





# GRAND SCALE

A SYMPATHETIC THREE-YEAR RENOVATION GIVES A SENSE OF INTIMACY TO A PALATIAL FEDERATION HOME  
OVERLOOKING SYDNEY HARBOUR WORDS **KIRSTY DE GARIS** STYLING **MELISSA COLLISON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD POWERS**





The formal living area of Louise Green and Warwick Negus's home (**this page**) is a rich blend of texture and colour. Robyn Cosgrove Rugs was supplied with fabric swatches from which to draw colour inspiration for the hand-knotted rug. An off-beat stripe was selected for the bold runner on the stairs in the main entrance (**opposite page**). The Edra 'Corallo' armchair from Space is made with hand-curved steel wire and finished with coral-coloured epoxy paint. →



The best ideas, designs and concepts usually don't occur overnight. They need time to develop, grow and mature before they are ready to be brought into being.

Louise Green, Warwick Negus and their four young children moved into their house in the harbourside Sydney suburb of Point Piper seven years ago, but were in no rush to decide on the best way to approach a redesign. They spent three years in the Federation residence, last renovated in the 1940s, before deciding on an architect and interior designer to work with. "It was crumbling around our ears!" laughs Louise at the memory.

When it came time to transform the building's considerable size into a comfortable family home, colour, texture and scale were of central importance to architect Luigi Roselli – as was being mindful of the building's history. It was constructed in 1899, so Luigi had a solid structure to work with. "We kept its assets," he explains, praising the home's thick walls and cedar joinery, architraves and stairwell in the entry foyer area.

During the two-stage renovation, the kitchen was relocated to the street side of the house, allowing an informal dining area to take in the views. The adjoining balcony is now accessible through foldback steel doors. "We had timber sash windows there which were almost floor-to-ceiling," says Louise. "We turned them into recessed balconies upstairs, except for the balcony outside the master bedroom's ensuite."

The layout needed to be child-friendly, but she and Warwick decided to retain the formal living and dining areas, even if →

**[Opposite page]** Craftsmen were brought out from England during the home's 1940s renovation to hand-carve the formal dining room's fireplace. The self-portraits are by Archibald Prize winner Craig Ruddy. A modern extension **(above right)** contrasts with the older section of the house. Covering all four floors, its staircase acts as the house's 'backbone' and allows easy indoor/outdoor access, while the limestone flooring is heated from beneath in winter. Louise bought the dining table in London. Folding steel doors separate the patio **(right)** from the kitchen and informal living area, as bamboo shards refract light and offer protection from the sun without blocking it out. The Robert Plumb outdoor furniture is from William Dangar & Associates.





they don't get much day-to-day use. "They're part of the history of the house," explains Louise. "I like them, too, just as I liked the 1940s bathroom upstairs." It also stands unchanged.

To soften the appearance, Luigi went for hard flooring with rugs, a concept the family was comfortable with after years spent living in Hong Kong, Singapore and London. Stylist Melissa Collison from Site Interior Design Studio was enlisted to source furnishings which worked with the expansive, mostly neutral interior spaces. "The aim was to inject colour," she says.

Louise adopted a hands-on approach throughout the redesign, and her taste migrated to warmer tones. "Louise loves orange," says Melissa. "The only blue in her life is in the view from her home and glimpses in two paintings. For the rugs we used shades of tangerine, hot pink, pumpkin and cream."

The family wanted to hold on to their old furniture pieces, collected during a lifetime of living overseas. "I like to keep old pieces," says Louise. "I like layering them and finding ways to update them." She isn't alone in that desire. "The pieces people have are the stories of their lives," says Melissa. "I would never want to sweep through and change all of that."

In the informal dining room, a solid timber table sourced in London stands alongside a sideboard picked up at the Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen flea market in Paris, above which hangs a contemporary artwork. The formal living area features a large Fortuny pendant lamp crowning the space above a Fiam 'Neutra' coffee table in clear, curved glass, with antique Chinese portrait →

Warm orange tones are the order of the day in the entrance **[above left]**. A Maxalto 'Dormeuse' chaise from Space is matched with dyed emu leather-decorated cushions created by Melissa Collison especially for the room. A Thomas Pheasant for Baker Furniture 'Constellation' mirror from Cavit & Co can't help but turn the head of anyone who enters the formal dining room **(left)**. Antique-looking mirrored panels on the foyer's rear wall **[opposite page]** accentuate its dimensions. The chair is upholstered in Luigi Bevilacqua 'Velluto Tigre' silk/cotton/viscose velvet from Boyac, while the owners applied silver to the chandelier when they moved in, to update it... and decided to leave it there!





paintings on the walls and an exquisite custom-made wool and silk rug on the floor. "A rug is an investment piece," explains Melissa. "Something to work furniture pieces around for years."

