

AUSTRALIAN

PRECIOUS CARGO STYLISH STOWAGE FOR EVERY ROOM

HOUSE & GARDEN

100+
pages
of

CHARISMATIC, *creative*
and *colourful* HOMES

YOUR
POINT
of View

Excess all areas, '80s style
Chic diaries and luggage for post-lockdown life



Unsaid and done

Tacit understanding between architect and owners produced a home that is eminently liveable and makes a style statement without saying a word.

STORY Sarah Pickette | PHOTOGRAPHY Prue Ruscoe



LIVING Charlie the Australian shepherd's warm brown coat is in perfect harmony with the rose and earth tones throughout this art-filled home. Artwork on wall at right by Aida Tomescu. Rugs by Robyn Cosgrove; the Seal armchairs are vintage finds. &Tradition 'Mayor' sofas, Cult Design. Le Klint 'Arc' floor lamp, Great Dane. Gubi coffee table, Ownworld. The large artwork above the sofa is by Belinda Fox and the smaller works to its left are by Joshua Yeldham (top) and Dean Home (bottom). All cushions in Missoni fabrics.



Friends who've known each other a long time often possess the ability to communicate wordlessly. And it seems that design

professionals can do the same with their repeat clients. There was no brief when architect Brooke Aitken set about updating the interior of this Sydney home - but she didn't need one.

"In Brooke we trust," says the homeowner. "This is the fourth house we've worked on together. She has impeccable taste and we adore her." Having known the family of four for more than a decade, Brooke understood exactly how they wanted their new harbourside home to look: colourful, welcoming and a natural showcase for the art and designer furniture they'd collected over the years.

"The bones of the house were perfect, which meant all our energy could go into its interior decoration," says the owner. Brooke had inspected this house with the family before they bought in 2019 and she'd encouraged them to snap it up. With no structural work required, Brooke's architectural skills were set to one side temporarily and she focused on decorating.

"It was mostly a matter of helping the owners position their artworks, place their furniture and look at what new pieces they might need to purchase," she says. The house had been freshly painted not long before it was sold and the colours were good choices, so there wasn't even much work for the painters to do.

COVERED DECK *Above* Charlie settles in beneath a Ryan Hoffmann artwork from Liverpool Street Gallery. Dedon 'Tibbo' outdoor sofa and coffee table, Cosh Living. **LIVING** *Opposite* The home's main living area looks out to Sydney Harbour and part of a heritage rail siding. To the left of the Living Divani bookshelf from Space are two paintings by Belinda Fox. A Gubi '2.0' coffee table with a blood-red glass top and brass rim, from Ownworld, is set upon a custom-made rug from Robyn Cosgrove.



And while the kitchen and bathrooms are probably not how the owners would have designed them, says Brooke, they are still in great condition. "We very much took an 'if it ain't

broke, don't fix it' approach to this house. We could have ripped out the kitchen and put in something more to the owners' taste, but that's not what we wanted to do. You can make spaces better without getting rid of things that still work well."

Positioned over a three-car garage and wine cellar, the bottom level of this home is a self-contained space used by one son; it has its own kitchenette and terrace. Above it are the home's living spaces, simply arranged with a dining zone at the rear, kitchen in the middle and living area positioned at the front to open out to a large deck and harbour views beyond. "As soon as we saw the covered deck, we loved its depth and width," says the owner. "Its size and north-west aspect make it a perfect outdoor living space."

Brooke steered the family towards two Dedon 'Tibbo' outdoor sofas - "the most comfortable outdoor furniture I've ever sat on," she says - and picked out a striking pink artwork by Ryan Hoffmann for the undercover area. The artwork ties in perfectly with the furnishings in the adjoining living area: a pair of blush-pink &Tradition 'Mayor' sofas and custom-made Robyn Cosgrove rugs are complemented by a Belinda Fox painting and new Living Divani bookshelves. "Our living area is ▶



DINING A Johansen dining table is paired with Kai Kristiansen '42' chairs, both from Great Dane. The chairs are upholstered in a Neisha Crosland for Schumacher 'Zebra' fabric from Tigger Hall Design. Vintage Ercol timber seat and matching coffee table purchased at Revival and reupholstered in a Missoni fabric. Sculpture on coffee table by Joshua Yeldham, artwork partially visible at left by Aida Tomescu and carved-timber artwork in courtyard purchased overseas.

