Harbour vista

Snapping up an unrenovated house on a desirable street gave one couple the opportunity to build something truly special.

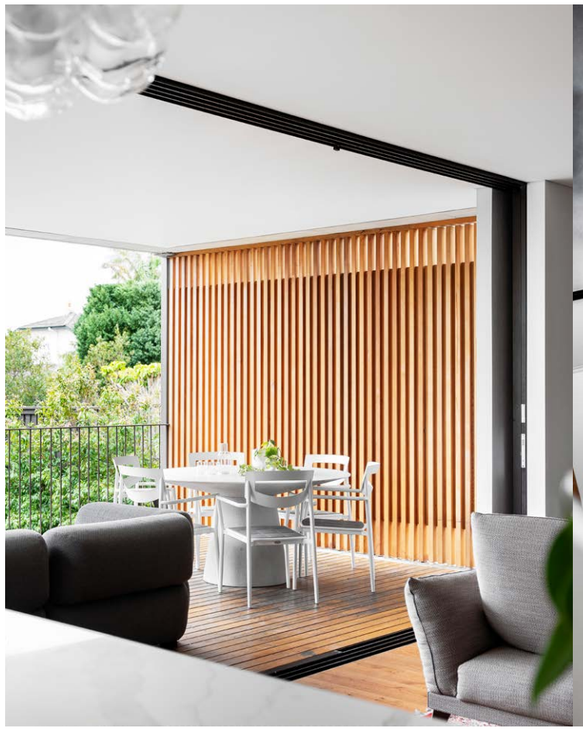
STORY *Stephanie Hope* | STYLING *Holly Irvine*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Tom Ferguson*

EXTERIOR An established frangipani tree dictated the curved design of this terrace. Dulux Grey Pebble render and paint. Off-form concrete and aluminium cladding in Dark Bronze, Sterland Roofing & Cladding. Blackbutt decking. Custom red cedar panels.

"THE SOFT CURVES ARE A GOOD CONTRAST TO THE RECTILINEAR SHAPE OF THE HOUSE." *Mohit Keni*

TERRACE/ALFRESCO KITCHEN
Sliding doors help extend the living space into the covered deck. Custom western red cedar panels and joinery, Space Joinery. B&B Italia 'Butterfly' sofa, Space. Custom skylight, Eastman Glass. Wolf barbecue and Falmec rangehood. X-Bond grey marble benchtop, Seamless Surfaces. Mizu sink and mixer, Reece.

H&G **CORBEN ARCHITECTS, NSW**



A longstanding fixture on an esteemed street in Sydney's Manly, this charming 1960s home recently had a well-deserved modern upgrade. Owners Laila Kaiser and Darren Scott asked Mohit Keni of Corben Architects to take charge of the project, which called for major alterations and additions to the existing single-storey building to create a comfortable family home that took better advantage of the sweeping harbour vistas.

"When we bought the house, it hadn't been touched in decades – we could see through the floorboards to the ground underneath!" recalls Laila. "What began as a remodel became almost an entire rebuild; only one room has stayed the same." The challenge was to balance the needs of the couple's 10-year-old son, Oscar, and mini poodle Dazzle, while also finding a place for Darren's passions for art, cooking and wine and their combined cultural backgrounds (Laila is American, born in Iran, and Darren is Australian).

The original and now updated front entry and sitting room flow through to a generous, light-filled new kitchen, living and dining space at the rear. Laila bought many of the key furniture pieces in these spaces during the build, which helped inform its design. Slide-away doors open to a covered entertaining terrace with alfresco kitchen that overlooks the new pool and gardens below. The sweeping curves of this terrace and its roof is one of many standout design devices. "The shape of the deck is the result of retaining a very advanced frangipani tree that was a prominent feature of the backyard," Mohit explains. "The soft curves are also a good contrast to the rectilinear shape of the house. Timber-stamped off-form concrete gives it a natural finish that will age very well."

A lower ground level features a rumpus area with fold-down bed, kitchenette, bathroom and TV. "Right now, we're using that entire area as a games room, workout room, play room, music room – you name it," says Laila. Upstairs, the addition of a partial third level has captured the ocean views. Three of the four bedrooms are on this level, including the master with ensuite, walk-in robe and a small balcony that takes in the view. "It's definitely our favourite spot," says Laila. "There's a sitting area, with a bar fridge and stools, and we invite people up for small parties or to watch the fireworks."

The home's fixtures and materials have all been carefully selected. This being a "shoeless" household, wide engineered floorboards feature on the main living level, with carpets in the bedrooms and stone tiles in the lower level rumpus room.