This philosophy of juxtaposition injects bursts of energy into each of the large rooms. However, sourcing suitably sized artwork to fill the walls is still very much a work in progress. "Everything just disappears in these huge spaces," sighs Louise.

Despite the vast scale, ecologically sound design principles are found in whichever direction you look. "This is a rambling place, but it has the advantage of thick walls and good cross-ventilation," says Luigi Roselli. "It is a house which never gets too hot."

The interior spaces are also almost free of air conditioning, while underfloor heating warms the home from the ground up when the days shorten and the weather turns cold. Outside, rainwater tanks service a garden created by landscape designer William Dangar and top up the swimming pool.

After a few summer days on the patio in direct sunlight, it was decided the outdoor terrace had to be screened. "It took ages to arrive at the bamboo screen design," says Louise. "I wanted the light to be dappled, like under a tree, not totally blocked."

The family lived with no solution until the right screen was found, but that was never a problem. After all, it's exactly how Louise likes her home redecorations. Layered, over time. ❖

An original cedar door opens to the master bedroom **(above left)**. "We used hundreds of metres of fabric for the curtains," says Melissa Collison. The New Clematis rug is from Robyn Cosgrove Rugs and "adds to the romantic and ethereal mood", says Robyn. Leading from here is a sizeable ensuite **(left)**, for which architect Luigi Roselli suggested the distinctive tiled flooring. "I love his eye for detail," says Louise. In the background, a small balcony was built where floor-to-ceiling sash windows once stood. Louise and Warwick are delighted with their sumptuous bedroom **(opposite page)**. Fortuny cushions from Ascraft + Decortex provide the finishing touch to Osborne & Little 'Edo' wallpaper and 'Silk Linen Strie' fabric by Hodsoll McKenzie for Zimmer + Rohde on the bedhead, both from Mokum. Genuine impact is also supplied by mirrored bedside lamps and tables purchased at In-Ex Living in Melbourne.





New Clematis Tibetan wool and pure silk rugs in (left) Nutmeg and (right) Sea Mist, from \$7500 for a 250cm x 300cm rug, from Robyn Cosgrove Rugs, (02) 9328 7692, [www.robyncosgroverugs.com.au](http://www.robyncosgroverugs.com.au).

## TIBETAN ART

INTERIOR DESIGNER MELISSA COLLISON PROVIDED ROBYN COSGROVE RUGS WITH AROUND 30 FABRIC SWATCHES FROM WHICH TO DRAW COLOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE HAND-KNOTTED RUGS USED THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE. "THE BRIEF WAS TO USE ALL THE COLOURS IN THE FABRICS MELISSA USED, AS THEY WERE ALL BEAUTIFUL - RICH AND JEWEL-LIKE," SAYS ROBYN. THE RESULT IS COLOURFUL WITHOUT BEING GARISH. THE GEOMETRIC COMPLEXITY ALSO OFFERS A COUNTERPOINT TO THE TRADITIONAL FEATURES OF THE HOME, SUCH AS DEEP SKIRTING BOARDS, FIREPLACES AND CEILING MOULDINGS.

### *wall flower*

The main bedroom (bottom) is comparatively subdued with its muted tones, from the floral floor rug to silky bedclothes. The wallpaper, while featuring a strong pattern, conforms and adds interest without being overbearing.

(Below) Osborne & Little 'Edo' wallpaper in (from left) 5226/08, 5226/03 and 5226/04 from the Sakura collection, POA, from Mokum, 1300 667 390, [www.mokumtextiles.com](http://www.mokumtextiles.com).

WORDS AND SOURCING BY DAVID HARRISON, MAIN PHOTOGRAPHS

# IN DETAIL

IDEAS FROM THE POINT PIPER HOME

**REFLECTED GLORY** With its double-height reception area, grand staircase and panelled walls and doors, the Point Piper home can comfortably take large-scale furniture such as antique mirrors and mirrored furniture, which accentuates the scale even further. For custom-made mirrors, call Mirror Resilvering Service on (02) 9624 4848 or visit [www.mirrorresilvering.com.au](http://www.mirrorresilvering.com.au). (Below, from left) Beverly Hills high side table, \$1475, from Coco Republic, (02) 9647 1577, [www.cocorepublic.com.au](http://www.cocorepublic.com.au). Coco Seaton mirrored side table, \$770, from Orson & Blake, (02) 8399 2525, [www.orsonandblake.com.au](http://www.orsonandblake.com.au).

### SOFT FOCUS

The Fortuny-style lights in the lounge are made from opalescent silk with Italian glass beads and silk tassels. This Chrysalis scone, \$1740, is designed for mounting from a wall bracket. Call D'Cota on (02) 9328 0255 or visit [www.dcota.net](http://www.dcota.net).

Studio Italia 'Grace' polished metal table light with silk shade, \$220, from Mondo Luce, (02) 9690 2667, [www.mondoluce.com](http://www.mondoluce.com).

