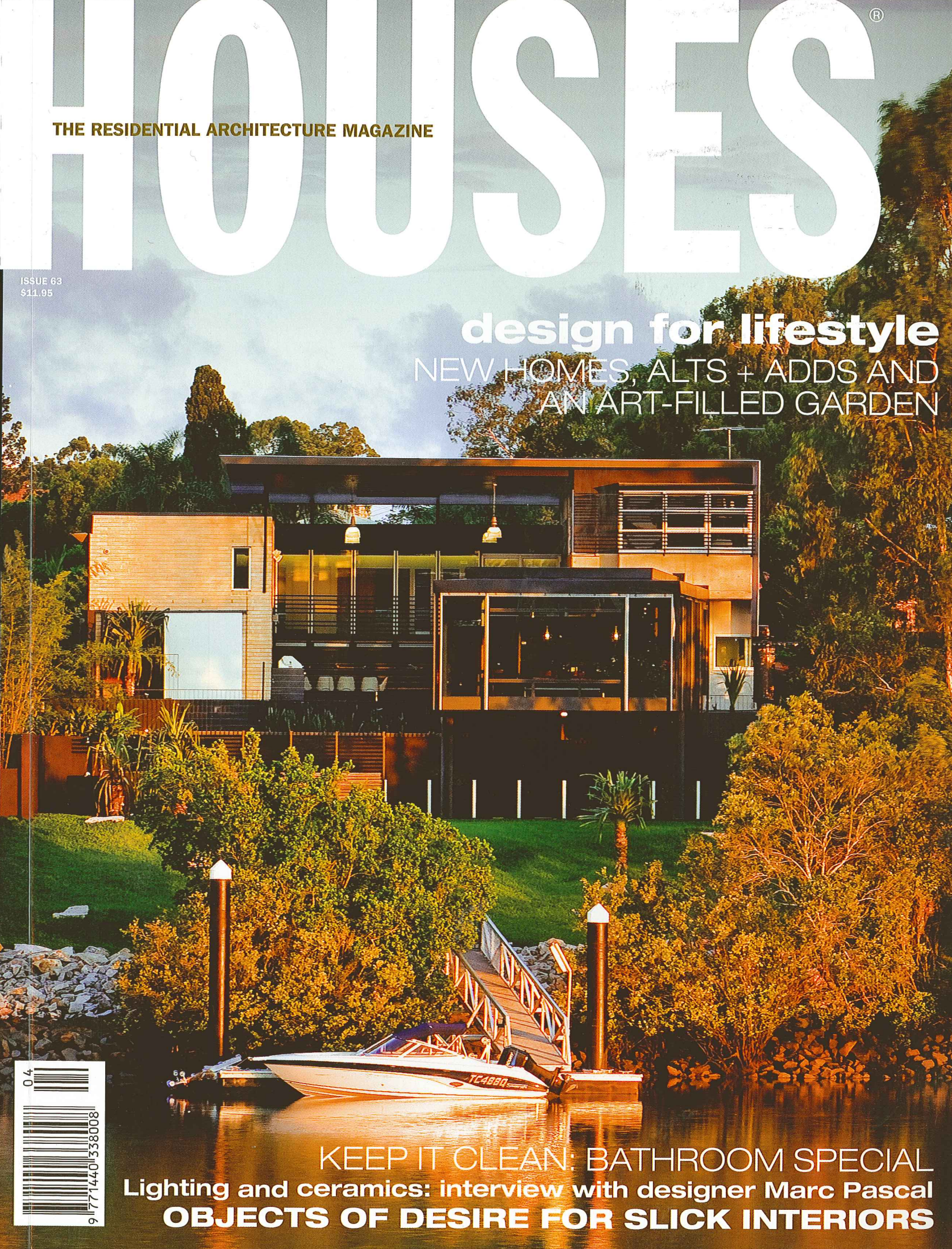


HOUSES®

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design for lifestyle
NEW HOMES, ALTS + ADDS AND
AN ART-FILLED GARDEN



KEEP IT CLEAN: BATHROOM SPECIAL
Lighting and ceramics: interview with designer Marc Pascal
OBJECTS OF DESIRE FOR SLICK INTERIORS



