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AUSTRALIAN

# DESIGN HEROES

*Our top designers take you inside*

THOMAS HAMEL NICK TOBIAS GREG NATALE DAVID HICKS  
MATT GIBSON ARENT & PYKE ROMAINE ALWILL VILLA + VILLA



# BLUE NOTES

Designer *Greg Natale* modified his signature exuberant style to deliver a pared-back aesthetic with riffs on the colour blue.

Photographs ANSON SMART Words NICKY LOBO



This page An artwork by Kerry Armstrong signals the entrance to the corridor that houses the children's homework station. Alexa Hampton ceiling lamps from Visual Comfort. Opposite page Thomas Pheasant 'Arcade' table for Baker Furniture holds a silver ribbon sculpture by Dan Murphy. Artworks by Morné Visagie. Greg Natale rug.



This page Greg Natale 'Aquarius' wallpaper provides a textural backdrop in the formal living room. Wall and ceiling lights from Visual Comfort. Opposite page, clockwise from top left The Art Deco character is preserved on the exterior of the house. Richard Mishaan club chairs from Bolier. Sofa from Cavit & Co. In the hall, a Christopher Guy mirror hangs above a bench from Max Sparrow. Leather upholstered barrel chairs in the study with a leather steamer trunk desk from Restoration Hardware. Leather panelled walls and dark timber joinery evoke a masculine mood.



“While the clients liked pattern and were keen for texture and layers the scheme had to be understated.”

This family of five had lived on a generous block on a gently sloping site in Sydney's eastern suburbs for some years before deciding to transform it. Originally engaging architect Bernard Teh Howell to design the home, a DA was secured before Bernard suddenly and sadly passed away. Having a fair idea of what they desired, the clients were introduced to designer Greg Natale through the builder, and invited him on board.

With a teenage son and two younger daughters, the family was looking for a home that catered for the needs of children developing their own social lives, as well as the collective propensity to entertain with extended family and friends. “They were after something classic, with proportions and spaces that gave them room to grow as a family,” Greg says.

Working with the owners, the team extensively reworked sections of the house to respond to the brief. A basement was introduced to house a suite of entertainment elements, such as a cellar, home cinema and guest accommodation. A pitched roof in the original design was rethought, streamlining the facade to accentuate the subtle Art Deco character.

Other design features were integrated to bring warmth and personality into what would be a large home. A sinuous, ribbon-like circular staircase connects the three floors, a bold structural statement whose curves are echoed in partitions and ceiling details on the ground floor. Generous proportions provided the opportunity for wide hallways that feel almost gallery-like with the art purchased from South Africa and elsewhere.

Greg's impressive residential portfolio often features strong patterns, however in this project it was to be pared back. “While they liked pattern and were keen for texture and layers the scheme also had to be understated,” he says. “White was a key part of our brief and from the exterior to the interiors it enhances the crisp detailing.”

Greg's solution was to break up the interior expanses of white with grey and blue, and to include a statement front door. “The brilliant blue front door is probably the only really loud design statement in the home,” he says. “The other introductions of colour and pattern are more delicately handled. I felt that the front door, against all that white, could afford to be bold – creating a real sense of arrival.” The blue is carried through into the elegant entrance hall with hints of blue in the custom rug and, sparingly, in furniture, finishes, objects and art.

As with most of Greg's projects, custom joinery brings an extra level of care and consideration to the aesthetic, creating a feeling of cohesiveness. Signature joinery details, as well as metalwork in balustrades echo the Art Deco curves, which soften the grand scale of the individual spaces.

Overall the home is built for entertaining. The pool and outdoor area are well used in the warmer months with the kitchen placed adjacent to provide easy access. Similarly, the basement entertaining level opens directly out to the backyard and pool area, perfect for the younger members of the family.

Not just a beautiful home for the clients, this project is an evolution of Greg's work. While all projects pose their unique challenges, the brief here for a more classic and restrained design meant tweaking some of his signature elements. “I see this as a softer, more classically inspired Greg Natale project,” he says. “There is definitely an evolution towards smooth lines, more organic curves and softer schemes.” Yet this pared-back home beautifully celebrates the layering, detail, texture and pattern that are characteristic of the practice. ■

For more go to [gregnatale.com](http://gregnatale.com).

This page, from top An artwork by Karry Armstrong hangs in the family room above a pair of 'Melody Club' chairs from Max Sparrow. Custom cushions in Kelly Wearstler 'Channels' fabric in Periwinkle Oatmeal. In the dining room two Morné Visagie artworks overlook the smoked oak table from Bolter and Jonathan Adler 'Claude' chairs in navy leather. Opposite page 'Domicile' sofa from Bolter with custom cushions in Schumacher fabrics. Jacques Garcia for Baker Furniture 'Tréfle' accent table from Cavit & Co. Bowl from Becker Minty. 'Empire' stools at the breakfast bar from Coco Republic.



This page A Scott Petrie artwork hangs above the 'Warner' bed from Restoration Hardware in the main bedroom. Phillip Jeffries metallic weave wallpaper. 'Savoy' sofa from Restoration Hardware. Opposite page A loured roof and integrated outdoor heating allow this terrace to be used year round. Klismos collection outdoor furniture from Restoration Hardware. Cushions in outdoor fabrics from Tigger Hall and Trina Turk.



**SPEED READ**

» Interior designer Greg Natale was called on to add his expertise to the refashioning of this Art Deco home in Sydney's eastern suburbs. » He modified his love of bold colour and pattern to create a classic home in a more subdued palette that offers plenty of scope for the family to entertain or pursue their own interests. » Living areas are spread over three generous floors, including a full entertainment zone in the basement with a wine cellar and home theatre. » Luxurious proportions are softened by sinuous curves in the architecture and furnishings, and highlighted by a sculptural staircase in the entry. » The predominantly white interior scheme is enlivened with classic blues and greys and demonstrates a more subtle and pared-back approach to patterning and layering.





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**GREG NATALE**  
Greg Natale Design

PHOTOGRAPHY: YERBA FALSA / TACCA CREATIVE / STEVE COBONNY

Custom USM coffee table in Graphite Black from ECC Lighting + Furniture, designed by Greg Natale. Wallpaper by Greg Natale for Porter's Paints and tiles by Greg Natale for Tera Nova. Artwork by Kerry Armstrong. Greg Natale sofa from Stylecraft with 'Shatter' and 'Black Point' cushions by Greg Natale. Greg Natale for Casa Mia side tables with lamps from Conley & Co. Cassina armchair from Cult. Bowl and shagreen box from Becker Minty.

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