



NEXT LEVEL

Every room of this slick, contemporary home on Sydney's northern beaches has a beach or garden view, framed by palm trees and masses of lush, subtropical plants.

STORY *Deborah Grant* | STYLING *Kayla Gex* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Maree Homer*



FOYER The custom front door by Stockwells Joinery has a bronze disc pull from Designer Hardware. Lagano granite in different textures lines the walls and floor. Pendant light, Spence & Lyda. Artwork by Jeffrey Smart. Designer buy: 'Stella', meals table, from \$4900, Zuster. **KITCHEN** With a palm grove beyond the splashback window, the outlook is a feature in itself. Maximum porcelain benchtop by Artedomus. 'Joko' stools, Fanuli. 'Lora' pendant light, ECC Lighting+Furniture. ▶

H&G HOUSES

ate 2016 saw the realisation of a dream for a Sydney family, who finally moved into the northern beaches home they'd been planning for years. Handing them the key was Michael Kilkeary from Cadence & Co, who'd helmed the design team, in conjunction with landscape designers Julia Levitt and Fiona Ericsson from Sticks & Stones Landscape Design. Between them, they'd spent more than 18 months working on the four-level, six-bedroom home that fitted perfectly into the front-line beach location.

Though exciting for all involved, the project wasn't without its hitches. "The previous owner, a developer, cleared the site and built a concrete bunker as the base, but objections from neighbours to the DA's five levels had made it unviable," says Michael. The present owners, who have a number of children, were happy to reduce the footprint to better fit the site.

Cadence & Co has worked on a number of the owners' houses and Michael, the firm's architectural designer partner and lead interior designer on this home, was able to take them from the design stage through to construction and project management while ensuring a superior level of finish, inside and out. "The external finishes - painted render, vertical zinc panelling and stone rockface cladding - provide a low-maintenance structure that can withstand harsh beachfront forces," says Michael.

Design-wise, the house had to be sympathetic to the site and offer privacy in each of the bedrooms and various living areas, as well as outside areas, in a location that beachgoers frequent all year. Another challenge was bringing light into the lower levels. Trimming a floor from the original plan meant Michael could increase the ceiling heights and window sizes to let more sunshine in and create better views. At the sides and rear of the home, where there wasn't a direct ocean aspect, he allowed enough room for lush garden vistas.

Entry is on level two, above the basement garage and gym. The living and pool entertaining areas flow from here, as well as two bedrooms. Up on level three are the main living and dining areas, barbecue terrace and media room, and on top are two



more bedrooms plus the parents' suite. The owners wanted a modern, warm and liveable home with a bespoke feel. This has been achieved through contrasts of stone and wood on the floors, walls and ceilings, inspired by some of the textures outside.

Glass is an important feature and used lavishly to create sightlines up and down stairs and across rooms. There's a frameless glass wall in the hall, glass in the lift at the back of the stairs, and even in the dining room's pendant lights, where the volume is generous but doesn't obstruct the artwork beyond.

Luxury abounds, from the simple (an elegant cedar bench seat in the second ensuite's steam room) to the sublime (the Lagano granite in the foyer). "The entry walls feature it in a diagonal ribbed texture that gives the impression of a lovely corduroy fabric," says Michael. As well as a fully appointed home, there's an acoustically controlled media room, a swimming pool overlooking the beach and a cellar next to the dining room.

Landscaping was key to the success of this house and Sticks & Stones has done an amazing job. "We were brought in to soften the spaces and create an instant garden," says Julia. "There were more than 3500 plants carefully specified and grown for this home. We sourced from as far afield as Queensland, as well as a 50-year-old *Dracaena draco* tree from a specialty grower."

The sloping site called for a relaxed, meandering timber staircase that connects with each destination. "Every pocket of the spotted-gum decking, timber staircase or retaining wall is filled with different textures and hues of green," says Julia. The top deck, which is secluded and protected, is her favourite: "It's a nice escape from the heat and bustle of the day."

In recent months, the custom-formed concrete fire pit on the pool terrace has been a real hit with the owners. As Michael says, "It allows the family to sit outside in winter, overlooking the beach yet warmed by a spectacular open fire."

Cadence & Co, Torrey Hills, NSW (02) 9450 1950 or cadenceandco.com.au. Sticks & Stones Landscape Design, Surry Hills, NSW; 0439 822 079 or sticksandstonesld.com.au.

'The material palette was chosen to provide detail and texture, and to ground the building in its landscape.' Michael Kilkeary, architectural designer



