

June 2005

"Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old."
FRANZ KAFKA

designed for living

belle

EURO VISIONS

AUSTRALIAN INTERIORS CONTINENTAL STYLE

french bliss
INSIDE
philippe starck's
crystal palace

frère play with the
bouroullec brothers

EDITOR'S CHOICE

CLASSIC CUTLERY
DESIGNER VACUUM FLASKS
OUTDOOR FABRICS
TOP 10 TRAVEL GADGETS

ON THE CHIC
the table is set spot
the design difference

olivia newton-john's
byron bay getaway

best of british
sir paul smith's
talent show

\$7.95
(INCL. GST)

PP255003/0000
(NZ \$9.95)



9 313006 001201



belle

designed for living

When creating a beautiful interior, where does your inspiration come from? This issue we celebrate the European influences on Australian homes. Take the stunning waterfront apartment featured in **nature boy, page 90**, for example. The owner has teamed mid-century modern classic furniture with gorgeous Australian artworks and the deep ochre colours of the central deserts to create a subtle blend of character. Designer Marco Meneguzzi has created a hip home for his young clients in **neutral palette, page 96**, using a clean suite of colours teamed with unfussy antiques. Next we travel to the beautiful hinterland behind Byron Bay on the northern NSW coast to luxuriate in the soothing surrounds of Olivia Newton-John's Gaia Retreat and Spa, in **hopelessly devoted, page 102**. The tropical setting couldn't contrast more with up-and-coming designer Greg Natale's own apartment, which owes its glamour to his Italian background and eye for retro disco flash, in **disco chic, page 108**. An elegant historic house is given an ultra-modern extension in **split personality, page 114**, while an off-the-plan city pad is given a comfortable yet sophisticated makeover for a retired record executive in **night music, page 122**. A building designer secured his ultimate brief when he discovered a vacant inner-city block, erecting a stunning two-storey home in **the blockbuster, page 128**.

Black glamour The 1970s' black mirrored coffee table, now the centrepiece of interior designer Greg Natale's indulgent inner-city apartment, was the starting point for the transformation. The table once belonged to Sydney high-rise architect Dino Burratini. The kitchenette was remodelled by Natale to resemble a wet bar.



Italian influences The kitsch baroque armchair from interior designer Greg Natale's parents, coffee table and Minotti side table are highlighted by the Murano glass chandelier, sourced on online auction site eBay. The Moore sofa by Minotti from De De Ce sits against a stucco wall by Mary Christec of Just Finishes. Heavy Rubelli Brunschwig & Fils fabric curtains hang from the oversize windows.

disco chic

A heavy dose of *Italian glamour* infuses the studio apartment of award-winning interior designer Greg Natale. Kitsch? Definitely. Yet its sophistication shines through.

Text by Annabel McGilvray. Styling by Jean Wright. Photography by Sharrin Rees.



Elegant dining An original Andy Warhol print of Marilyn Monroe from Connie Dietzschold Gallery hangs near the dining table, designed by A.G. Fronzoni in 1964, available from De De Ce. The abstract painting is by Scott Petrie. The chairs are re-upholstered vintage pieces from Ken Neale at Twentieth-Century Modern.

IT'S A LITTLE NEW YORK DISCO, A DASH OF DOLCE & GABBANA AND a good southern Italian helping of kitsch baroque tossed together in the most elegant fashion within the confines of a split-level apartment. It's a Warhol print, a chandelier, mirrored surfaces and animal pelts. A space for intimacy and obviously a little frivolity.

The inner-city Sydney apartment is the home and creation of rising-star interior designer Greg Natale. He says the mix of modern and retro, kitsch and fashion is a deliberate evocation of his world.

"When I was looking for a decorating style for this I thought, 'This is for me, so I really need to go inside me. This needs to have a subjective approach'. Then I started looking for styles and things that were personal."

Natale began with the decorator's equivalent of a clean slate. When he walked into his new off-the-plan inner-city Sydney apartment in 2002, it had concrete floors and white walls. The strong interior lines of the Burley Katon Halliday-designed apartment were perfect, with a combined entrance-level living-dining room equipped with a kitchenette and above, a mezzanine-floor bedroom, but Natale wanted to imbue it with his own signature style.