THIS IS THE LIFE

From the first time they saw it, the owners knew there was a lot to love about this property: "The house is full of natural light and the sunsets are just surreal." The locale – on Sydney's Lower North Shore – is "cosmopolitan but not overrun," says the owner. "There are plenty of great cafes, restaurants and shops. We're five minutes from my wife's office and two sets of traffic lights to my office in the city. You can be in so many great spots in 20 minutes. It's brilliant." ▶





“SOME OF THESE ARTWORKS HAVE BEEN WITH THE FAMILY FOR YEARS AND BEEN HUNG IN PREVIOUS HOMES, BUT EVERYTHING REALLY FEELS PERFECT FOR THIS PLACE.”
Brooke Aitken, architect

DINING *This page and opposite bottom* An Ercol footstool picks up on blue tones in the painting by Euan Macleod (left). Persian rug purchased on a family holiday overseas. Sculpture by Joshua Yeldham. *Beacon*, an early work of Belinda Fox's, has been owned and treasured by the family for years but looks like it was painted especially for this room. Mirror-top joinery creates an interesting view of the ceramic sculptures, all by Belinda Fox. **ENTRY** *Opposite top* Abstract painting by Colin Pennock from Arthouse Gallery. Custom console by Jason Mowen. Ottoman in Missoni fabric from Top3 by Design.

so beautiful,” says the owner. “The way the colours and pieces harmonise is incredible.”

The dining space was tweaked slightly by Brooke, who simply added a mirrored top to the existing joinery. “Now it reflects the ceramics that sit on it, so if you’re standing nearby you get a beautiful dual view of them.” Star of this space is a vast Belinda Fox painting - one of her earlier works. “This piece was bought as a birthday gift,” she says. “It’s been with the family for many years but it’s as though it was painted for this space. It couldn’t be more perfect.” The dining area is furnished with a Johansen dining table accompanied by Kai Kristiansen ‘Number 42’ chairs, all from Great Dane.

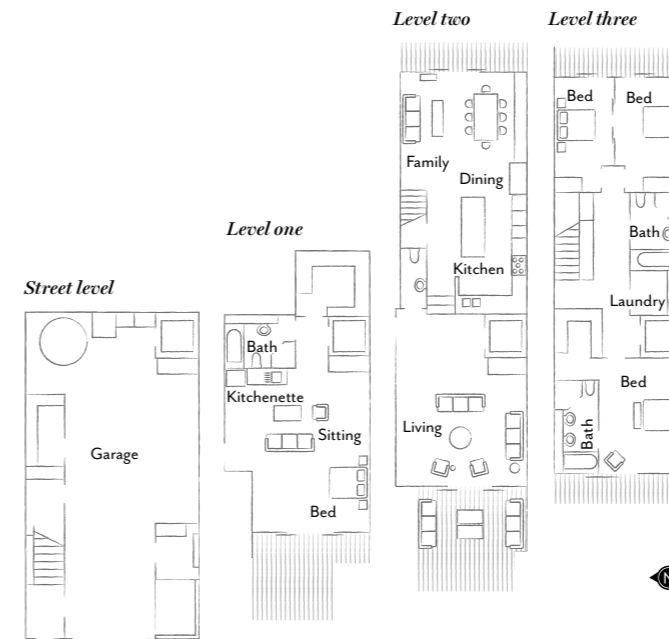
Art also takes top billing in the main bedroom, where a circular series of glorious Marion Borgelt works are positioned on a textured wall. “These pieces are made from a birch ply that has a blush-coloured wash on them, and a mirrored surface,” says Brooke. “They would be so beautiful to wake up to.” In fact, the owners’ passion for collecting Australian art shines right through in this home.

“All the art in our house has its own special story - the story the work itself tells, the story of when and why we acquired it and what we’ve lived through with these works on our walls,” says the owner. “Each piece creates a powerful emotional connection and a beautiful sense of place.”

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THE LAYOUT





MAIN BEDROOM A work by Belinda Fox takes pride of place over the bedhead, which was custom-made for Brooke Aitken Design in a Raffles Textiles linen. Møller 'Bench #63', Arne Vodder bedside tables and chest of drawers, all Great Dane. Ramie carpet in Beret, Signature Floors. Vintage Grant Featherston chair from Revival, reupholstered in a Kvadrat fabric. Artworks opposite by Marion Borgelt (bottom right) and Clifford How (two works, bottom left). ▶



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



THE PALETTE

Dulux Tranquil Retreat (interior, throughout)	Porter's Paints Ballet Slipper	Porter's Paints Bull Whip
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COURTYARD Black
labrador Nancy in the
rear courtyard, which was
planned and planted by
Adam Robinson Design.