-stacked granite cladding (main bedroom)



POOL Sarah and Lachie take a dip. For similar towel, try Myer. **PARENTS' RETREAT** 'Snug' chair and 'Soft Triangle' side table, Stylecraft. Moller bench #63, Great Dane. Throw, Orson & Blake. 'Lisburn' carpet, Cavalier Bremworth. Artwork by Gabi Lee, Otomys. **MAIN BEDROOM** A blackbutt recess in the stacked-stone walling creates a space for storage and display. Candlesticks, H&M. Muuto mirror, Living Edge. Riva 'Clessidra' stool, Fanuli. 'Bronte' granite cladding, Surface Gallery. **SMART BUY:** 'Polished Cylinder' brass vase, \$54, Zakkia. **DECK** Rachel and Sarah cuddle up in a circular day bed with retractable canopy. B&B Italia 'Canasta' day bed, table and cushions, all Space. **SARAH'S ROOM** A sweet space for the youngest of the family. Artwork, Castle & Things. Beanbag and throw, Koskela. Muuto 'Restore' basket, Living Edge. Rug, Temple & Webster. Custom ottoman. For *Where to Buy*, see page 187. H&G