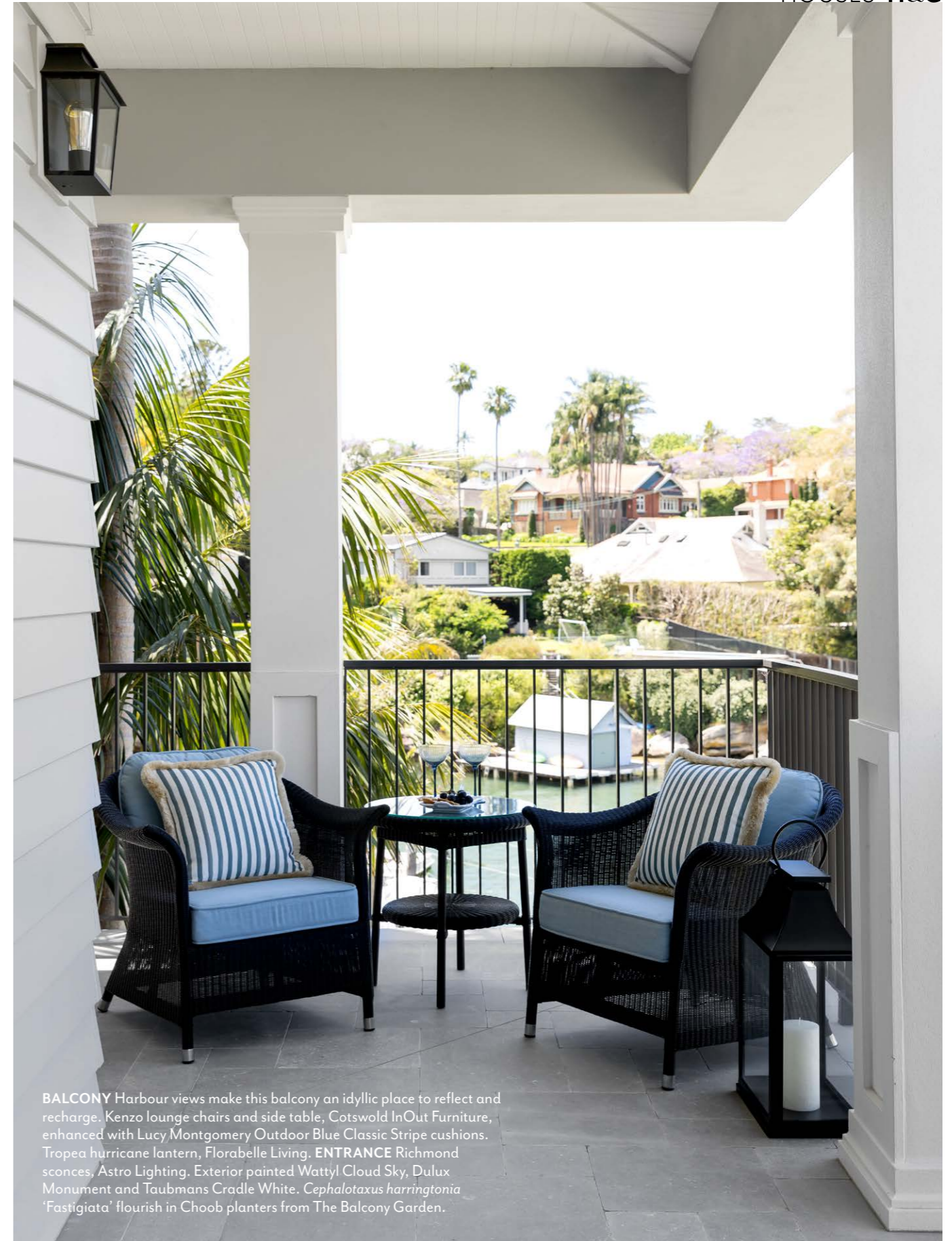




A CLEAN *slate*

After almost three years of building, these owners couldn't be happier with the fresh new family home that hits their brief in every way.

STORY *Hanna Marton* | STYLING *Jacinta Woods & Sonia Warner* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Simon Whitbread*



BALCONY Harbour views make this balcony an idyllic place to reflect and recharge. Kenzo lounge chairs and side table, Cotswold InOut Furniture, enhanced with Lucy Montgomery Outdoor Blue Classic Stripe cushions. Tropea hurricane lantern, Florabelle Living. **ENTRANCE** Richmond sconces, Astro Lighting. Exterior painted Wattle Cloud Sky, Dulux Monument and Taubmans Cradle White. *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* 'Fastigiata' flourish in Choob planters from The Balcony Garden.



