IL LIDO

Drenched in OCEANIC references with splashes of *'70s-tinged* drama, this Greg Natale-designed harbourside Sydney home is a perfect encapsulation of its owners' PERIPATETIC lifestyle.

By FREYA HERRING *Photographed by* ANSON SMART *Styled by* JOSEPH GARDNER





This page in the living area of this Sydney home, Le Bambole **armchair** by Mario Bellini for B&B Italia from Space Furniture; custom **coffee table**, Lily **candle holder** (left) and Stella **bowl** in Terreno Gold marble (on book), all by Greg Natale; Seymour **sofa** by Rodolfo Dordoni for Minotti from Dedece; Altar **side tables** by Tacchini from Stylecraft; **vase** by Jodie Fried from Studio Gardner; custom **rug** by Greg Natale from Designer Rugs; Gem Branch **chandelier** by Giopato & Coombes from District; Pipistrello **table lamp** by Gae Aulenti for Martinelli Luce from Finnish Design Shop. ***Opposite page*** in the dining area, **artwork** by artist unknown. ***Previous page*** in the entry, Anjelica **sideboard** by Greg Natale from Covet Collection; Crown **vase** by Floris Wubben from Studio Alm; Geo **vase** Emperador by Greg Natale; clay **bowl** by Sophie Vaidie from Studio Gardner; Porta Romana Neolith **wall lights** from South Pacific Fabrics; **Roman blinds** produced by Studio B Soft Furnishings in Unique Fabrics Dieter in Porcelain fabric; **wall** in oak burl from Briggs Veneers; **floor** in custom Tessere marble tile by Greg Natale from TeraNova; *Homage Painting (Black Canvas)* **artwork** by Morgan Stokes from Curatorial+Co. *Details, last pages.*

These pages in the formal dining area, custom **dining table** and Lily **bowl** in Arabescato by Greg Natale; Fulgens **dining chairs** by Antonio Citterio for Maxalto from Space Furniture; **fireplace** from Real Flame; **upper cabinet** in American Oak veneer; **lower cabinet** in ALPI California burl from Elton Group; **benchtop** in Oyster marble from CDK Stone; bamboo cabinet t-bar recess with Amalfine **handles and grip** in silver bronze with vintage patina from Turnstyle Designs; Levante **suspension light** by Marco Spatti for Luceplan from Misura; Kupoli **table lamp** by Michael Verheyden from Ondene; custom Anemones **wallpaper** by de Gournay; **floor** in custom Barra marble tiles by Greg Natale from TeraNova and Oyster marble from CDK Stone.

There is always a bit of Greg Natale in the homes he designs. It's that impeccable Italian bent he is known for, but also his personal history and the nostalgia therein, layered up with his clients' own stories; the art and objects they have collected over the years, and the unique needs they want facilitated in their home. It's why they choose Natale to reimagine their most private of spaces: this tension, this texture, these many, undulating layers.

Such rich stratums inform a new project by the interior designer in collaboration with Corben Architects — a four-floor, three-bed, five-bath home situated in the plush suburb of Balmoral on Sydney's Lower North Shore. It is a home that celebrates the clients' love of the ocean and honours the international lifestyle they lead, refracted through a 1970s lens, a design decade Natale worships. "My parents built their dream home in the late 1970s," he reminisces. "Living in a new house with a lot of pattern and marble had this huge influence on me."

Here, the 1970s comes out in low-slung furniture, geometric tiling and S-fold curtains, in space-age features like rounded skylights and flying-saucer-shaped chandeliers, and in all-encompassing browns and moments of burl, walnut and oak thrown together in the classic, wood-clashing style of the period. "My favourite era of design is the 1970s, so I probably do it now without even realising," says Natale. "I think it's because I remember the end of the '70s, so it feels a bit nostalgic for me." Sky blue was key in the clients' brief, a tone Natale took and ran with, drenching the primary bedroom in its ethereal tones, "That blue is so '70s," he says. "My parents' bathroom was that colour."

Another reason for the prevalence of sky blue in this house is because it represents something this family is passionate about: the sea. The property overlooks the tranquil waters of Balmoral Beach, and its pleasure spaces — dining and lounging — honour those seaside vibes. They do so, though, with subtlety. "The brief was sky blue and beachy, but not beachy in a typical Sydney way," states Natale. "The way I took 'beachy' was something that was earthy and natural. I suggested sticking with the blue, but also bringing in greens, sandy-toned timbers and textural, plaster lights." He has created a quasi-beach scene via palette alone, with the dining room sporting blue tones, its ceiling slicked in glossy, pale-blue lacquer; shiny like the sea. It leads into the adjoining living room ceiling which is decoratively coffered and painted with sandy, matte colouring, the furniture beneath it continuing its tonal narrative with creams and whites counterplayed with pops of amber.