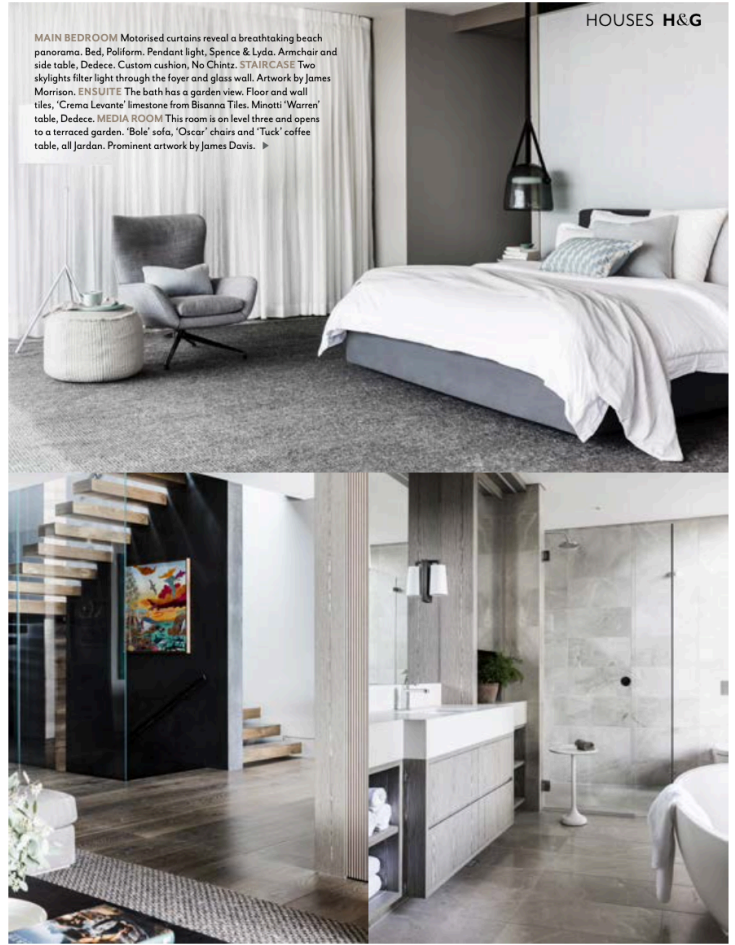
DINING The defining feature is the Martina Emiler artwork on the wall, closely followed by Banma 'Tim' pendant lights from Sparco & Lyda, 'Boss Executive' table and 'Joko' armchairs, Fanuli. Flooring, large-format engineered oak boards from Nash Timbers. Tableware and vase, Mud Australia. For similar wool throw, try Waverley Mills. **MAIN LIVING** A place where the family hangs out together, with a soft sisal rug from International Floor Coverings underfoot. Platform 'Groundpiece' modular sofa, Fanuli. Rust-coloured 'Kew' cushion, Linen House. The window seat is by Intoo, with cushion fabrics from Elliott Clarke. Art on far wall by Tim Storrier (large painting) and Patrick Hughes; art at entry by James Morrison. Smart buys: Inoko knit throw in Natural, \$195; Love Linen.

This is the life

The owners wanted their home to have a strong sense of understated luxury to match their beach lifestyle. Everyone has their own bedroom and bathroom so early risers in the family can hit the sand or home gym (next to the ground-level garage) without disturbing the others. There are plenty of breathtaking spaces for entertaining or relaxing or working on a laptop with the soothing sound of breaking waves in the background.



MAIN BEDROOM Motorised curtains reveal a breathtaking beach panorama. Bed, Paliform. Pendant light, Spence & Lyda. Armchair and side table, Dedeco. Custom cushion, No Chintz. **STAIRCASE** Two skylights filter light through the foyer and glass wall. Artwork by James Morrison. **ENSUITE** The bath has a garden view. Floor and wall tiles, 'Crema Levanta' limestone from Bisazza Tiles. Minotti 'Warren' table, Dedeco. **MEDIA ROOM** This room is on level three and opens to a terraced garden. 'Bole' sofa, 'Oscar' chairs and 'Tuck' coffee table, all Jardan. Prominent artwork by James Davis. ▶





THE PALETTE

Resene Quarter Villa White
ceilings, living

Resene Double Pravda
exterior render, mid-levels

Resene Napa
bedrooms and foyer-level walls

POOL BAR/SERVERY An indoor-outdoor hangout on the beachfront with Eveneer 'Saltwood' cabinetry and oak panelling, 'Joko' stools, Fanuli. **Designer buy:** Bover 'Fara' outdoor pendant, from SZROO, Tangent Lights. **PATH** Linking the pool and lawn with the upper barbecue area, the grey ironbark stairs have landings marked by feature pots. The gabion pot by Sticks & Stones is filled with *Senecio serpens*; the Tait grey pot contains a swamp lily. **OUTDOOR SHOWER** On the private side of the existing Norfolk Island pine, a recycled pillar marks the spot where sand from the beach is left behind. Brass showerhead and levers, The English Tapware Company. *For Where to Buy, see page 221. H&G*

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

How the garden grew

Created by Sticks & Stones Landscape Design, this lush garden has 24 different plant species, from *Blechnum gibbum* 'Silver Lady' and *Philodendron 'Xanadu'* lining the paths to a 4m *Bismarckia nobilis* palm tree from Queensland craned into position at the front. "The client is fond of Hamilton Island and wanted the same tropical grandeur, as well as screening plants for privacy," says team leader Julia Levitt.



FEATURE TREES & PLANTS

TREES
Golden cane palm
Dragon's-blood tree (*Dracaena draco*)

PLANTS
Bird's nest fern
Heliconia bihai x *Caribaea* 'Hot Rio Nights'
Philodendron 'Xanadu'
Giant bromeliad