Some renovators will give their interior designer carte blanche to inject whimsy and drama into their home, while others need a little nudge out of their comfort zone. The owners of this home on Sydney's Lower North Shore definitely fall into the latter camp.

After raising a big family, the couple simply wanted a practical home with a timeless Hamptons-style aesthetic in which to entertain their grown children and grandchildren. "They didn't want anything too loud or overwhelming," says interior designer Jacinta Woods, co-director of Woods & Warner. Fixtures and finishes had to be durable and high-quality. And the house needed to be easy to clean. So, when Jacinta was engaged in 2018 to refine the details - the architectural plans and DA were already in place - she had some gentle negotiating to do.

When the new owners bought it, the modest, two-level brick house had been in the same family for half a century and updated haphazardly over the years. However, location is everything and this fixer-upper, built on a slope, was so close to Sydney Harbour you could almost cast a line from the porch.

"The original house was dated and needed refurbishment," says builder Michael Serhal, director of Intacon Australia. "But the view over the bay was stunning." The layout and interiors just didn't live up to the dress-circle milieu.

Before it could be transformed into an elegant but easy to care for nest, builder Michael had significant work to do. During demolition, he discovered the original slab wasn't structurally sound. Rebuilding the lower-ground level involved excavation, new piers, constructing retaining walls and pouring a fresh slab, which took seven ▶

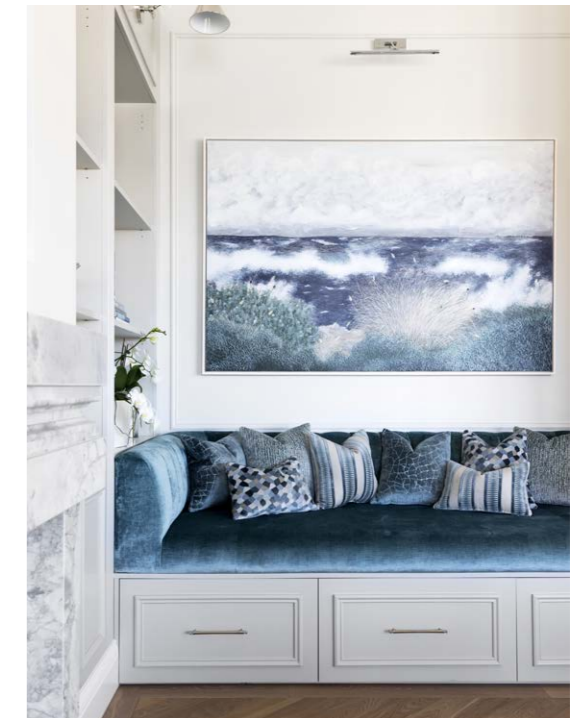
KITCHEN Above and opposite Grand and timeless, the kitchen features coffered ceilings and joinery with Fedwood custom beading, painted Taubmans Flint Smoke, all painstakingly crafted by Intacon Australia. Cooking beneath the E.F. Chapman 'Boston Library' wall lights and Ralph Lauren 'Hendricks' pendant lights from Laura Kincade is a special experience. Benchtop, Smartstone Carrara in Super White. Stove, Asko. Schock Typos sink, Abey. Door hardware, Mother of Pearl & Sons Trading. Fendi herringbone oak floorboards, Havwoods International. Collette B bar stools, Casa Mia. Solana centrepiece bowl, West Elm.



THIS IS THE LIFE

With four adult children, their partners and several grandchildren, the owners delight in their home bustling during gatherings and celebrations. "They are very family-orientated and hospitable people," says Jacinta. "That's why the extendable table downstairs can seat 24!" Grandkids often 'camp out' in the downstairs family room instead of sleeping in guest rooms.

LIVING Fireplace in Super White marble, WK Marble. Montana coffee table, Casa Mia. Collette sofa and Pauline armchair, Arthur G. Hourglass side table, Casa Mia. On side table: photo frame, West Elm and Electric Dream vase, Greg Natale. Regis nickel floor lamp, James Said. *Sunday Beach* artwork by Felicia Aroney (left), Harvey Galleries. Bridget swivel chair, Arthur G, and Fredo side table, James Said (both right). Custom rug by Woods & Warner, Designer Rugs. E.F. Chapman 'Boston Library' wall lights. On shelf: *Sandstone Terraces*, *The Rocks* artwork by David Sayer, Art2Muse Gallery. TV, Samsung. Walls painted Taubmans Grey Matter. *Opposite* Custom day bed by Woods & Warner in Elliott Clarke Brussels fabric, Jade Upholstery. Cushions in Elliott Clarke fabrics, Kravet. *One Small Edge* artwork by April Lockwood, Bluethumb. Goya 760 LED wall light in Polished Chrome, Astro Lighting.



months. Poor site access, concrete cancer in the existing balconies and pandemic-oriented delays pushed the build time out to almost three years.