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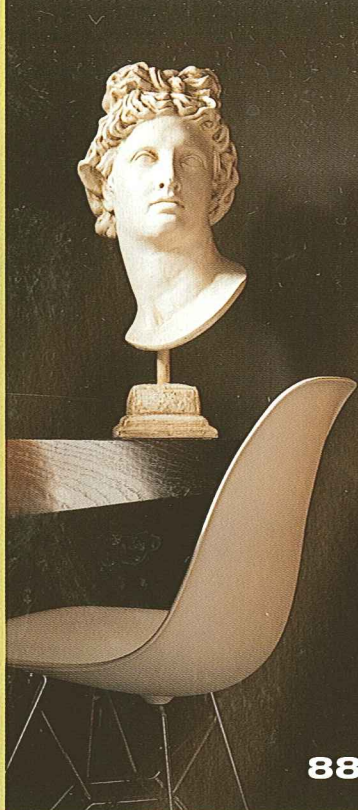


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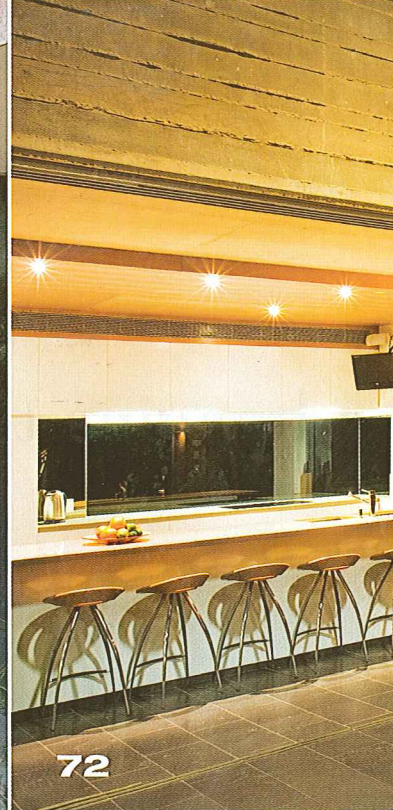
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88



56



72

UPDATE

- 17 PRODUCT** sensibly stylish objects of desire for every room in the house
- 31 BATHROOM** beautiful bathing is at hand with these divine products
- 118 BOOKS** home offices, the future of cities, dutch design, Finnish summer houses

Q&A

- 25 MARC PASCAL** quiz time with the Melbourne-based purveyor of lighting and ceramics

IN FOCUS

- 39 BATHROOM DESIGN** a closer look at bathrooms in this issue's featured houses
- 47 OUTDOOR AREAS** an art-filled (and artful) Adelaide garden by Taylor Cullity Lethlean