Caroline Olesnicky, daughter of the owners and overseer of the house's redesign, cites "the ever-changing reflectivity of the lacquered ceiling in the dining room" as one of the family's favourite spaces. "At night, seeing the ceiling pendant completely reflected above with a softened, 3D effect is a definite wow moment," she says. "During the day, when the windows are open, the soft movement of the pendant in the breeze makes the house feel like it is breathing. There is a soulfulness to the interior of the house that almost feels biological."

The entire property could so easily have been themed in this one, beach-led bent, but that is a temptation Natale has resisted. Journeying through its 800 square metres of rooms, the storied lives of its dwellers make themselves known, and throughout it another theme starts to make itself apparent: the aesthetics of East Asia.

"The clients bought the house 35 years ago and then moved to Hong Kong," explains Natale. Now, they go back and forth between the cities, increasingly spending more time in their Antipodean hometown. Natale wanted to reveal this aesthetically immediately upon entry, and he does so via the use of wood, with the front door opening onto an expansive wall of burl, synonymous with luxurious Chinese design, paired with Natale's own walnut Anjelica sideboard. "The entry is about creating a sense of grandeur with all that wood," he explains. "The whole East-West thing is not obvious, it's subtle."

They have gone to town in the home's study however, which is confidently awash in maroon; a moody, thinking space with deepset dentil cornicing that recalls British Victoriana — a shrewd nod to Hong Kong's colonial past. "Because we have spent more than half of our lives living in Hong Kong, we wanted to draw on an East-meets-West aesthetic," asserts Olesnicky. "We supported this with a curated eclecticism of mixed woods, rich colours, dark metals and organic wall finishes."

Natale has created a home for this family, with all of their quirks, idiosyncrasies, experiences and histories, and in doing so, has imparted some of his own, too. "For me, good design is about storytelling, and I'm a storyteller," he says. "When I walk through different spaces I like to find surprises along the way — my work is definitely about drama and creating a mood. And at this house you feel like you're at the beach; it's calm." ■ *gregnatale.com*

This page in the kitchen, **island, benchtop, splashback** and **kickboard** in Tempest quartzite from CDK Stone; **upper cabinets** in Dulux Waltzing gloss satin finish; **lower cabinets** in American oak veneer; **kitchen mixer** and wall-mounted **pot filler** from Astra Walker; Ilve Majestic Electric **oven** with induction cooktop from Winning Appliances; **rangehood surround** in hand-plastered Lusso Venetian Finish; Zanotta Teti **occasional table** and Beetle **barstool** by Gam Fratesi for Gubi from Cult; **vase** by Laura De Carteret and clay **bowl** by Sophie Vaidie from Studio Gardner; marble **vessel** by Michael Verheyden from Ondene; **floor** in Slavonian Oak Miele Scuro from Mardegan Legno; *Homage Painting (Canvas)* **artwork** by Morgan Stokes from Curatorial+Co.



This page in the guest bedroom, **bed linen** from In The Sac; Sigmund **bench** by Arflex from Space Furniture; **joinery** in American Walnut veneer; Lo & Co Hubble **knobs** in Travertine; Dish **pendant light** from Anna Charlesworth; Souvenir **lamp** by Kawabi from Studio Gardner; **curtains** produced by Studio B Soft Furnishings in Camengo Fjord no.14 fabric from The Textile Company;Fragment **rug** by Greg Natale from Designer Rugs. ***Opposite page*** in the study, custom **desk** by Greg Natale; Andreu World Calma Executive Highback **chair** from Ke-zu; Blake **armchair** (on left) by Minotti from Dedece; **joinery** in Dulux Burnished Russet gloss satin finish and stained American oak veneer; Travertino Rosso **drawer tops** from SNB Stone; Soleil Vide Poche **plate** (on desk) and Caldera **tray** (on shelf behind desk) by Greg Natale; **teapot** by Christopher Dresser; Tulipiere **vase** by Cécile Daladier from Studio Gardner; Japanese Wakasa lacquerware **tray** from Greene & Greene; Flos Chiara Oxidised **desk lamp** by Mario Bellini from 1stDibs; CTO Axis 3 **pendant light** from Winning Appliances; Chawton **picture light** by Elstead from LightCo; **curtains** produced by Studio B Soft Furnishings in Unique Fabrics Aldeco Tricot in Golden Earth fabric; custom **rug** by Greg Natale from Designer Rugs; **artwork** by artist unknown. *Details, last pages.*