It was worth it. The pièce de résistance, this lower-ground entertaining space, features a family room, stately but relaxed dining space, bar and kitchenette – replete with oven, bar fridge, sink and mini dishwasher. A wrap-around barbecue and alfresco area flow onto amphitheatre-style steps and an easy-care garden. On the ground level, an entry foyer leads to two bedrooms, both with ensuites, a powder room, kitchen/living/dining and verandah. A second storey was added to accommodate a generous main bedroom, walk-in wardrobe, ensuite and foyer.

“The light in the original house was compromised, so the selections needed to be light and airy and bright,” says Jacinta. This is obvious the moment you step through the front entrance on the street level, revealing that statement-making hall with an airy void, grand staircase and marble-inlay floor by Teranova. It’s so ‘Nancy Meyers’, you almost expect Diane Keaton to float down the stairs at any moment.

Introducing colour and pattern required kid gloves. The owners approved of blue, so shades of tranquil cerulean abound, from oceanic accents in the formal living room to the sapphire-toned dining chairs by H+J Furniture. Banquette seating in the living room has been upholstered in Elliott Clarke ‘Brussels’ fluted velvet in Wedgewood.

Tessellated floor tiles from Olde English Tiles in the laundry also made the cut. “We fought really ▶



“We’re obsessed with all the wainscoting detail... That craftsmanship is perfection; there’s not a millimetre that’s out.” JACINTA WOODS, INTERIOR DESIGNER

hard for that one,” recalls Jacinta. “The laundry tiles required personality. It’s still a classic technique; we’ve simply adjusted the colours to make them current and relevant.”

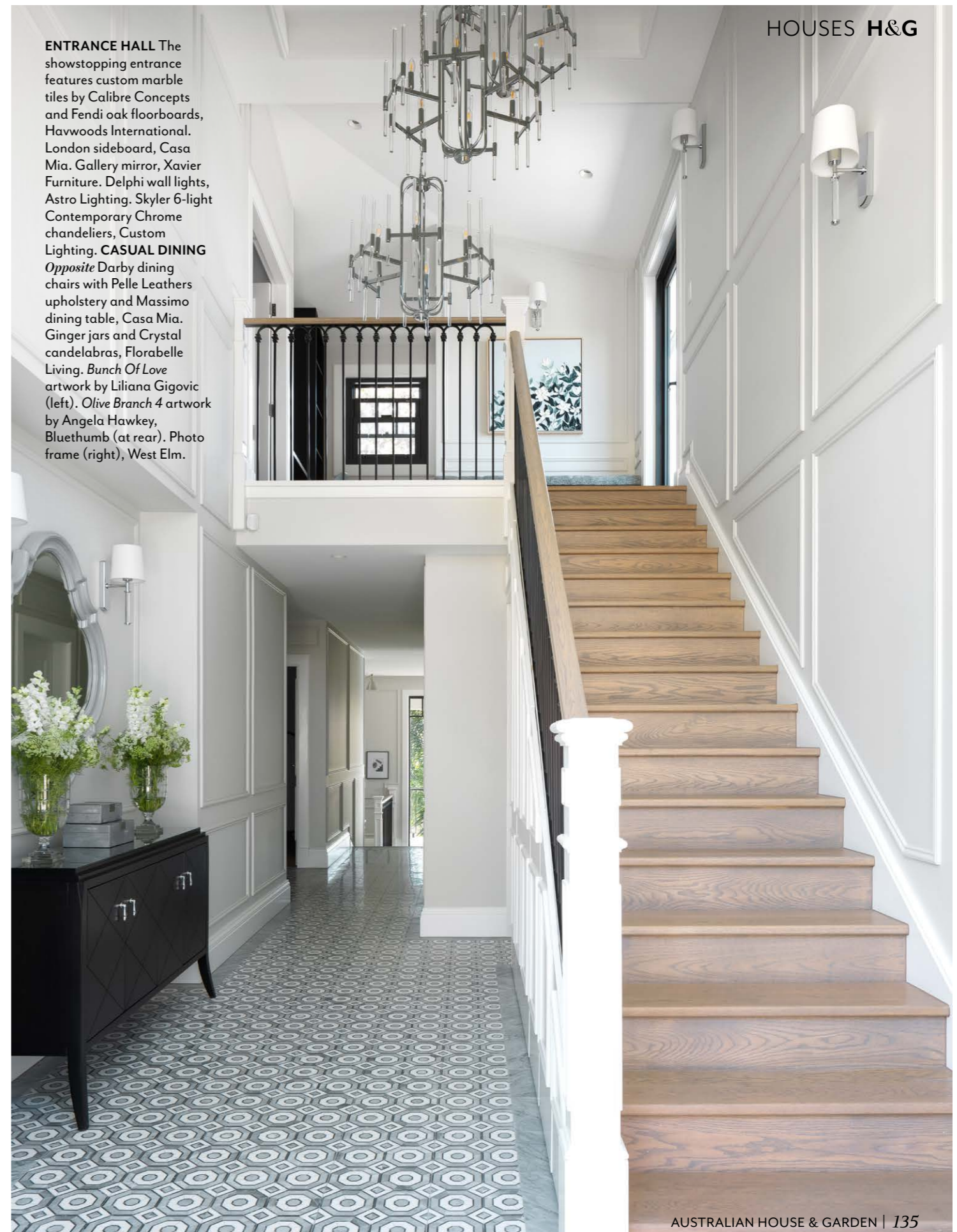
Meanwhile, the guest bedroom, featuring a bold upholstered bedhead in a botanical Lelièvre ‘Maquis Agave’ fabric is now one of the owner’s favourite spaces. “We see it as quite subtle; however, the homeowners initially felt it was intense,” says Jacinta.

