

MODERN HISTORY

Life is now a breeze for a family of five in this calm coastal home with nature-inspired interior finishes and playful art at every turn.

STORY *Hanna Marton* | STYLING *Jack Milenkovic/Atelier Lab* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Pablo Veiga*



KITCHEN/LIVING Custom ceiling boards designed by Michael Cumming Architect. 'Focus P' spotlight, Gineico. DGA 'In&Out' lights, Est Lighting. &Tradition 'Betty TK8' stools, Cult. 'Penny' vase, Martyn Thompson Studio. De Padova 'Silvia' chair, Boffi Studio. Tacchini 'Victoria' sofa, Stylecraft. 'Remnant' side table, Marlo Lyda. Oak floors, Woodcut. **EXTERIOR** Cladding, James Hardie. Barrimah sandstone cladding, Eco Outdoor.



LIVING Bifold pocket doors finished in microcement conceal a TV above the Escea fireplace. Linen curtains, Fybre Furnishing. Tacchini 'Victoria' sofa, and Artemide 'Callimaco' floor lamp, both Stylecraft. 'Remnant' side table, Marlo Lyda. E15 'Backenzahn' oak stool, and BD Barcelona 'Explorer 1 Table', both Living Edge. De Padova 'Ishi' coffee table and 'Silvia' chair, both Boffi Studio. Custom bench seat in Tigger Hall Design fabric, O'Hehir & Sons Upholstery. 'Panama' rug in Papyrus, Armadillo. *On coffee table, from left Ripple Effect* by Bettina Willner, Saint Cloche. 'Penny' vase and plate, Martyn Thompson Studio. Timber bowl, Secondi. *On joinery, from left Melting Pot No.1* by Annie Mangen. *Cell theory #3* artwork by Daniel O'Toole, Saint Cloche. *Light Gesture (Large)*, 2021 by Ivana Taylor Design, Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert. *Somewhere Between Now 9* by Trent Whitehead, and *Untitled*, 2019 by Kat Shapiro Wood, both Chalk House. Mirror, bowl and candle holder, Secondi.

When architect Michael Cumming's clients first encountered this idyllic block in a coastal Sydney suburb, it sported a speck of a dilapidated cottage. "But from the front door, you could see out to banana trees and into a lush, green gully," recalls one of the owners. "It's a special location." Easy access to the beach was a bonus. However, with two bedrooms, one bathroom and one living space, the circa 1910 brick house wasn't practical for a young family of five. The only solution was to raze the site. The owners coveted a characterful beach house that felt like it had always been there – like the existing sandstone and weatherboard homes in the area – not a stark knock-down rebuild. ▶





Having met Michael through friends, the owners gelled with the architect instantly – despite his more contemporary bent. “Initially the owners talked about a very traditional, very white beach house,” says Michael. “The trick was to add extra layers, curves and subtle colour so it wasn’t too ‘expected’.”

“Michael respected our wishes but also pushed the design to a more modern place that we were super comfortable with,” adds one of the owners. “He made the house exceptional.”

Accommodating the owners’ wish list – four bedrooms, two living spaces, a pool and a garage – would prove a challenge, given the 400sqm block size. Michael deftly designed a tri-level home with an entrance foyer, study, bedroom, mud room, bathroom, kitchen/living/dining and a deck on the ground floor. On the lower ground level, a family room, powder room and laundry link to the pool and terrace. Gracing the second floor are two

bedrooms, a bathroom and a parents’ retreat with inspiring ocean views.

There was another hitch: the orientation. The living spaces at the rear needed to capitalise on views of the gully and open onto the backyard and pool. “The problem was... that’s directly south.” Since south-facing homes don’t capture much sunlight and warmth, especially in winter, Michael and his team – which included Edward Birch, Nic Glass and Alpha Kwan – conceived a curvy central staircase and, above the kitchen, a lofty light-filled void. These draw more sunlight into the centre and southern-oriented entertaining spaces, while letting hot air escape in summer and breezes to waft down.

