

DECEMBER 2005 £3.30

INSPIRING
INDIVIDUALITY
IN YOUR
HOME

UK
EDITION

ELLE DECORATION

SHOPPING EXTRAVAGANZA

HOTTEST NEWEST LATEST

OUR PICK OF THE UK'S BEST HOME STORES

(great for gifts!)

COME ON IN!
GORGEOUS HOUSES TO INSPIRE YOU

ENTERTAINING MADE EASY
FROM COOL CROCKERY, CAKES AND CUTLERY TO COCKTAIL CHIC AT HOME
PLUS
MUST-HAVE TABLES, CHAIRS AND EVEN TV STANDS!



BREAKING THE RULES

WHEN INTERIOR DESIGNER GREG NATALE DECORATED HIS OWN PLACE, HE THREW AWAY THE RULE BOOK. THE RESULT? HIS HOME OOZES SEXY GLAMOUR – PROOF THAT BY DARING TO BE DIFFERENT YOU CAN CREATE A TRULY STUNNING SPACE.

WORDS MEGAN MORTON PICTURES ANSON SMART



THE LIVING ROOM:

when Greg Natale decorated his Sydney apartment, he chose pieces with a high shine, such as the bespoke suspended sideboard in the sitting room, in which he keeps his audio/visual equipment. Made from macassa ebony, he had it French-polished 'to shine like a grand piano' (for similar, try Paul Kelley). This, the vintage glass coffee tables (try Boom! Interiors) and shiny gold-nickel-plated 'Still' side table by Rodolfo Dordoni for Minotti (European Design Centre), contrast with the subtle textures of the sofa, curtains and flooring, resulting in a layered effect that is deliciously dark. Greg's not afraid to mix styles, hence the elaborate Murano-glass chandelier (for similar, try Glory Antique Chandeliers) and the baroque chair, a family heirloom (Judy Greenwood Antiques has similar). He changed the old polished-concrete floor for basalt, a volcanic rock in a warm graphite colour, sourced from southern Italy (Oliver Burns sells bespoke basalt flooring). ▷





**'MY WORK
HAS BEEN
DESCRIBED
AS
EVERYTHING
FROM BOLD,
DYNAMIC
AND
GLAMOROUS
TO VERGING
ON THE
KITSCH'**

THE DINING AREA: the one-bedroom apartment might be small, but there's always room to party. Dinner for six is easy to accommodate, but Greg also likes to throw twilight drinks for as many friends as drop by. The anthracite-grey 'Fronzoni' table by AG Fronzoni is by Cappellini, paired with vintage chairs from Kenneth Neale in Sydney, reupholstered with mink velvet from Brunschwig & Fils. The dining area is at one end of the living room. 'The double-height wall is covered in polished plaster made from marble dust, which reflects light, creates texture and breaks up the space,' explains Greg. 'I made sure that every line and surface in the place is perfectly straight,' he adds. It's this almost invisible symmetry that he believes forms the basis of great design. ▶





GREG NATALE'S GUIDE TO BREAKING THE RULES IN STYLE:



ABOVE: Greg Natale, perched on the balcony in his apartment – the only patch of white in the whole place.

THE BEDROOM: a collection of old and new glassware. Its facets and forms are among Greg's favourite things (for antique glassware, try Alfies Antique Market; for new pieces, try Waterford Crystal).

1. DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK.

While his neighbours used sheer blinds and mirror trickery to make the most of the cherished Sydney sunshine, Greg installed 5m-long blackout curtains at his double-height windows. 'I like the privacy they bring, and it's good to be able to temper the strong light here,' he says.

2. GOING GREY ISN'T THE END OF THE WORLD.

Greg's favourite colour is a dark, resonant grey which, to his mind, is snug rather than cold. 'It's the result of a long quest for the perfect shade. I think it's warm, sexy and sophisticated in a masculine way.' His reason for using it is simple: 'Many places look their best in the daytime, when no one is around to appreciate them, but I wanted to have a space that was as beautiful at night as it is in the day.' Hey presto! 24/7 glamour.