He lived with white walls for a year. Having set up his own practice, Greg Natale Interior Design, in August 2001, he was busy with a whole range of projects, including the wildcard winner of the 2002 *belle* Apartment of the Year award, the Gonano apartment.

But when he came across a coffee table that had belonged to the late

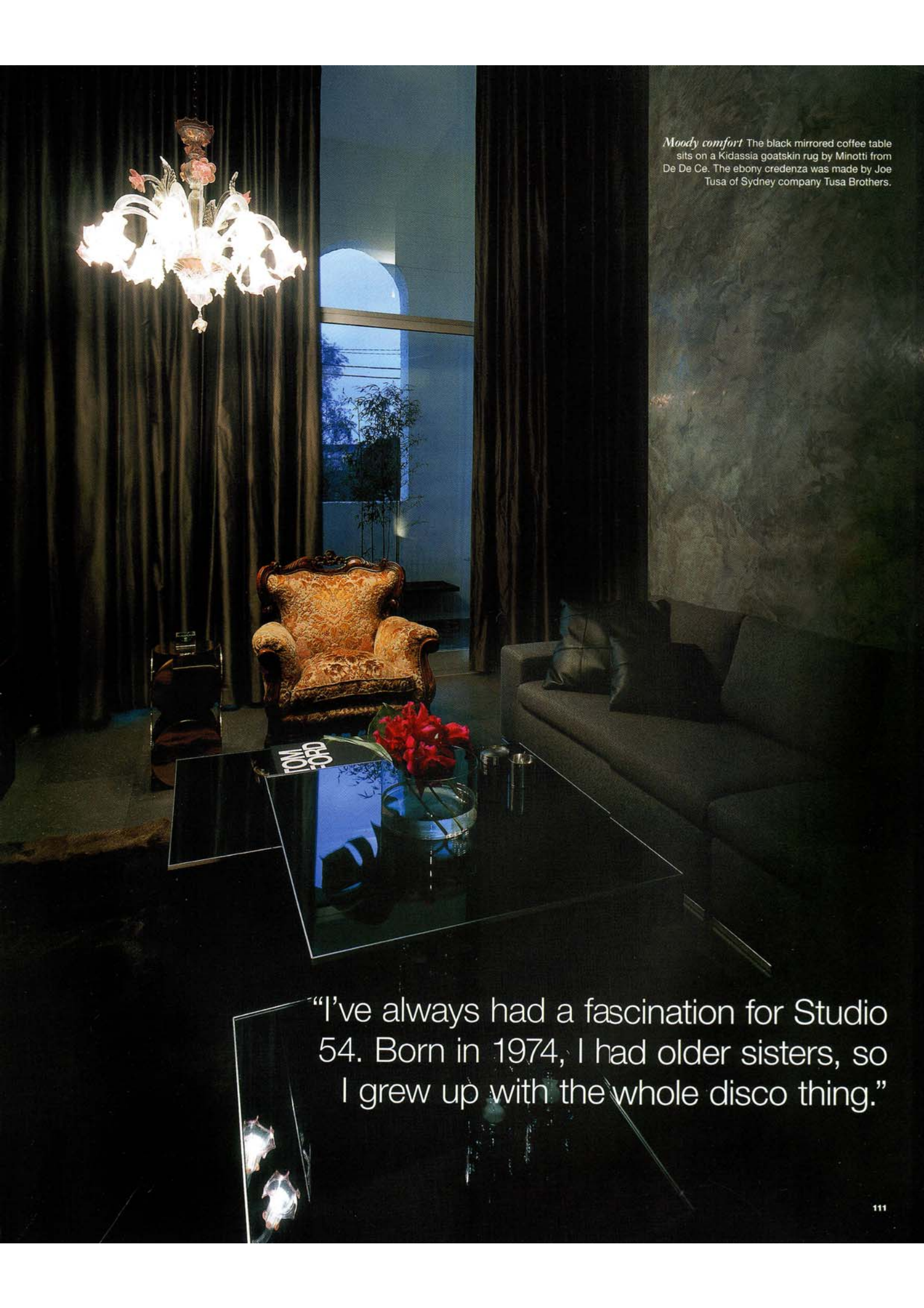
Sydney high-rise architect, Dino Burratini, with whom he had done work experience while at school, Natale found his starting point for the studio's transformation. The 1970s' black mirrored coffee table became the centrepiece of the apartment's entry-level and, now sitting fetchingly on a Minotti goatskin rug, fed naturally into Natale's penchant for the high era of New York disco epitomised by nightclub Studio 54 and its devotees. "I've always had a fascination for Studio 54. I was born in 1974 and had older sisters so I grew up with the whole disco thing."