HOUSES

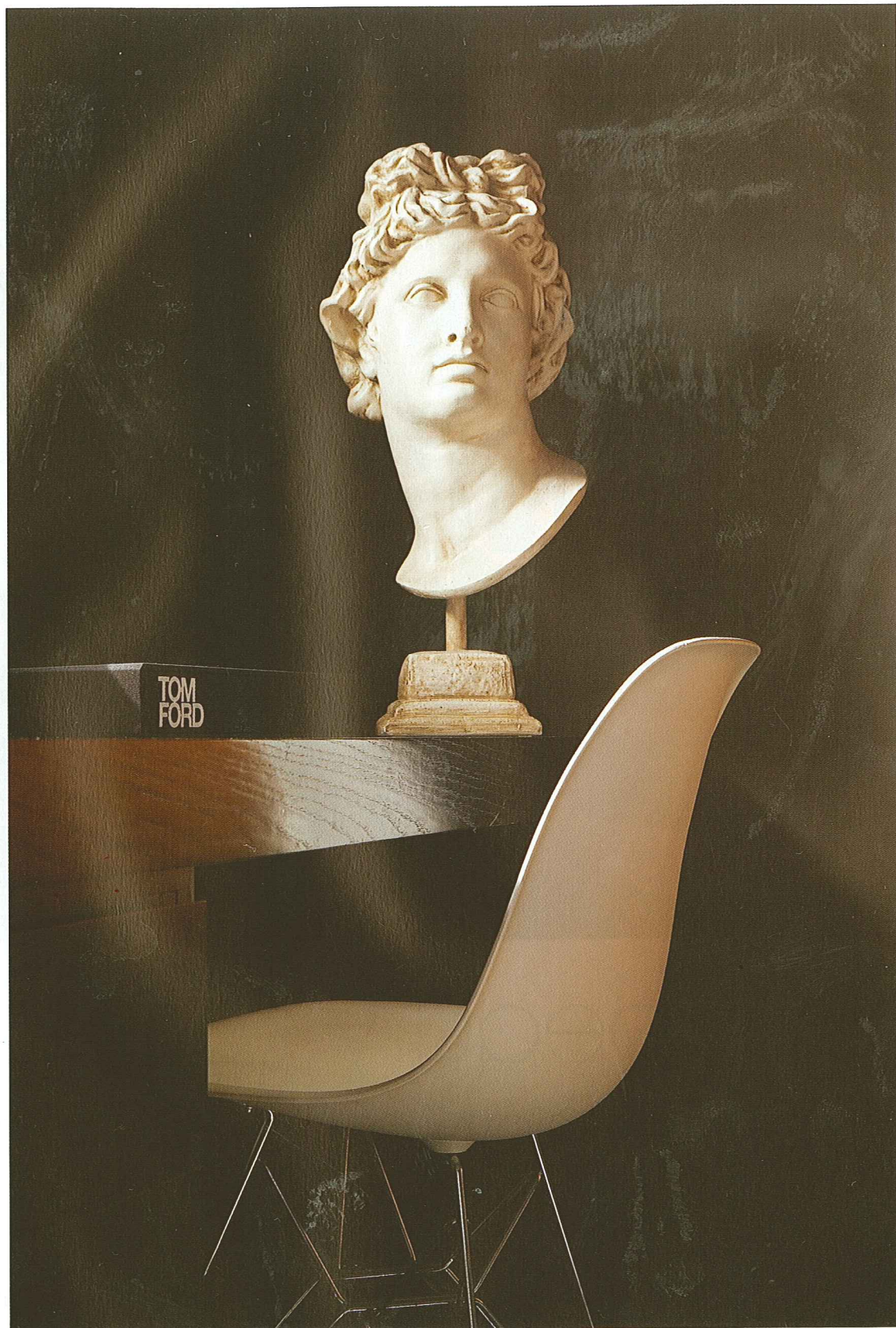
- 56 CRINKLE CUT** a copper-clad urban pad Clare Cousins Architecture and Interior Design
- 64 COASTAL TEXTURE** rustic, robust and perfect for the beach Seeley Architects
- 72 BEND IN THE RIVER** a multilayered family home in Brisbane Steendyk
- 80 GARDEN LOOKOUT** a playfully perched pod in a sea of green Andrew Burges Architecture
- 88 LAYER CAKE** an interior that makes opulence tastier than ever Greg Natale Design
- 96 DECIDUOUS ADDITION** a pavilion-style renovation among the trees Woods Bagot

PROFILE

- 105 OF PENINSULAS AND WALLED GARDENS** the elegantly restrained Owen and Vokes

PS

- 120 IT ATE MY HOUSE** Simon and Freda Thornton Architects has created a monster



LAYER CAKE

The owners of this Sydney house asked designer Greg Natale for an interior that was pretty, glamorous and green. His opulent melange of patterns, colours and styles delivers on all three counts, plus a few more besides. **Story by Helen O'Neill Photography by Anson Smart**



PREVIOUS PAGES, LEFT:
The moody study is defined by bold contrasts and a sculptural inclination. **RIGHT:** The collection of classic furniture includes an Eames lounge and ottoman, and an Eero Saarinen side table. **THESE PAGES:** Styles are blended confidently in the decadent lounge room – Louis chairs sit comfortably with Saarinen and Warren Platner tables and a custom-designed rug by Greg Natale.

DECORATING THE HOME of a long-time friend can turn into an emotional minefield and, in the case of Sydney designer Greg Natale and friend Melissa Ciolino, the stakes were high. Melissa's house itself was relatively unproblematic – a standard one-level, red-brick art deco residence in a quiet Sydney suburb. It was a building identical to countless others across the land, a structure that has, as Greg puts it, "nice lines, good bones."

What was unusual was the depth of their relationship. It began twenty-eight years ago when Melissa was seven and Greg was six. "He lived a street away," Melissa recalls. "We used to walk home [from school] together. His cousin was in the same class as my sister; his sister married one of my husband's best friend's brothers. Yes, we're close."

