





A VISIT WITH GREG

# High society '70s style

An opulent apartment in Sydney's Darlinghurst offers a refined statement in 1970s style and artistry, perfect for intimate soirees – and living the high life.

STORY KATHERINE BEARD PHOTOGRAPHY TONY POTTER  
STYLING JO FORBEST







**PREVIOUS PAGE:** The dining area is dominated by a colourful original Andy Warhol print from his Marilyn Monroe series.

**ABOVE:** Although this kitchen is a regular apartment size, it cleverly holds everything needed for entertaining, with quality Smeg appliances, high-gloss polyurethane cabinet doors and 30 per cent polyurethane splashback.

**OPPOSITE:** Sumptuous and luxurious, the Natale apartment in inner-Sydney's Darlinghurst mixes old and new with ease and imagination.

Interior designer Greg Natale admits he is “a man obsessed”. A child of the '70s, he delights in bringing the iconic glamour and sophistication of that era to life – with particular reference to the infamous nightclub Studio 54. This obsession with all things ‘Dynasty and high-glam’ is portrayed with spectacular success in his inner-Sydney one-bedroom apartment design. One-off furniture pieces, bold lines and lashings of glitz all combine to create the perfect city haven, where he can shed the day in intimate retro surrounds.

As Greg sees it, “the last 10 to 15 years of interior design have been very homogenous. I wanted to create something that was totally personal and to do that you have to look inside yourself.” Consequently, his Italian heritage figures strongly in the finished product as does his childhood, surrounded as he was with his parents’ kitsch baroque furniture. “I chose high-glam 1970s pieces and lots of Minotti furnishings – then I just threw it all together with family heirlooms!” he explains laughing. With a great deal of style, we might add.

The shell of the apartment was completed by Burley Katon Haliday and when Greg took possession it was essentially a ‘white box’ with superb lines. Determined to design a place that reflected his own personal tastes, rather than toe the line of current interior design philosophies, he took great pleasure in applying what he terms “a subjective approach”









to his home. The journey started with his favourite coffee tables and it was from their style and shape that he took inspiration. "The whole apartment began with the coffee tables," he says. "Back in Year 10 I did work experience with Dino Burritini, who designed skyscrapers and didn't use natural materials. The buildings were all gloss and shiny chrome. When Dino passed away recently I went to the auction of his furniture and bought the tables." Original B&B designer pieces from the 1970s, they are in effect 'framed' by the apartment's retro-chic design and colours, a moving tribute to his former mentor.

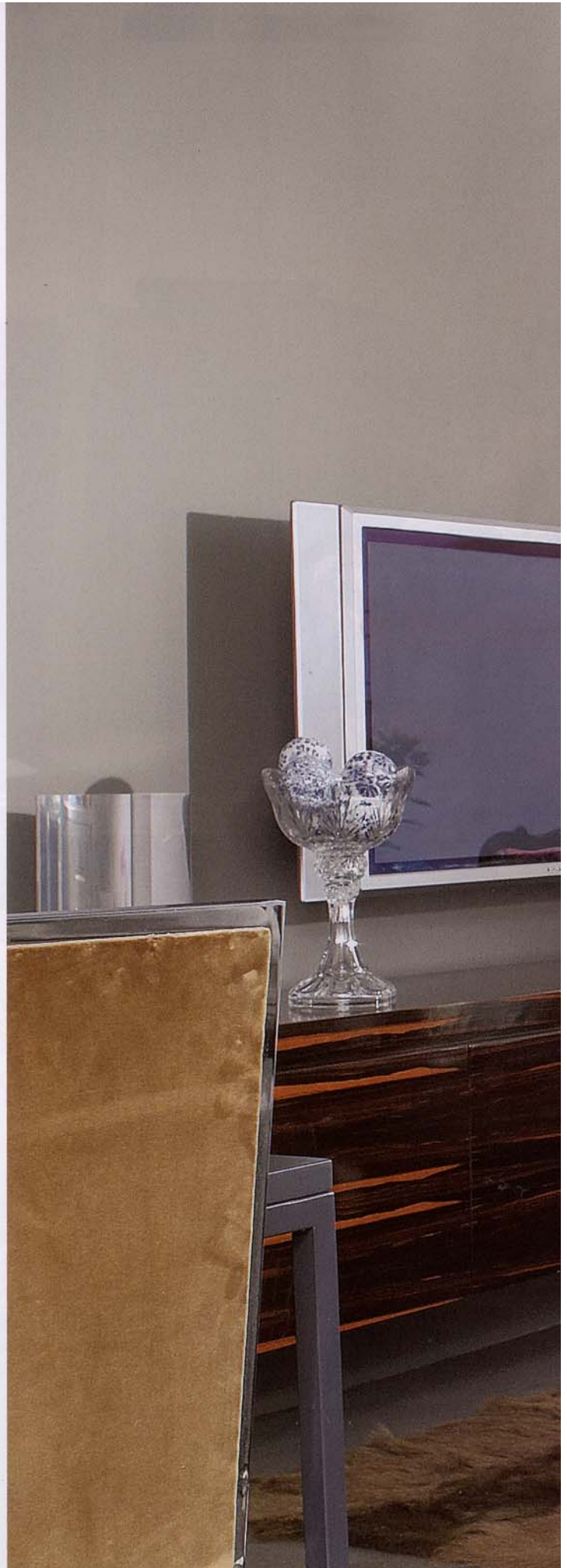
"Grey is a favourite colour. It's neutral and provides a great backdrop to – whatever," says Greg. And indeed, this hue prevails throughout the apartment, from the recycled Basalt floors – volcanic rock from southern Italy – to the walls in Grey Heath by Dulux, which in some places are stuccoed in the old Italian style. This was created with a mix of pigment and marble dust, which was spread over the wall and then rubbed off. The effect breaks up the apartment aesthetically and is also practical in that the surface reflects light.

