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# *inside*

INTERIOR DESIGN REVIEW

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## THE ART OF THE INTERIOR

SPECIAL 20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

JIN KURAMOTO | GREG NATALE | SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INTERIOR DESIGN

project - Greg Natale Design headquarters  
designer - Greg Natale  
text - Sarah Hetherington  
photography - Anson Smart  
location - Surry Hills, Australia

**GREG NATALE'S  
NEW SPACE IS A  
SYMPHONY OF BLACK,  
WHITE AND GREY  
- PRINT, PATTERN  
AND PANACHE AS  
SARAH HETHERINGTON  
DISCOVERS.**

**OPPOSITE** Setting a tone of opulence and glamour, vintage brass lighting warms a monochrome palette of black, white and grey



**TAILORED**

**DREAMS**



**ABOVE TOP** Materiality, tone and texture are extended to envelop the kitchen in the same luxury seen throughout

**ABOVE BOTTOM** Natale's 3D collection of Tiles (Marmo) with Emu- Heaven chairs and dining table (Ke-Zu)

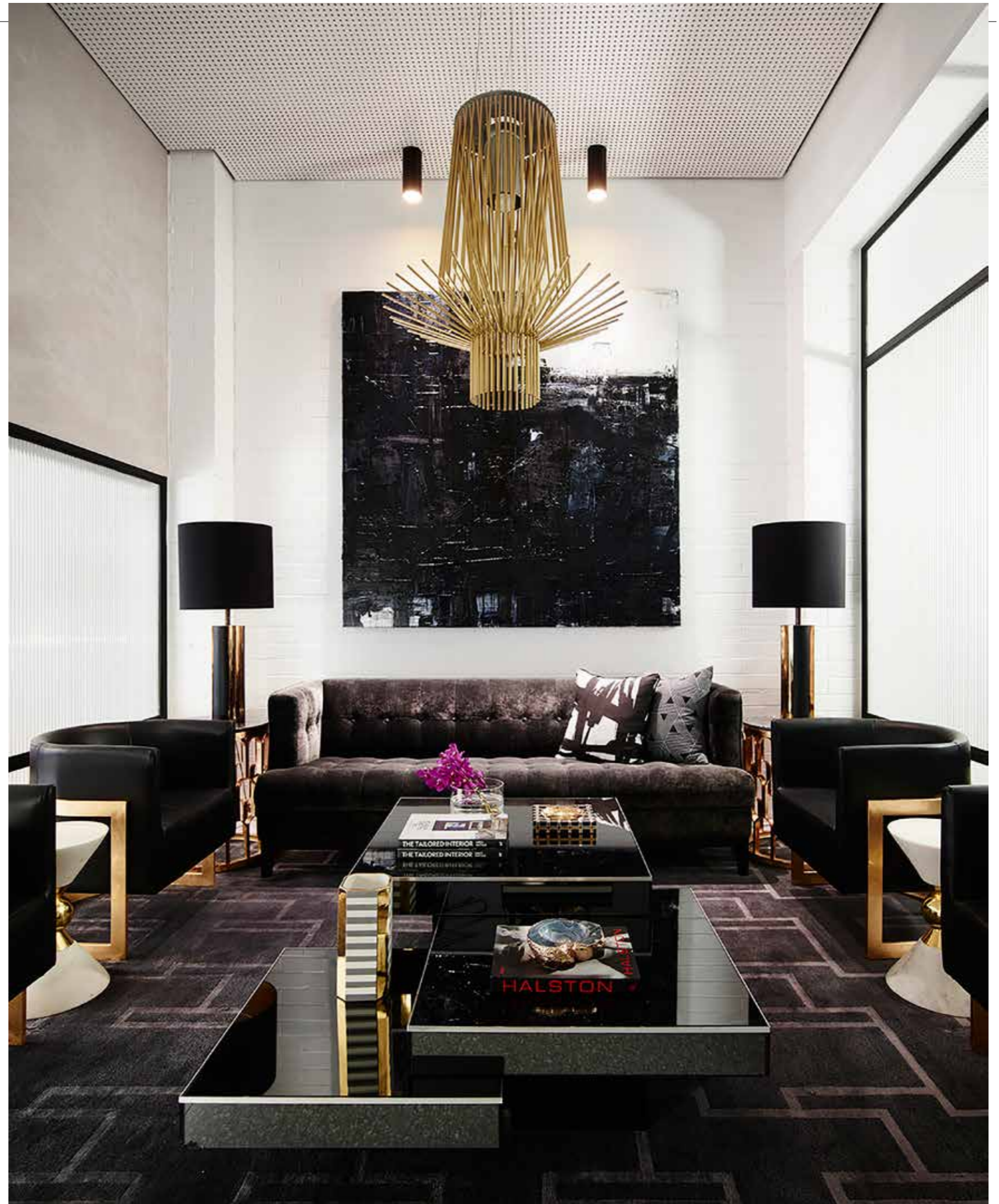
**OPPOSITE** The main reception lounge features Natale's lounge from the Chest range (Stylecraft) and his Worlds Away armchairs in black and gold below a magnificently elegant vintage brass feature light

