

Horses and humans alike are accommodated in supreme comfort in this stylishly versatile stable in a Sydney suburb

Words PHOEBE FRANGOUL

Photography FELIX MOONEERAM

Styling CHLOË MCCARTHY

Bordered by native eucalyptus forests and the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, the Sydney suburb of Terrey Hills is known for its ties to equine culture. Bridle trails wind through the town's quiet streets and bushland, offering escape from the hectic city. It was here that Cadence & Co was engaged by homeowner and equestrian Mandy Gillespie to design and craft a special building, where the comfort of its four-legged occupants is as important – if not more so – than that of the people.

‘The brief was twofold – to create stables for the horses and a retreat-like environment that could also support intimate gatherings,’ says Cadence & Co’s Micheal Kilkeary, the practice’s design principal and partner. The team devised ►



Ranch dressing



a structure incorporating the stables alongside a robust yet cosy lounge and an outdoor entertaining porch that overlooks the riding arena. While they've worked on several similar projects, this one – known as Georgetown Stables – is distinctive for how personal it is. 'It's a direct expression of Mandy's life and passion,' says Michael. 'We began by learning from her. Firstly, the rituals with her horses – grooming, riding, spending time in the stables. Secondly, the nuances of the Western riding style.' The team discovered that the saddles are a different size and design, while the horses themselves have specific traits; the pace of this equestrian style is 'slower, almost meditative'. This, and ►

The stables had to feel calm and layered, with detailing that spoke to both utility and atmosphere, ensuring the space could serve as a place of work, retreat and connection



Portrait Mandy Gillespie and her horse Gracie **Exterior** The building is clad in hardwood and pine, topped with a roof in Custom Orb metal sheeting from Lysaght. Above the main sliding doors into the stable is the 'Original Goose Neck Barn Light' from Barn Light Australia **Stable** In the part of the building that belongs to the horses, everything is neat and calm, with a place for everything. The 'Original Cord Pendant' lights are by Barn Light Australia and underfoot (or hoof) is durable, recycled herringbone brick paving **Porch** Colourful patterned rugs and cushions from Cadrys are layered up on the generous porch, with its custom sofas and armchair



decorative motifs often found on riding gear, informed details throughout the space, such as the diamond pattern of the brick inlay on the breezeway floor.

In every aspect of the build, practicality was paramount – the layout needed to flow seamlessly, ventilation had to be assured and every material was selected to withstand daily use. At the same time, the stables had to feel calm and layered, with detailing that spoke to both utility and atmosphere, ensuring the space could serve as a place of work, retreat and connection. The chosen palette includes recycled brick (tough yet with a certain softness) for the floors, birch-plywood walls with mixed hardwood battens for ►



Exterior (left to right) Horses Teddy, Gracie, Del and Lyric **Dining area** Stylist Chloë McCarthy of Sydney-based design studio Room on Fire worked with Cadence & Co on the interiors. Here, a relaxed spot for meals is centred around the 'Boston' dining table from Alfresco Emporium and chairs from French Provincial, with a cheerful silk tablecloth from Cadrys adding a splash of colour **Living room** Cadence & Co's Michael Kilkeary says the lounge was imagined as 'a place of comfort – somewhere to retreat, but always connected back to the stables'. With its warm birch-plywood walls and mix of woven textiles, sheepskins and leather upholstery, this space has a snug, cocooning quality. An antique English Chesterfield sofa anchors the space, its worn leather adding a sense of time and character to the new interior. The room was layered with Mandy's own treasured pieces, including portraits of her horses, and grounded by a custom coffee table crafted by a family member. The 'Classic Ring' chandelier and 'Dean' picture lights are from Visual Comfort; the chair on the left of the sandstone chimneybreast is the 'Taurus' from Future Classics Furniture



In every aspect of the build, practicality was paramount – the layout needed to flow seamlessly, ventilation had to be assured and every material was selected to withstand daily use



Bathroom A Perrin & Rowe basin sits in front of a wall clad in handmade 'Tierra' tiles by Tiles of Ezra
Kitchen The robust material palette continues with rock-cut 'Storm Granite' worktops from Worldstone adding a raw, elemental feel to the scheme. The cabinets are crafted from solid oak from Nu Space with Belzer solid-brass handles from Passio Interiors
Exterior Sprawling paddocks and day yards bring the horses to the doorstep. Myles Baldwin was responsible for the landscape design around the barn, with landscaping by Reflective Gardens. The grounds are planted with creeping rosemary, olive trees, magnolia and cacti
See Stockists page for details



strength and visual rhythm, wire-brushed Tasmanian Oak joinery for texture and depth and rock-cut granite worktops. In the bathroom, handmade Zellige tiles add crafted variation, while the choice of Zinalume for the roof quietly references the language of the Australian shed.

This was a design grounded in trust, made possible by what Michael refers to as a 'strong collaborative energy'. His highlight? A wall displaying saddles, boots and bridles. 'It's both storage and storytelling, functional and expressive,' he says, reflecting on how it represents the nature of the whole design – robust and practical but fun. 'For us,' he adds, 'it's about more than meeting a brief. It's about creating something enduring that feels both personal and connected to the landscape.' cadenceandco.com.au **ED**