Referring to his apartment's imposing grey walls, Natale lapses into a story told by Tom Ford of 1970s' international fashion superstar and doyenne of Studio 54, Halston (aka Roy Halston Fowick) who sought to paint his New York townhouse in the 'perfect grey'.

"He searched and searched and searched for the perfect grey. Tom Ford went to his townhouse in the late 1970s and he said it was the perfect grey. And believe it or not, when I was picking this grey, I think I put about 30 different colours on this wall."

Next, Natale remodelled and simplified the kitchenette space, using his trademark mirrored surfaces to give it a wet-bar look. Visitors could think they really are in a nightclub anywhere at any time during the past 30 years.

The grey of the walls exaggerates the lurid tones of the ultimate 1970s' glam adornment, an original Andy Warhol print. On the neighbouring wall is a less garish abstract from Australian LA-based artist Scott Petrie. The art in >



Moody comfort The black mirrored coffee table sits on a Kidassia goatskin rug by Minotti from De De Ce. The ebony credenza was made by Joe Tusa of Sydney company Tusa Brothers.

“I’ve always had a fascination for Studio 54. Born in 1974, I had older sisters, so I grew up with the whole disco thing.”

Design notebook...

Furniture Moore **sofa** by Minotti and A.G. Fronzoni
dining table from De De Ce, tel (02) 9360 272,
(03) 9650 9600, (07) 3367 0755, www.dedece.com.au
Credenza made by Tusa Brothers, tel (02) 9534 2142.
Vintage **dining chairs** from Ken Neale Twentieth-
Century Modern, tel (02) 9331 2033. **Bedhead** from
Lara Kincade, tel (02) 9692 0815.

Soft furnishings Kidassia goatskin **rug** by Minotti from
De De Ce, as before. Rubelli **fabric** for curtains from
Brunschwig & Fils, tel (02) 9363 4757. Faux chinchilla
throw from Cruz, tel (02) 9386 9934.

Art To learn more about LA-based Australian artist
Scott Petrie, visit www.scottpetrieart.com Warhol print
from Connie Dietzschold Gallery, tel (02) 9690 0215.

Extras Stucco **wall** (in living room) finished by Mary
Christec of Just Finishes, tel 0414 922 332.



Furry comfort The mezzanine bedroom is dominated by the glamorous bedhead by Lara Kincade, and edged by a credenza made by Tusa Brothers. On the bed is a faux chinchilla bedspread from Cruz.



“To be honest, the hardest client is yourself. It’s very easy doing work for other people,” says Greg Natale.

turn, frames and provide a context in the studio space for the 1964 A.G. Fronzoni dining table and its six re-upholstered vintage chairs.

But beyond the 1970s disco retro theme is a motif much closer to home – the kitsch baroque furniture beloved of much of Australia’s immigrant Italian community during the 1960s and ’70s. To illustrate, Natale gestures to a gloriously kitsch baroque armchair sourced from the Australian home of his Southern Italian immigrant parents.

Above it hangs a Murano glass chandelier that is a long-sought (and found courtesy of online auction website eBay) replica of one that hung in his aunt’s home. He sketches a picture with words of his childhood surrounded by similar objects. “As a kid I hated it – when I was 15 I tried to sell it all through *The Trading Post* – but the baroque stuff like the chair is really iconic. To me, that is now the most iconic thing in the apartment.”

Natale says he has really gone back to his roots in many ways in decorating his own home. The majority of both the modern and retro furniture is either Italian and Italian replica, while Italian tradesmen completed many of the details – such as the lovely ebony credenza that lines one wall of the sitting area, made by Joe Tusa of Sydney company Tusa Brothers.

But it was a difficult commission, he says with a sigh. “To be honest, the hardest client is yourself. It’s very easy doing work for other people.” □

Greg Natale Interior Design, tel (02) 8399 2103, www.gregnataleid.com.au