Inside an unassuming 1960s modernist building in Sydney's Surry Hills lies a world of luxe, sophisticated glamour, exquisite craftsmanship and elegant touches of Hollywood Regency. Discreet 'Greg Natale' gold lettering, set against the pale grey façade, is the only signal that this is the interior design firm's new headquarters. Established in 2001, Greg Natale's eponymous company works predominantly in high end residential.

Inspired by the fusion of public and private spaces within the late American fashion designer Halston's East 63rd Street, Manhattan townhouse, twice designed by architect Paul Rudolph in the 1960s and 1970s, Natale undertook the construction of his headquarters as architect, interior designer and, of course, client. He notes, "The project uniquely enabled me to really do what I want; I was the client, it was my brief." The building was purchased in 2015 and redeveloped straightaway at a rapid pace, with the terrace transformed from two to four split-level storeys.

As a representation of his brand's aesthetic and design sensibilities, the headquarters express Natale's distinctive penchant for a neutral palette of black, white and grey. Many projects commence with this structural base and, from there, Natale layers and tailors, adding touches of warmth, tone and texture with accents including rugs, cushions and art, achieving a "timeless, classic style that transcends trends".

Upon entering the offices, one is met with an instant visual feast of luxurious finishes, high-end furniture and layers of detail. Black and white geometric marble tiles (Sotssass by Greg Natale) line the floor of the compact entranceway, complete with cement rendered walls, which enhance the space's tonal elegance. To the right of the vestibule, a sleek gold console table nestles underneath the stairwell and features a striking metal sculpture by Los Angeles artist, Dan Murphy – the first of many contemporary artworks featured throughout. Above the table, hangs a gestural black and white painting by Kerry Armstrong. To the left





The contrasting tile patterns are immediately striking and create a syncopated dance for the eye.

of the entranceway is the boardroom, where the flooring comprises a black and white mosaic tile grid (Zucchi by Greg Natale) skirted by grey terrazzo. The contrasting tile patterns are immediately striking and create a syncopated dance for the eye.

Inside the boardroom, a large oval Florence Knoll marble table is set among six refurbished black leather, steel-framed chairs, all situated underneath a ravishing brass vintage pendant light – the effect creates a formal space where clients and staff can meet and present ideas. Across the windows, grey linen curtains drape from ceiling to floor, cleverly subduing the afternoon sun. Opposite the doorway, on the far cement rendered wall, sits an abstract painting by artist, Jo Davenport – the first real injection of colour thus far. Natale believes a great artwork truly “finishes a space... the final layer”.