In line with the ‘low-maintenance’ brief, user-friendly Smartstone Carrara benchtops grace the kitchen and bathrooms, but are made luxe with a lamb’s-tongue edge. “It surprised us how beautiful the application looked,” says Jacinta. “A number of clients have since asked us what marble we used!” Super White marble passed the pub test for the fireplace surround, since it won’t need frequent cleaning. Ample storage was a must; there’s a place for everything hidden discreetly behind meticulous joinery.

“We’re obsessed with all the wainscoting detail, and the coffered ceiling in the kitchen and entertaining areas. That craftsmanship is perfection; there’s not a millimetre that’s out,” Jacinta remarks. “It’s fine for us to draw up in 2D how we want our wainscoting to be, but Michael had to plan out every single box and rectangle. When you’ve got a great, passionate builder on board, the design intent gets reflected and executed in the most appropriate manner. It’s easy for a builder to go, ‘Oh, that’s too hard.’”

Since they got the keys back in April 2022, the owners don’t know themselves. “The owner still wanders around the house saying she can’t believe it’s actually hers,” says Jacinta. Sometimes a little nudge goes a long way.

▶ *Woods & Warner, Naremburn, NSW; woodsandwarner.com.au. Intacon Australia, Sydney, NSW; michael@intacon.com.au or intaconaustralia.com.au.*



ENTRANCE HALL The showstopping entrance features custom marble tiles by Calibre Concepts and Fendi oak floorboards, Havwoods International. London sideboard, Casa Mia. Gallery mirror, Xavier Furniture. Delphi wall lights, Astro Lighting. Skyler 6-light Contemporary Chrome chandeliers, Custom Lighting. **CASUAL DINING** *Opposite* Darby dining chairs with Pelle Leathers upholstery and Massimo dining table, Casa Mia. Ginger jars and Crystal candelabras, Florabelle Living. *Bunch Of Love* artwork by Liliana Gigovic (left). *Olive Branch 4* artwork by Angela Hawkey, Bluethumb (at rear). Photo frame (right), West Elm.