3. ACCEPT NO COMPROMISES.

Greg didn't just paint the odd wall with his beloved grey, he used it all over the place. 'I'd always wanted to do an all-grey room, but there was never a client who would go for it.' So, he decided to test out his dream in his own space. 'I thought, "Why not celebrate the smallness of the shoebox space? Deliberately cocoon, instead of trying to make it seem bigger than it is?"'

4. MAKE WILD STATEMENTS.

'You have to be careful when decorating in a one-colour space,' warns Greg. 'It's as though everything you put in it has double the impact.' But this is something that Greg positively revels in, because it gives his favourite pieces a chance to sing out, such as the bling of crystal in the sunlight. To prevent objects competing for interest, the larger pieces of furniture are all in sombre hues, similar to the walls.

5. ECLECTIC IS TOO OBVIOUS – GIVE YOURSELF A SECRET THEME.

At a quick glance, Greg's personal possessions look like a careless collection of items. In fact, they're a personal ode to the year he was born: 1974. His all-time favourite? 'The baroque chair in the living room. I grew up with it. I used to think it was so ugly that I tried to sell it from under my parents' noses. Thank God no one wanted it! It's become a real inspiration.' Similarly, the pink-and-white Murano chandelier has sentimental connotations: his uncle and aunt had one exactly like it. 'It's easy to be different when you're inspired by your past,' he explains. 'All this comes from my memory – from growing up in Australia with my crazy Italian family.'

DECO ▶

Greg Natale Interior Design (00 61 2 8399 2103; www.gregnataleid.com.au).



THE BEDROOM: an elaborately carved, silver-leaf covered headboard shines out against the grey walls. 'I love gold, but it can be so gaudy. I think you get away with more when you use silver,' he says. He added ochre highlights to the silver leaf to achieve a golden effect (for similar pieces, try salvage yards such as Lassco or Retrouvius). 'The faux-chinchilla bed throw is my Alexis Carrington [from TV's *Dynasty*] moment,' says Greg (try Habitat's faux-fur 'Wolf' throw). 'I lifted all the cabinetry off the floor, so it wouldn't come across as heavy. By making it appear to float, you get the storage without the clumpiness.'



**'I WAS
ALREADY ON
MY QUEST FOR
THE PERFECT
SHADE OF
GREY WHEN
TOM FORD
SAID HE HAD
FOUND IT.
GREY IS
GLAMOROUS,
SEXY AND
MASCULINE'**

STOCKISTS:

100% Glass (020 7249 4911;
www.100percentglass.com).

Alfies Antique Market
(www.alfiesantiques.com).

Boom! Interiors (020 7722 6622;
www.boominteriors.com).

Brunschwig & Fils (020 7351 5797;
www.brunschwig.com).

Cappellini (00 39 031 759111;
www.cappellini.it).

Dulux (01753 550555;
www.dulux.co.uk).

European Design Centre
(020 7323 3233; www.edcplc.com).

Glory Antique Chandeliers (020 7633
0696; www.glory-chandeliers.com).

Habitat (0845 601 0740 for branches;
www.habitat.net).

Judy Greenwood Antiques
(020 7736 6037;
www.judygreenwoodantiques.co.uk).

Kenneth Neale (00 02 9331 2033).

Lassco (020 7394 2100).

Oliver Burns (01727 814170;
www.oliverburnsinteriors.com).

Paul Kelley (020 8534 8883;
www.pk-designs.co.uk).

Retrouvius (020 8960 6060;
www.retrouvius.com).

Showhome (020 8761 3405;
www.ourshowhome.com).

Waterford Crystal (0800 039 0077).

**For full stockist details, with
addresses, turn to page 179.**





THE BEDROOM: nailing the right shade of grey for this room was hard work. Eventually, Greg found the closest match was Dulux's 'Grey Hearth' (UK equivalent: '50RB 20/091' matt emulsion). The full-length marble-framed mirror gives the room an extra dimension (for bespoke mirrors contact 100% Glass; also, local glaziers will usually cut mirror to size). The wooden stool is by American furniture company Herman Miller (UK online shop www.ourshowhome.com has a similar one by Charles and Ray Eames). To go with it, Greg painted a wooden plinth white (for a similar look, try the 'Cesar' occasional table by Rodolfo Dordoni for Minotti from the European Design Centre).