When Melissa and husband Vince bought the house in 2005, it was always expected that Greg would be involved. They began businesses within a year of each other (Greg launched his practice in 2001; Vince and Melissa started their building company in 2002) and they occasionally refer clients to each other.

Vince began a two-month whirlwind renovation, moving the kitchen from the front of the house to the back, ripping a red-brick fireplace from the sitting room and knocking down walls. Then Greg's work really began. The interior design brief was broad but clear. "Melissa wanted pretty, she wanted glamorous, she wanted green," says Greg. He wanted to give her all that, in a Hollywood regency, layer-upon-layer mix of glamour, pattern and detail typified by the work of a US interior designer they both admired – Kelly Wearstler.

The colour scheme – based around burnt oranges, greens and black – was inspired by one of Melissa's prized possessions, a painting by Australian artist Susan O'Doherty called *U-Turn*. When Greg saw that painting in the couple's previous apartment, he hated it. When Melissa put it up in her new lounge, "I loved it," he says. Melissa remembers the episode differently. "He wanted me to put it in the kitchen. We said no, we bought it to go with the lounge [suite]; we have to make it work."

Greg asked Sydney printing company Signature Prints to custom colour Florence Broadhurst wallpapers. "Melissa wanted something really glamorous," he recalls, so he picked Broadhurst's Imperial Brocade for the living room. The paper was silver foil with a printed pattern in a tone Greg calls champagne (beige, according to Melissa), to match the lounge suite.

Turning his attention to "the unexpected details [he] wanted to put in each room," Greg hung one hand-blown glass Murano chandelier in the lounge and another in the kitchen. He ordered rugs that echoed the geometric champagne-on-silver-foil wallpaper he would use in the hall and got Melissa to scour outlets for quirky china, glassware and neoclassical busts. For the study, Greg designed around a black Eames chair and footstool. "They wanted something masculine, something

moody. The zebra skin rug is new – and because they're friends of mine, I had helped them along the way with the desk, with the chair. I always had a vision for them. I'd say, 'Buy this, buy that; we can reuse things.'"

In the bedroom, he reupholstered Melissa's 100-year-old French antique bed, turning it from a pink, distressed, shabby-chic object into an "homage to Kelly Wearstler," using fabric from her range on the bedspread, adding mirrored bedside tables and a reproduction chandelier. "This is all about mixing neoclassical lines with modern ones," he says, citing the late legendary UK designer David Hicks as another inspiration. "Layering with geometric repeat patterns; putting a layer of decoration over minimalism; [adding] a layer of opulence and pattern."

It's a different story in the children's room, where six-year-old Max and three-year-old Salvatore sleep. Here, there is no pattern on the walls. The joinery is clean and minimalist, and the detailing kitsch-inspired fun. Broadhurst designs appear again in the bedspreads, cushions and crayon-stained ottoman, but this room is about tone, not print. Says Greg, "I'll never forget when we put it together and the kids came home and said: 'Wow. We love our room.' Gives them a sense of pride, I think. It is playful. This whole house is playful, don't you think?"

In the hall, Greg created what Melissa describes as a "plate wall" with a selection of green Spode from Wedgwood. Why? "He didn't want me to put a lot of family photographs up," she grins. Greg nods: "I am not a picture person."

It wasn't an issue he had to deal with in the bathroom, a small room with green tiling. Greg wallpapered it with one of Broadhurst's largest designs, Exotic Birds. "The only way this bathroom was going to work was if I over-scaled the pattern, made it really dramatic. And yes, there's silver, silver everywhere. I always like adding a bit of sparkle to an interior. For me, it's like adding another layer."

The project was a gradual process taking about eighteen months – very different to Greg's normal business approach for his corporate and residential clients. "I can only really do it like this if it is for friends or family. It's more of an organic process and I love it."

There were, however, disagreements. Says Melissa with a grin, "There were all sorts of things he wanted to do that we said no to." She cites using white instead of beige wallpaper in the living room – "I said, 'No, that'll be too stark'" – and putting the pattern that ended up in the living room in the hall. Greg says, "I can work with my really close friends and my immediate family [because] you can scream at each other and get over it."

