

MATCHPOINT

In a strange harmony of contrasts, a minimalist-inclined home and maximalist decorative style make beautiful music together.

PHOTOGRAPHER: ANSON SMART STYLIST: MEGAN MORTON



Interior designer Greg Natale dresses the views over North Sydney with strong slabs of furniture and a little Eastern flair, softening the house's frameless glass perimeter. A Knoll 'Tulip' side table is paired with a Minotti 'Moore' ottoman, both from Dedecce. The outdoor daybed was custom designed by Natale. Moroccan lanterns and cushions all from importer Silk Route. Details, last pages.





A cantilevered door separates the dining room with its high-backed 'Divina' armchairs from Corporate Culture, **THIS PAGE, ABOVE**, from the day bed on the shaded terrace. While next door, **OPPOSITE PAGE**, Moooi's 'Smoke' armchair, from Space Furniture, gathers attention against Minotti's 'Moore' sofa, 'Huber' coffee table and the 'M' rug, all from Dedecé. The colourful Designers Guild cushions pick up on Scott Petrie's magenta-hued *Bliss* painting.

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Accentuating the two-storey void, **THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT**, Tom Dixon's 'Blob' wall lamps work their way up five metres of dining room wall. The dining room table was purchased by the clients. The chandelier was custom-made. **TOP RIGHT**: in the foyer, a sculptural timber stool is placed under a Warhol Marilyn print. **ABOVE**: Florence Broadhurst's florid 'Cranes' pattern, in pink and gold, is used to camouflage effect in a daughter's bedroom. **LEFT**: and in the rumpus room, the Signature Prints, Broadhurst 'Oriental Filigree' pattern offsets Jordan's 'Biarritz' sofa and two 'Panthella' lamps from Louis Poulsen.



...and blue for boys. **THIS PAGE, ABOVE:** in a son's bedroom, Florence Broadhurst 'Stampede' in blue teal and silver from Signature Prints throws an acidic yellow Kartell stool into relief. **LEFT:** in warm weather, a wall of folding glass doors is retracted to increase the terrace's connection to the kitchen, living and dining spaces. **BELOW:** a study platform looks over the dining room. Eames chairs from Living Edge. Knoll 'Platner' side table and Minotti 'Hockney' chaise from Dedece. The 'Spun' lamp is from Euroluce.



YOU CAN IMAGINE the pause around Environa Studio's meeting table, as clients Mark Kohout and his wife Piera announced their intention to commission Greg Natale to decorate their newly built home. Environa are 'green' modernist designers, while Natale is very much more baroque in his style. The owners of this home on Sydney's North Shore have bravely pulled together two very different design approaches, and testament to all involved, the Kohouts are very happy with the result.

"We asked Environa for a glass house with no internal walls – and we got pretty close," says Mark Kohout of the vision they developed with the architects. After pushing open the wonderfully large and heavy front door, the glisten of the distant harbour catches the eye. As the lively interior opens out, the view is exploited at every opportunity. Progressively luring you forward to the landscape, the levels of the house become viewing platforms – either announcing the view or tightly framing it.

Environa Studio was commissioned to bulldoze the existing duplex on the owner's newly acquired property and "create a contemporary home that contained free-flowing spaces", explains Kohout. As the house's levels gently step down an escarpment, spaces within the home seep into one another. Internally, there is a real sense of openness allowing different floor levels to interact.

The upstairs study for instance, which feels like a reading platform, remains open and indirectly connected to most of the house – you can peer over the bookshelf balustrade and inspect the dinner table.





Cappellini's sleek 'Segno' bed, designed by Carlo Colombo, **THIS PAGE, ABOVE**, is luxuriously dressed in Brunswig & Fils finery: 'Shensi' cotton and 'Taffeta Blue Stripe'. The painting and a pair of Chinese emperors reflect the prevailing mood of 'modern traditional'. **OPPOSITE PAGE**: in the ensuite, long slabs of travertine and marble were filled and polished on site. The semi-recessed Flaminia 'Twinset' basins are from Parisi. Details, last pages:

While in a private space, there is a sense of what's going on in a wider shared space – a design answering the needs of a young family.

For the owners, one of the most pleasing features of their new home is the glass wall on the living level, which can completely fold away. "The entire back wall disappears, so in summer you're in the kitchen or the living room, but you're outside," says Kohout.

On the upper level, the study, dressing room, bathroom and main bedroom are a series of 'pods' rather than typically enclosed rooms. "The house is all about the manipulation of space," says Tone Wheeler, director of Environa Studio. "We've carved spaces to create the home."

Adding to the architecture, Greg Natale of Greg Natale Interior Design, uses decoration to define each space further. "I wanted Greg to bring a feeling of luxury to the place," says Kohout.

Natale's choice of pattern and colour contrasts with the poised, clean shell. His decoration counters the architectural voice. This contrast heightens the energy within the home. Natale admits he's had fun with this interior and such excitement has stirred a cocktail of design flavours. From the Moroccan-inspired terrace to the theatrical dining space, and the retro rumpus room downstairs, Natale has created an exotic hybrid style he calls "Australian glamour". Moooi's 'Smoke' armchair pouts among Minotti pieces in the sitting room, creating a counterpoint to the hard-lined kitchen. Here, Catellani and Smith pendant lights hover above the basalt bench that Environa designed to be a continuation of the floor material.

Natale consistently introduces black pieces as a design thread, tying the different spaces together – a bespoke Murano glass chandelier perpetuates the drama of the two-storey void, and Flos 'Spun T1' lights beside Eames chairs in the study bring sexiness to the workspace. The designer's heritage subconsciously guides him – he remembers his parent's house in southern Italy in the '70s: "It was full of pattern, baroque style, and completely over the top."

Natale's love affair with print sees subtlety left at the front door: in the children's bedrooms on the lower level, bedspreads, lampshades, window treatments and walls all feature Florence Broadhurst designs. He says it's his contemporary take on traditional decorating.

"The Chinoiserie throughout the upper level was taken from the Japanese influence that's in the architecture," he adds.

"I enjoy pushing my clients," says Natale, "because the result is always more rewarding – there is a greater sense of achievement."

This house is a complex design, in that the interior architecture is strong and so too is the decoration. But in this instance, the two styles integrate rather than create dissonance.

For the Kohouts, the experience of finding a site and building a home that offers more than they could have imagined, has been well worth the journey.

"We love the great balance between the modernity of the architecture and the glamour of the decor," says Kohout, "every day I come home and I feel refreshed."

DANIKA JONES

ON THE UPPER LEVEL, THE DRESSING ROOM, BATHROOM AND MAIN BEDROOM ARE A SERIES OF 'PODS' RATHER THAN ENCLOSED ROOMS.