Continuing upstairs, one ascends a grey Carrara marble staircase framed with a black steel balustrade towards the main reception, which features a black marble desk, brass vintage lighting and a specially commissioned wall relief sculpture by Dion Horstmans – three geometric forms in black, bronze and white. Pieces from the designer’s collaborations, such as the charcoal lounge from the Chest range and black leather tub chairs from the World’s Away range, are located in the lobby, and set around a three-tiered, high gloss, black coffee table. Plush geometric rugs punctuate the grey terrazzo flooring and add warmth. The original brick structural walls have been retained, painted white and this, along with the perforated ceiling acts as a decorative feature, while being functional in reducing sound.

Behind the reception, a series of divided spaces unfold using fluted glass supported by a motif of black steel rectangular frames, and house offices, a bathroom and another client meeting room complete with Flos pendant light, Eames chairs, an intimately-scaled marble table atop a yellow and black geometric print rug, and a framed work on paper by artist Graham Kuo, where bold strokes of purple, black, watermelon and gold coalesce into a frenzy. Here, the glass walls provide both translucency and privacy for clients and staff. Further beyond, the designer has constructed a spacious showroom in which to display the ever-expanding range of interior products, and also a discreet double garage at the rear of the premises. It is worthwhile highlighting the innovative use of white tiles set against black grouting in the bathroom and shower, accentuating the recurring element of strong geometry.



**OPPOSITE** The boardroom is centred by a Florence Knoll dining table (dedece) with refurbished vintage black leather dining chairs and vintage brass lighting

**ABOVE** The golden tones of an Oluce Atollo Desk lamp (Euroluce) echo colour and form in the Natale designed rug and his gold tone and marble Worlds Away dining table

Ascending the marble stairs to the third and fourth floors, one uncovers a treasure trove of Natale's inspirations in his swatch studio – numerous swathes of fabrics, sample tiles and finishes line the shelves. Continuing upstairs, one reaches the kitchen, staff room adorned with Andy Warhol *Campbell's Soup Can* prints, rooftop terrace, private office and a large open floorplan design studio with 16 workstations for the growing team. Natale's private office features a library area complete with lounges, a red marble coffee table, shelves of books sorted by colour and a striking painting by artist Scott Petrie, framed by lamps from James Said Collections, Perth. The space allows Natale to quietly create and work on projects and designs.

The kitchen comprises retro 1970s-style Smeg appliances, sleek carpentry in a Yosemite finish along with matt black tapware and stone benchtop with matching splashback. Beyond, the rooftop terrace provides an inner-city oasis and features an over-scaled staircase where staff and clients can lounge, tiled with the soon-to-be launched 3D Collection (Marmo), furniture by Ke-Zu and a selection of potted greenery and succulents.

Natale admits he had a strong "vision for the site, seeing it completed as a whole" prior to commencing. The headquarters exemplify his streamlined and cohesive mix of luxurious

finishes – smooth marble, plush fabrics, matt tiling, high gloss fixtures, black carpentry, opaque glass and the rawness of the painted brickwork coalesce in a considered, yet seemingly effortless manner. Natale says, "Our DNA is the use of print and pattern. Classic and clean lines."

The designer is thrilled with the results, fulfilling the needs of his clients and staff. He is undoubtedly energised and driven to work, noting, "We are currently working on a hotel in Perth, and have just completed an 80-room hotel in the Hunter Valley, due to open soon." The scale of the enterprise is a remarkable feat given the staff of 15 who work on a portfolio of 30 to 40 simultaneously active projects, as well as myriad additional interior products, with a range of homewares launching in the near future.

Recently published and exquisitely designed, *The Tailored Interior* features an insightful introduction by Jonathan Adler and a photographic journey of projects, shot spectacularly by Anson Smart. Inside, Natale's candour when describing his approach and design philosophy is refreshingly accessible. As the man behind one of Australia's leading and award-winning interior design firms, Greg Natale is on a mission to create "luxury and glamour" – spaces for his clients to live in that are "tailored to their dreams".



RIGHT

Natale's private office includes lamps from the James Said Collection, Perth and a painting by Scott Petrie

LEFT

A flexible design studio for 16 that can accommodate expansion in an open-plan style that suits Natale well, seated at right



"Our DNA is the use of print and pattern. Classic and clean lines."  
Greg Natale