

# SOARING TO *new heights*

A family with three teenage boys needed space to grow in their Sydney bungalow.

STORY *Chris Pearson* | STYLING *Atelier Room on Fire*  
PHOTOGRAPHY *Felix Mooneeram*



**EXTERIOR** Weatherboards painted Dulux Snowy Mountains Half, Design Pine. Door painted Dulux Clay Pipe. 'Bayview' plantation shutters, CW Systems. Sokeria Egyptian limestone pavers, Artisan Exterior.



“There was a need for space to retreat to, but also for the family to be together. They wanted connection, openness and light.”

MICHAEL KILKEARY, ARCHITECT



**KITCHEN** Joinery in Dulux Snowy Mountains Half, Nu Space. Kitchen Island in 'Rombini Triangle' tiles, Di Lorenzo. Brodware 'Halo' mixer, Just Bathroomware. Fredericia stools, Cult. Rug, Cadrys. 'Hekke' floorboards, Tongue & Groove. **DINING** Joinery in Dulux Buff It Half, Nu Space. DK3 'Ten' table, and Møller '77' chairs, Great Dane. Rug, Cadrys. Ceramics, The DEA Store.



### THIS IS THE LIFE

“I love to cook, so I spend lots of time in the kitchen,” says the owner. “The boys enjoy meals at the bench and I can chat to them about their day while I cook.” For her husband? “He uses the pool most days. He loves to swim and then dry off in the sun. He absolutely loves the outdoor space. We entertain most weekends and enjoy cooking on the barbecue and playing lawn games,” she says.





Coming home is always an occasion for the lucky owners of this home on Sydney's Lower North Shore. From the front, it's a familiar two-storey bungalow, but inside it's anything but. A traditional hallway ushers them towards a revelation - a sweeping spiral staircase, the backbone of the house, which leads to a luminous courtyard and on to a living room with a soaring cathedral ceiling, bathed in soft light. "It's all so beautiful - that staircase is quite the centrepiece," says the owner.

But in 2012, when the couple bought the home for their growing family, now with three teenage boys, it was earthbound and far from elevated. Painted green and yellow, it had an awkward rear addition and was plagued by asbestos.

The couple, who had long dreamed of owning a bungalow, were unperturbed. "We initially updated it a bit to make it more comfortable for a young family," says the owner. "We restored it and rebuilt the rear. But it was always our intention to do a full rebuild, so in 2021, we bit the bullet." The most glaring faults? "The house was too small, so we were tripping over each other. Our outdoor space wasn't usable, the main bedroom had no ensuite, storage was minimal and we wanted a pool."

Central to the brief to architect Michael Kilkeary of Cadence & Co was two storeys, "so the boys could use the upstairs as their own space - to keep their mess out of the way and give them privacy," he says. "There was a need for space to escape and retreat to, but also for somewhere for the family to be together. They wanted connection, openness and light." "A butler's pantry was also on my list," adds the owner. "I love cooking and I wanted a smart kitchen with lots of storage that could double as a great place to entertain." And, connected to the kitchen, a large laundry/mudroom. Respect for the home's Federation past and the clean lines of Mid-century modernism were both overriding themes. ►



**KITCHEN** Joinery in Dulux Snowy Mountains Half and DuluxBuff It Half, Nu Space. Hardware, Iver. Artwork by Leonie Barton and bowl by Katarina Wells, all Curatorial + Co. **ENTRY** Front door painted Dulux Clay Pipe. **LIVING** Maison 'Kobi' linen curtains, Homelife Furnishings. Nanna Ditzel chair, and Folkform lamp, both Great Dane. 'Vis-à-Vis' side table, Artedomus.





To the front Michael added a gabled top storey clad in stucco and timber battens, reflecting the existing vernacular. “It spoke to the original language,” he says. This includes three bedrooms for the boys, with their own sitting room.

Meanwhile, he reconfigured the original bungalow with the main bedroom suite to the right of the entry, and a study and guest room to the left. But then any nod to a Federation bungalow breathtakingly evaporates with the staircase, then the kitchen leading to the living with the pitched ceiling beyond, all wrapped with a courtyard by landscape designer Adam Robinson.

“The spiral stair is an unexpected piece of sculpture, creating impact,” says Michael. “Adding to that, sightlines flow from the front door through to the back. Walls of glazing dissolve the barrier between inside and out,” he says. ▶



**HALLWAY** Umbrella stand c/o Chris Connell, Artedomus. Rugs, both Cadrys. **KITCHEN** Joinery, Nu Space. Kitchen Island tiles, Di Lorenzo. Mixer, Brodware. Stools, Cult. Large artwork by Leonie Barton. Large vase, small artworks and teapot by Suvira McDonald. **DINING** Pendant light, Coco Flip. DK3 table, Møller chairs, all Great Dane. Ceramics on shelves, The DEA Store.