"There is more," he adds. The next project for this house is a glass box extension to the back of the building. Will Greg be involved? He smiles. He already is. H







OPPOSITE: A 100-year-old French antique bed was reupholstered; Kelly Wearstler geometric-print bed linen contrasts with a deluxe crystal chandelier. THIS PAGE: Contrast and layering also define the corridor, where silver mylar wallpaper shimmers beside eclectic decorative items.



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PRACTICE PROFILE

The practice undertakes residential, hospitality, retail and corporate projects, ranging from apartment interior design to nightclub renovation.

PROJECT TEAM

Greg Natale, Stacey Pappas

BUILDER

Ciolino Constructions

PRODUCTS

Internal walls Blume wallpaper (entry corridor); Florence Broadhurst 'Imperial Brocade' wallpaper (lounge/sitting room); Dulux 'Forest Black' (study); Dulux 'Astroturf' (children's bedroom); custom-colour Merrillux paint (main bedroom) **Flooring** Grey-wash timber floorboards; geometric rugs designed by Greg Natale; Zebra rug **Lighting** Disco pendant (entry corridor); custom-made Murano chandelier (lounge/sitting); crystal chandelier (main bedroom); Kartell pendant (children's bedroom) **Bathroom** Period-style tapware; black toilet seat; Florence Broadhurst 'Exotic Birds' wallpaper **Furniture** Antique side tables, Florence Broadhurst printed cushions, vintage Warren Platner coffee table, Eero Saarinen side table with Calacutta marble top, floating credenza in polyurethane finish with Nero Marquina marble top designed by Greg Natale, Louis chairs and antique decorative pieces (lounge/sitting); veneer desk designed by Greg Natale, Eames Lounge and Ottoman, Eames Eiffel Plastic Side Chair and Eero Saarinen side table with Calacutta marble top (study); reupholstered and sprayed antique bed, antique chair and full-height joinery designed by Greg Natale (main bedroom); Harry Bertola Diamond lounge chair, Florence Broadhurst printed cushions and bedspread, and full-height joinery designed by Greg Natale (children's bedroom) **Artwork** Client's own artwork by Susan O'Doherty (lounge/sitting); custom paintings by Scott Petrie (entry corridor and study); white dog statue (entry corridor) and gnome (children's bedroom) by Ottmar Hoerl

