



THESE PAGES Designer Greg Natale's colour scheme of black, red, blue and gold helps unify the contrasting furniture styles in the formal living room. Armchairs from Garner Agencies. XO side table (in between) from Space. KnollStudio 'Saarinen' coffee table from De De Ce. Horse head and side table/stool (next to black sofa) from Meizai. Josef Hoffmann sofa from Mobili. Red fabric with black motif is David Hicks 'Herbert's Carnation' from Mokum. Rug from Designer Rugs. Painting bought from the Sydney Antique Centre.

DRAMA CLASS

An opulent mood prevails in this Sydney harbourside apartment, where glamorous accessories and saturated colour take centre stage.

PHOTOGRAPHS ANSON SMART WORDS CHRIS PEARSON



Expect the unexpected when you walk into this Sydney harbours apartment. From the outside, it's a minimalist's dream, but cross the threshold and you are transported back to the designer pads that dotted the Hollywood Hills in the 60s, where a dramatic combination of pared-back lines, retro curves and all-out glamour reigned.

Last year, the owners, a busy couple who travel frequently, swapped their semi in a neighbouring suburb for the lock-up-and-leave convenience of this abode. It had no garden to care for, just a balcony that soaks up the prime location. "But the apartment had no soul; it had a view but nothing else to recommend it," opines the owner.

So how to breathe life into a bare box, with white walls and ceiling and limestone floors? Her starting points were a black Murano chandelier and two traditional-style Australian landscape paintings she and her husband had inherited. "I always wanted a black chandelier, but I couldn't think what to put with it. I saw the work of Sydney-based interior designer Greg Natale and thought, 'If anyone can put all these modern and traditional elements together, he can'."

"White, white and more white" confronted Greg when he first set eyes on the apartment, yet, paradoxically, he set about making it even whiter by repainting the walls in Dulux Lexicon Quarter. This provided the perfect black canvas and foil for the striking hues he had selected for the interior decor.

The traditional artworks, with their gilded frames, were the key inspiration for the apartment's colour scheme, in which gold accessories feature strongly. "I love the gold – it's perfect! It's like a glue; it ties everything together visually. Gold is also brave – some people would call it as garish, but I love the idea of reinventing something kitsch and making it beautiful and sophisticated."

THIS PAGE Studio Italia 'Fenice' six-light chandelier from Mondo Luce. Dining table and chairs from Garner Agencies. Painting and bust both from the Sydney Antique Centre. Candlesticks from Meizai. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT and RIGHT The kitchen with adjoining informal meals area, with painting by Rhys Williams, vintage dining table by Eero Saarinen, and 70s-style bamboo chairs from Pecare Trading Company. Candlesticks from Spence & Lyda. Vitossi horse-head statue from Hub. BELOW The black credenza in the formal living room was designed by Greg and custom-made by Tusa Bros Kitchens. Gilt urns were bought at auction.





The formal areas of the apartment saw a revival of another kind of classic. “In the 70s, my parents decorated their house in an over-the-top, baroque style,” says Greg. “What some might have seen as bad taste back then, I used in the living area – blue velvet baroque-style armchairs, ornately framed artworks, a chandelier ... It’s a bit tongue-in-cheek, but it really works.”

Meanwhile, two matching black-and-white rugs that anchor the living area and the adjoining dining room are also inspired by a classical design – the Greek key motif. “I love playing with traditional shapes. This one is bold and graphic. People don’t come to me for beige on beige,” says Greg.

The dining zone, just inside the front door, separates the living room from the casual seating area, located at the rear of the apartment. Here, the dark undertones of the dining table echo the modern black furniture, while its lighter hues coordinate with the traditional walnut furniture in the entrance way, creating a flow between the open-plan spaces.

The informal living area was inspired by a shopping trip Greg took to the US, where he bought furniture by designer Jonathan Adler. The cotton on the Jonathan Adler Regency-inspired sofa was selected to give a relaxed feel, and the ceramic elephant side table, also from the US, to add a sense of whimsy.

The final surprise comes courtesy of the main bedroom, where a gilded bedhead is offset by walls in a rich mushroom colour. “I paired this space in Dulux Blackbutt to make the bedhead pop,” says Greg. “It really pop it does – just like the rest of the apartment. 15

THIS PAGE In the main bedroom, a wall painted in Dulux Blackbutt acts as a dramatic counterpoint to the gilt Tuscan bedhead from Laura Kincade. Beside table is an antique bought from the Sydney Antique Centre. Lamp from Bloomingdales Lighting & Decorator Accessories, with lampshade covered with Shalimar fabric from Hoad. Casa Mia Louis-style chair from Turner Agencies, covered with David Hicks 'Little Clinch' fabric from Mokum. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Console and mirror in the formal living area from Riedel Imports; gilt vase from Meizai, ceramic bowl and vase from Orson & Blake. Louis-style commode and bust in the entrance from Raffan Kelaher & Thomas auctioneers; mirror from the Sydney Antique Centre. The casual seating area was inspired by a shopping trip to the US; Prescott armchair and X-bench footstool, Lampert sofa, Meurice two-tiered table, *Raindrops* by C. Jeré wall sculpture, Pat Nixon rug, all from Nathan Adler, Los Angeles. Elephant side table bought in the US.



WHILE ALL THE OTHER ROOMS ARE WHITE ON WHITE ... "I PAINTED THIS SPACE IN DULUX BLACKBUTT TO MAKE THE BEDHEAD POP"

SPEED READ The owners of this Sydney harbourside apartment chose designer Greg Natale to add personality to their living spaces. • "People don't come to me for beige on beige," says Greg, and he has lived up to his reputation by injecting colour and drama into the scheme. • Gilt accessories, decorative fabrics, graphic rugs and wall colour that "pops" all add up to a look that delivers maximum impact.