THE PALETTE

Dulux Snow Mountains Half  
(joinery, walls, exterior)

Dulux Buff It Half  
(joinery)

Dulux Clay Pipe  
(front door)

Curves recurred in images accompanying the brief, so he has celebrated them throughout, in the staircase, arched internal doors (enabling sections of the home to be shut off when needed) and first-floor windows. Flowing counterpoints to the traditional lines of the front, “they introduce playfulness, as well as a retro vibe,” says Michael. Perforated bricks, part of the Mid-century vernacular, bathe the stairwell in light while preserving privacy, essential in this built-up area.

Continuity is provided by engineered timber flooring, and a white and sandy palette. “It’s all clean, neutral and understated. Any punches of colour are provided by the garden,” he says.

Michael loves the pavilion at the rear with its pitched roof and relaxed luxe. But, for the owner, that sinuous stair is hard to go past. In fact, she cannot fault her forever home after its makeover: “It is going to work hard for us. I am looking forward to the boys bringing their own kids here. It will suit us for many years to come.” ▶

Cadence & Co: [cadenceandco.com.au](http://cadenceandco.com.au).  
Adam Robinson Design: [adamrobinsondesign.com](http://adamrobinsondesign.com).

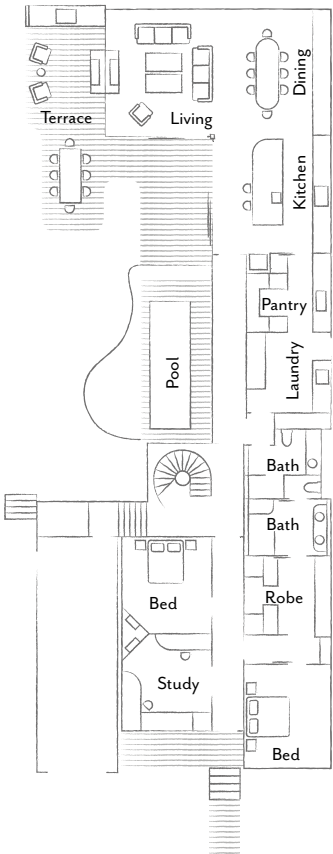
**LIVING** Nanna Ditzel chair, Folkform lamp and Kalmar floor lamp, all Great Dane. Fritz Hansen stool, Cult. Coffee table, Ted O’Donnell. Terracotta vessel (right) by Lucy Simpson, Artedomus. Ceramics, all The DEA Store. Artwork by Morgan Stokes. **EXTERIOR** Pool, Lap of Luxury Pools. Artwork in hallway by Theresa Hunt.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

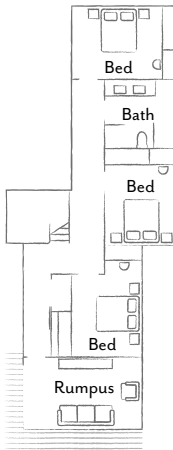


THE LAYOUT

Ground floor



First floor







**ENSUITE** Vanity, Nu Space. Benchtop in Pewter travertine, Worldstone. Zellige wall tiles and Unique travertine shower tiles, all Di Lorenzo. Wall light, We Ponder. Basins, Nood Co. Tapware, Brodware. 'Casablanca' floor tiles, Surface Gallery. **POWDER ROOM** 'Saanti' LED mirror, ABI Interiors. 'Rombini' feature tiles, Di Lorenzo. **STUDY** Chair and lamp, both Great Dane. Artek throw, Anibou.



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## THE SOURCE

*Mid-century and contemporary elements work well together united with subtle patterns and a grounded palette.*

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Produced by Marissa Foye.

1 Aerin 'Delmara' large **cachepot**, \$1235, Palmer&Penn. 2 'Sadie' **outdoor cushion** in Everdawn Vista, \$195, King Living. 3 'Sleek' **dining table**, POA, Fanuli. 4 L'Objet 'Timna' **vase** in Latte Porcelain, \$1495/short, Becker Minty. 5 Plantino 'Natures Trail' Brushed Wide Board **timber flooring** in Blackbutt, POA, Choices Flooring. 6 *Unknown Realms To Luring artwork* by Indivi Sutton, POA, Sainte Cloche. 7 'Claudia' area **rug** in Taupe (244x153cm), \$499, Castlery. 8 'Craig' expressed wood **chair**, \$799, West Elm. 9 'Palazzo' rectangle **coffee table**, \$3800, Casa Blanco. 10 Kartell 'Angelo' stone **table lamp** in Titanium, \$2245, Space. **H&G**