THE PALETTE

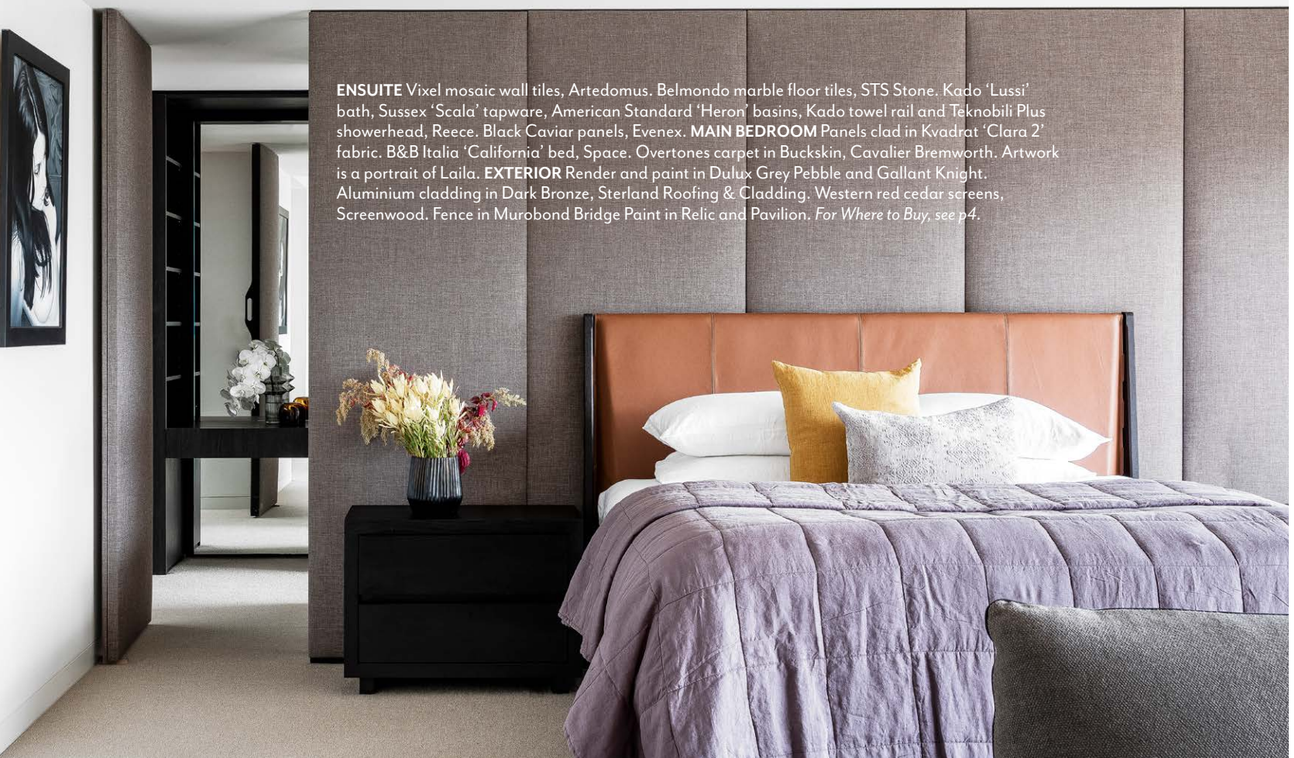
Dulux Whisper White (interior walls)

Dulux Grey Pebble (exterior),

Dulux Gallant Knight (exterior)

KITCHEN Polyurethane cabinetry painted Dulux Whisper White with Navtext Honey Oak panels, New Age Veneers. Nature's Original 111 marble splashback and benchtops, TCE Stone. Mizu 'Soothe' mixer and AFA 'Cubeline' sink, Reece. Replica Bocci chandelier, Lucretia Lighting. Owners' bespoke bar stools. **LIVING** Escea gas fire, Abbey Fireplaces. X-Bond marble plinth, Seamless Surfaces. Western red cedar doors, Space Joinery. Sofa, armchair and cocktail tables, Roche Bobois. Artwork by Jimmy Engineer. **TERRACE** B&B Italia 'Butterfly' setting, Space. **STAIRS** Eterno European oak engineered floorboards, Tongue n Groove. Artwork unknown.