THE PALETTE

Dulux Western Myall
(kitchen joinery)

Taubmans Going Grey
(main and guest bedrooms)

Taubmans Cradle White
(exterior)



MAIN BEDROOM *Top left* Chifley headboard, H+J Furniture. New York side table, Casa Mia. Thomas O'Brien 'Hudson Swing Arm' wall light, The Montauk Lighting Co. 1977 Crystal Smoke vase, Greg Natale. Custom quilt cover and pillowcase, BQ Design. **POWDER ROOM** *Top right* Super White marble vanity. Eleganza tapware, Abey. Versailles wall light, Astro Lighting. **LANDING** *Bottom left* Custom seat, Jade Upholstery. *Garden Magnolias 10* artwork by Angela Hawkey. **BEDROOM** *Bottom right* *Country Garden* artwork by Angela Hawkey. **GUEST BEDROOM** *Opposite* Helix headboard in Lelièvre 'Maquis Agave' from South Pacific Fabrics, H+J Furniture. ▶

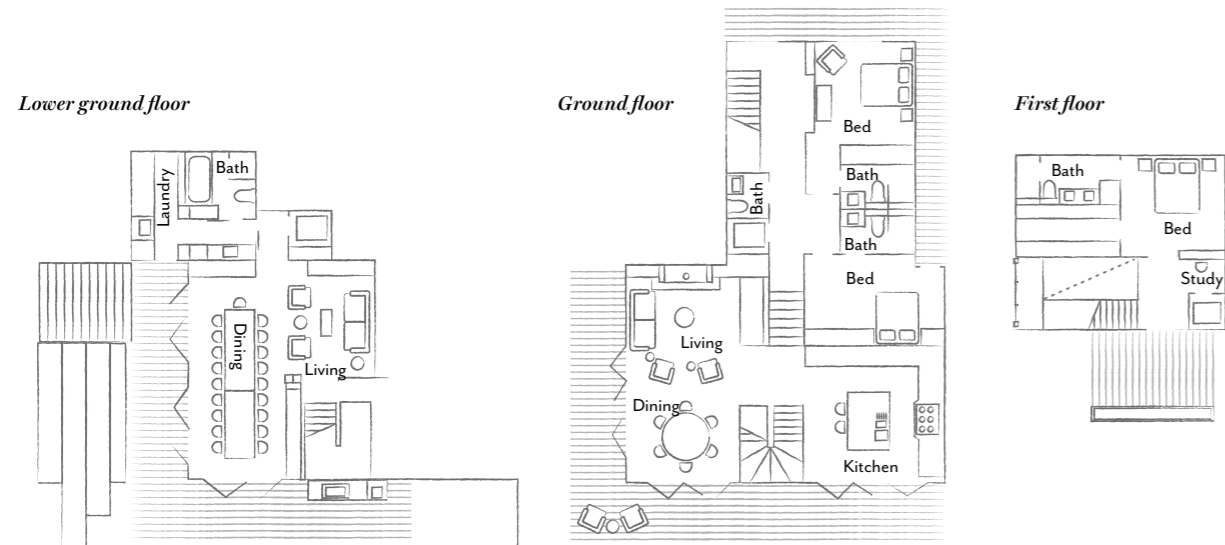
Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.





KITCHENETTE *Above left* A self-contained kitchen and bar in the lower-ground entertaining zone means no traipsing between levels to serve family and friends at the oversized dining table. Talostone benchtop and splashback in Super White. Joinery painted in Dulux Western Myall. Hardware Mother of Pearl & Sons Trading. Aerin Clarkson wall sconce, Bloomingdales Lighting. Caffè dining chairs, H+J Furniture. Tablecloth, Mona Pedestal bowl and Rubens Fawn Jar, all L&M Home. **LAUNDRY** *Above right* Custom floor tiles, Olde English Tiles. Benchtop, Smartstone Carrara. Wenge-stained American oak drawers. Roma wall light, Astro Lighting. Bernini Large Fawn Pedestal vessel, L&M Home. Eleganza tapware, Abey. Splashback features Devon Super White Gloss tiles stacked vertically, Earp Bros. Joinery painted Dulux Gnu Tan.

THE LAYOUT



THE SOURCE

Oceanic accents needn't feel clichéd with this tasteful selection of light and airy elements.

Produced by Saffron Sylvester.

1 Lehriya marble bowl, \$275, Florabelle. **2** Liebherr 80-bottle Vinidor wine cabinet, \$12,311, Winning Appliances. **3** Wash & Wear Low Sheen paint in Natural White, \$91.90/4L, Dulux. **4** Gio Gold White teapot, \$399, Wedgwood. **5** Camden viscose rug (240x300cm), \$5950, Designer Rugs. **6** Fletcher marble coffee tables, \$8280/set of 2, James Said. **7** Hendricks pendant light in Polished Nickel by Ralph Lauren, \$3490 (large), Laura Kincade. **8** Vera fringe cushion with Beige trim (50x50cm), \$50, Living by Design. **9** Kent 3-seater sofa, POA, Xavier Furniture. **10** Astor dining chair, \$349, Domayne. *For Where to Buy, see page 192. H&G*