The open living/dining room is dominated by a gorgeous baroque chair which Greg's mother bought in the 1980s,

---

ABOVE: Greg Natale, a Sydney interior designer, drew on his Italian heritage and passion for 1970s style when designing his opulent residential apartment.

RIGHT: Minotti is one of Greg's favourite furniture suppliers and sourced the rug, sofa and gold table for him.











and it's still covered in the original fabric. Continuing the familial inspiration, the opulent chandelier overhead is actually a replica of one his aunt and uncle owned, but he bought this one new from Murano in Venice online. The sofa, rug and gold table were all new too – from Minotti – and the taffeta curtains are from Brunswig & Fils. The Franzoni dining table was crafted by Capolini and is iconic in that it is constructed out of polyurethane. The dining chairs were from Ken Neal in Darlinghurst, but refurbished by Greg in 'Velvet' by Brunswig & Fils. A painting by Scott Petrie and an original Andy Warhol print add the finishing touches to the sense of '70s-style luxury evoked. "You can't get more kitsch and '70s than a Warhol!" Greg grins.

The contemporary idea that kitchens should form part of the lifestyle of a home, and not be seen purely as a functional concern, is evident from Greg's treatment here. The mirrored cabinet – a signature Natale piece – conceals a fridge and freezer, while the other Smeg appliances are neatly stowed under a linear benchtop featuring high-gloss polyurethane doors and a polyurethane splashback.

Meanwhile upstairs in the master bedroom, by way of explaining the rich fur rug from Cruise, the Minotti ottoman



ABOVE: The enclosed balcony offers a soothing place to relax with its fresh white walls and a Natale-designed bench seat in solid timber.

RIGHT: Lashings of pink contrast with the warm grey and chocolate tones, providing highlights and 'layers of colour', which Greg says are intrinsic to good interior design.



"GREY IS A FAVOURITE COLOUR. IT'S NEUTRAL AND PROVIDES  
A GREAT BACKDROP TO – WHATEVER"







in chocolate brown leather and the exotic bedhead, Greg says he “watched way too much *Dynasty* in the ‘80s and was fascinated by Alexis”! The bedhead was bought new from Lara Kincaid, a retailer of baroque repro furniture. Hand-carved in timber and finished with silver leaf, it’s certainly a fitting tribute to the era. The large mirror was designed by Greg himself and framed in marble – “an original Natale”. He also designed the cabinets, with the credenza serving as a balustrade for the empty space behind. The bathroom adjoins the bedroom and features a marble benchtop, a basin by Villeroy & Boch, Caroma tapware and small Glennon mosaic tiles in the same warm grey as the paint finishes.

An enclosed balcony facing northeast offers a restful spot and boasts another Natale-designed piece – the bench seat in solid American walnut. Contrasted with stark white walls, bare windows and stainless-steel accents – including a barbecue – this is a place that invites socialising and witty repartee.

All in all, this apartment is perfect for urban society life, with the twinkling of champagne flutes and laughter almost audible from the photos.

ABOVE: The master bedroom invites repose with its eye-catching Cruise fur rug and hand-carved bedhead dusted with silver leaf.

LEFT: A deep Villeroy & Boch basin with stainless-steel Caroma tapware is a sophisticated statement in any home.