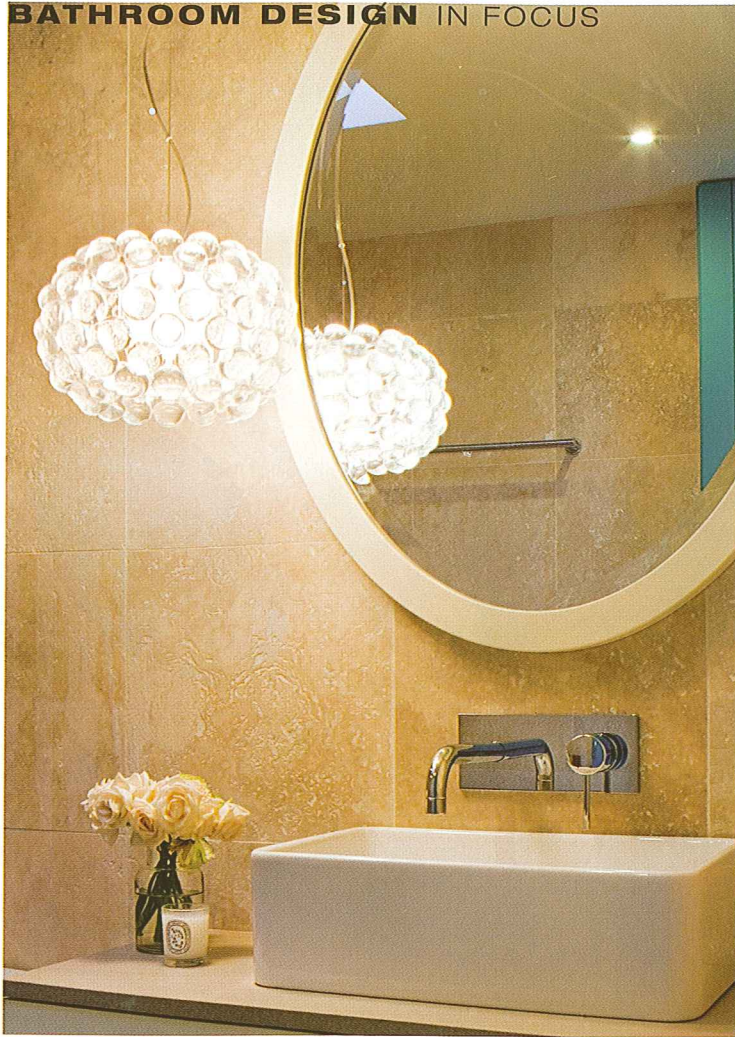
FLOOR AREA
 150 m²

PROJECT COST
 \$100,000

TIME SCHEDULE
 Design, documentation, construction 18 months

LEFT: The colour scheme was inspired by Susan O'Doherty's painting U-Turn, which takes a prominent position in the lounge. Artwork reproduced courtesy of the artist and Gadfly Gallery.

BATHROOM DESIGN IN FOCUS



OLD MEETS NEW / Clare Cousins Architecture and Interior Design

Heritage considerations occupied the minds at Clare Cousins Architecture and Interior Design when the firm crafted a contemporary extension to a period brick home in suburban Melbourne. A new copper-clad rear wing both contrasts and complements the existing house, and materials and textures were harnessed to intertwine the old and new parts of the home. The bathroom-cum-powder room is contained by a vivid blue-painted timber wall in the new wing. Clare combined feature finishes and fixtures with other less expensive options to achieve a bathroom experience that mixes the formality of the old and the everyday contemporary comfort of the new. Travertine tiles cover the floor and walls, laid luxuriously all the way to the ceiling. The feature pendant – Cabouche from Foscarini, designed by Patricia Urquiola and Eliana Gerotto – brings a touch of glamour, while more restrained lines on the fixtures keep the flamboyancy in check. **For the full copper-clad story, turn to page 56.**

RADICAL REINVENTION / Greg Natale Design

Renovations of mature houses often see bathrooms being entirely gutted to make way for sleek new fixtures and surface treatments. Greg Natale's restoration and reinvention of a 1940s red-brick art deco house in Sydney aimed to maintain and improve the original style of the house, while adding a degree of contemporary functionality. In the bathroom, the existing tiles were acid cleaned and regrouted, new period-style tapware and a black toilet seat were sourced, and new shower screens were installed. Continuing the luxurious feel he established in the rest of the house, Greg employed a decadent Florence Broadhurst wallpaper – Exotic Birds. Its over-scaled pattern provided the perfect counterbalance to the strong, solid colour of the existing tiles and fixtures. The bathroom restoration proved impressively cost effective, achieved for just \$3,000. **To see the house in all its glamour, turn to page 88.**

WHAT'S YOUR RITUAL? / Bathroom design checklist

HERE ARE SOME OF THE KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BRIEFING YOUR ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER

PRIVACY

Are you shy or a show-off? Are you keen to shower without the protective shroud of frosted glass? Perhaps you'd prefer a three-quarter-height partition?

STORAGE

How much storage space do you need? Should you conceal or display your products? Will your storage units themselves be features?

MIRRORS

How can you make mirrors work for you? They can be extremely useful for enhancing the sense of space and reflecting light.

FEATURE FIXTURES

Do you want to make a statement? There's no shortage of luscious bathroom fixtures on the market, and they can provide great opportunities for sculptural features in the bathroom.

LIGHTING

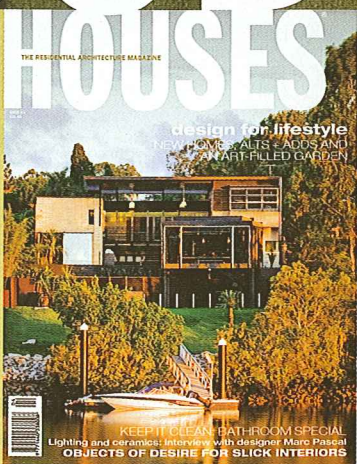
Would you like a consistent level of brightness for the whole bathroom? Would it suit you better to spotlight the basin? Will your light fittings be features or quiet achievers? Can you use natural light to sculpt the space?



Designer: Greg Natale Design / Photography: Anson Smart

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