"THERE'S A SITTING AREA WITH A BAR FRIDGE AND STOOLS, AND WE INVITE PEOPLE UP FOR SMALL PARTIES." *Laila Kaiser*



ENSUITE Vixel mosaic wall tiles, Artedomus. Belmondo marble floor tiles, STS Stone. Kado 'Lussi' bath, Sussex 'Scala' tapware, American Standard 'Heron' basins, Kado towel rail and Teknobili Plus showerhead, Reece. Black Caviar panels, Evenex. **MAIN BEDROOM** Panels clad in Kvadrat 'Clara 2' fabric. B&B Italia 'California' bed, Space. Overtones carpet in Buckskin, Cavalier Bremworth. Artwork is a portrait of Laila. **EXTERIOR** Render and paint in Dulux Grey Pebble and Gallant Knight. Aluminium cladding in Dark Bronze, Sterland Roofing & Cladding. Western red cedar screens, Screenwood. Fence in Murobond Bridge Paint in Relic and Pavilion. *For Where to Buy, see p4.*

Low-voltage, concealed light sources provide indirect, soft ambient illumination, with downlights to supplement and provide task lighting, and pendants used as features in the kitchen, staircase and sitting room. A Control4 home automation system integrates the lights, curtains, blinds, music, internet, security and more, with wall panels dotted around the home for easy access and control.

The kitchen makes a statement, although functionality was central to its design. Simple white polyurethane cabinetry runs along the wall and a concealed walk-in pantry has been included. "Laila and Darren were very keen on having seating around one end of the island for family meals, so the stone cladding is a result of that," explains Mohit. "We decided to play with the shape of the stone cladding to make it more interesting."

There's so much that Laila loves about her finished home but her favourite space is the room that has barely changed. "Darren and I have lived all over the world, and the front sitting room is where we keep pieces from every place that means something to us," she says. Iran, India, Singapore, Africa and America are all represented here. "I love that we've managed to combine our multicultural backgrounds into our home," she says.

DESCRIBE THE BRIEF AND THE RESULT YOU WERE TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH THIS RENOVATION? To create a comfortable family home and take advantage of the views.

WERE THERE ANY COMPROMISES? The curved terrace was designed around the existing frangipani tree.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST HAPPY WITH? Mohit: The rear deck and upper level addition. Laila: The perfect mix of welcoming common areas and private bedrooms.

HOW LONG DID THE RENOVATION TAKE? Approximately 27 months.

ANY ADVICE FOR WOULD-BE RENOVATORS? Laila: Always choose function over design. Build with your furniture in mind and include lots of storage, and build to council specs to save yourself a world of pain!

Design and building team **Architect** Mohit Keni, Corben Architects; corben.com.au. **Interior designer** Karina Kerr, Corben Architects; corben.com.au. **Builder** Schmidt Construction; schmidtconstruction.com.au. **Joiner** Space Joinery; spacejoinery.com.au. **Landscaper** Bates Landscape; bateslandscape.com.au.

MATERIALS *& finishes*

JOINERY Polyurethane cabinetry painted Dulux Whisper White (kitchen, bathrooms, laundry). Navtext Honey Oak, New Age Veneers (kitchen, living). Evenex panels in Black Caviar, Elton Group (wardrobe, ensuite).

DOOR HARDWARE Madinoz.

TILES Vixel wall mosaics, Artedomus (bathrooms and laundry). Belmondo honed marble floor tiles, STS Stone (bathrooms and laundry).

SPLASHBACK Nature's Original III, TCE Stone (kitchen).

BENCHTOPS Nature's Original III, TCE Stone (kitchen, bathrooms, laundry). X-Bond grey marble (fireplace plinths, alfresco kitchen), Seamless Surfaces.

FLOORING Eterno European oak engineered boards in Sienna, Tongue n Groove. Overtones carpet in Buckskin, Cavalier Bremworth.

APPLIANCES Siemens cooktop, Miele ovens and dishwasher, Qasair rangehood and Liebherr integrated fridges, all Winning Appliances (kitchen). Wolf barbecue; Falmec external rangehood (alfresco kitchen). Miele washer and dryer (laundry).

TAPWARE Sussex 'Scala' (bathrooms) and Mizu 'Soothe' square gooseneck mixer (kitchen, alfresco kitchen, laundry), Reece.

SINKS AFA 'Cubeline' (kitchen, laundry) and Mizu round sink (alfresco kitchen), Reece.

COLOUR SCHEME Dulux Whisper White (interior walls), Grey Pebble (exterior) and Gallant Knight (exterior).

LIGHTING Concealed LED strip lighting (bathrooms), downlights (kitchen), Little Manly wall lights (stairs) and custom pendant (sitting room), Tovo Lighting. Pendant chandelier, Lucretia Lighting (kitchen).