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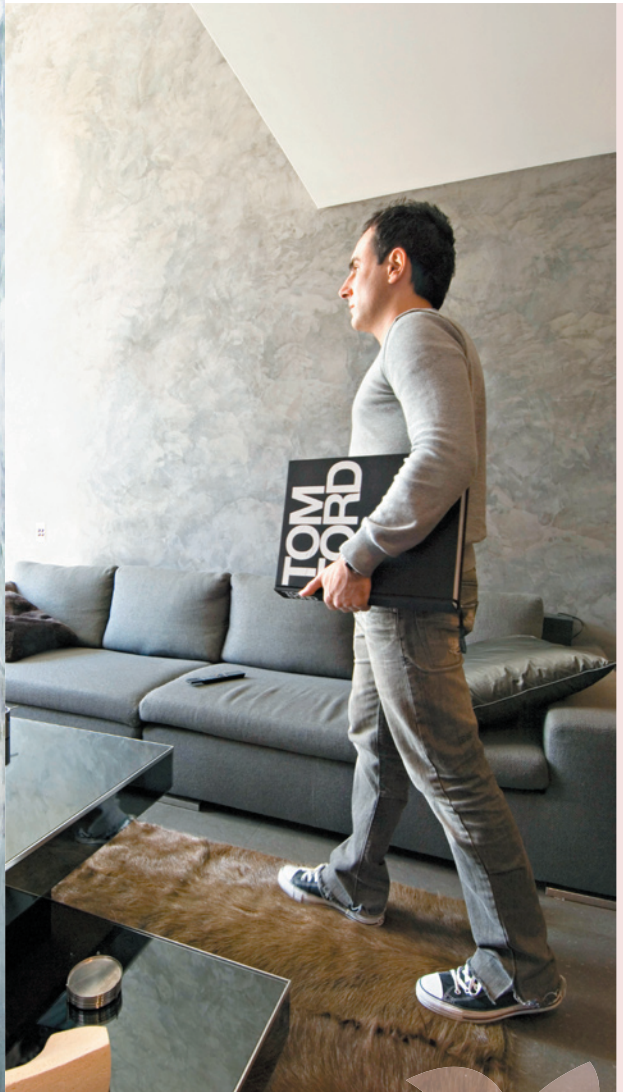
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# MODERN *Luxe*

STORY ERICA ROBINSON PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON KENNY



*Interior designer Greg Natale took a minimalist inner-city apartment and stamped it with*



### Meet the owner

Sydney-based Greg Natale has clear ideas about interior design. “I love furniture designed in the 70s and the tactile luxury of fur,” he enthuses. A book of photos of Tom Ford’s work – including an all-grey loft – was a clincher in the design process of his apartment, as was the use of juxtaposition. The slick coffee table (once owned by architect Dino Burranti) contrasts with the goat-hair rug and shaggy oversized sofa – both Minotti designs, from De De Ce.

*his ultra luxe personal style, rich with contrast and history*

*"I like to create a room that has a definite personality"*



**Above** in the kitchen, from Tusa Brothers, mirrored doors hide a double bank of cupboards; the refrigerator and freezer are built in under the bench. **Right** the macassar ebony credenza is from Tusa Brothers. **Far right** Greg 'kidnapped' the baroque armchair from his family home. **Opposite** The Andy Warhol artwork of Marilyn came from Conny Dietzschold Gallery, courtesy of 2 Danks Street; the painting above the Cappellini dining table from De De Ce is by Scott Petrie. The 70s chairs from Twentieth Century Modern, NSW, have been covered in a cotton velvet fabric from Brunswig & Fils, while the floor boasts an Italian basalt from Onsite Supply & Design. **Below** Greg's passion for revisiting his Italian background led him to obtain a chandelier from Murano, Venice.





For interior designer Greg Natale, finding a suitable inner-city apartment didn't pose much of a problem. "I bought this because of the northerly aspect and because the building was designed by Burley Katon Halliday. I knew I could trust them."

With a mezzanine bedroom and bathroom sited above the entry, the apartment makes great use of space. The front door is flanked by a kitchen to one side and dining area to the other, opening out into a living area with a

soaring ceiling. A wall of glass gives access to the north-facing balcony.

But if buying was the easy part, the process of decorating was much more difficult. "I wanted this place to be a personal journey – not like a design showroom or a catalogue – and I realised it needed three qualities. It had to be a reflection of my southern Italian background, an expression of the late 70s design that I love – and at the same time it had to be modern."

Two quite disparate elements shaped the final design. One was the coffee table – a 70s B & B design he bought at

the auction of the late architect Dino Burratini's belongings. The second was a book of photographs of the work of design hero Tom Ford, featuring an all-grey loft apartment.

"Grey seemed a strong, masculine colour and these photos convinced me. But finding the right grey was really hard," Greg explains. "I probably tried about 30 shades before I settled on the one I wanted. Even then it wasn't quite right because I chose a flat finish – it was awful, like a nightclub."

Greg entrusted the final paint job to Mary Christeck of Just Finishes. She ▶→

*"I wanted this place to be a personal journey"*



**Left** The balcony features a neat zinc barbecue from Scandinavium, and the circular white Saarinen table provides a counterpoint.

**Above** Greg designed a clever storage unit, made by Tusa Brothers, of Mortdale, NSW, to replace the balustrade that defined the mezzanine sleeping area. The silver leaf bedhead from Laura Kincade and the faux chinchilla Kruz bedspread continue the luxe look. **Right** The bathroom was left untouched – Greg says it was “just right” from the very beginning.





used a low-sheen paint throughout, as well as choosing a classically Italian stucco finish for the feature wall. The wall also conceals stairs that lead to the luxuriously appointed bedroom above.

The unified colours blend seamlessly with a long, low cabinet housing a state-of-the-art entertainment system. But it is Greg's avowed love of contrast that grabs the most attention. "I like to play soft surfaces against hard, use old things next to new," he explains.

In centre stage against a wall of lush grey silk curtains is an elaborate glass chandelier. A baroque armchair stands majestically below. Both these items also reflect Greg's background. "Friends

can't believe that I have this chair from my parents' home – when I was 15 I hated it, I even advertised it for sale. And the Murano chandelier, which is just like one my aunty had, was sourced from Venice via the internet."

The bathroom was the only space Greg left virtually untouched, saying it was "just right" from the outset. "I'm my own hardest client," he says. "I thought about it for a year before I did anything.

Greg's style isn't exactly minimalist, but it's certainly balanced: old-fashioned glamour given a 21st-century twist, garnished with memories of home. H&G Greg Natale Interior Design, NSW; (02) 8399 2103 or [www.gregnataleid.com.au](http://www.gregnataleid.com.au)