Michael’s team handled the interiors as well, so the architectural elements and design details are seamless. “We don’t think of architecture and interiors as separate things,” he explains. Nature-inspired colours and forms, plus a hint of playfulness, make it an effortlessly chic, ▶

KITCHEN Joinery in American oak, by Improva Joinery, adds warmth to the kitchen. Benchtop and splashback in Brescia marble, World Stone. Brodware tapware in Weathered Brass, and sink, both Candana. Oven, Fisher & Paykel. Large ‘Penny’ vase, Martyn Thompson Studio. Artwork on bench by Ella Dunn, Saint Cloche. Custom bench seat by Michael Cumming Architect in Tigger Hall Design fabric, O’Hehir & Sons. &Tradition ‘Betty TK8’ bar stools, Cult. **DINING** *Opposite Magnanimous Serendipity* artwork on wall by Zoe Young. Inoda + Sveje ‘DC09’ dining chairs, Great Dane. Custom ‘Tumby’ dining table, Mr and Mrs White.



“Michael respected our wishes but also pushed the design to a more modern place. He made the house exceptional.” OWNER

THE PALETTE

Dulux Snowy Mountains Half
(external walls)

Porter's Paints Irish Linen

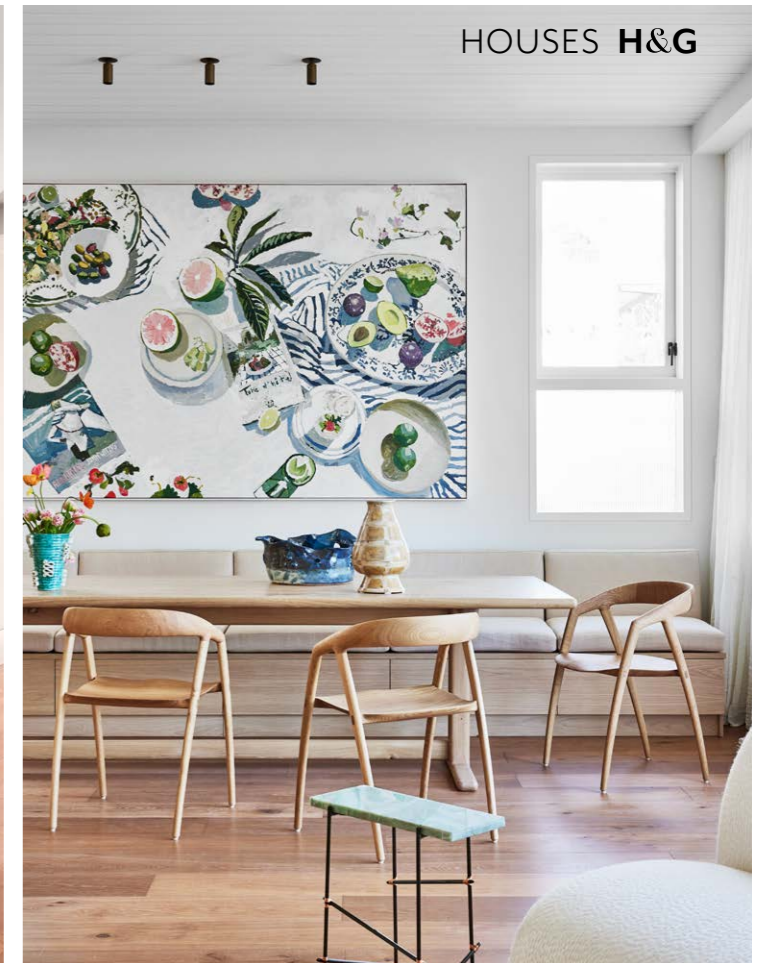
Dulux Lexicon Half

welcoming home. "The interiors are not matchy-matchy, but consistent," says the owner. "Everyone walks into the house and goes, 'Oh my God, it's so calm. It's the warmth of the floorboards. It's the green. I don't even know what it is.'"

While a lengthy DA process, Covid and record rainfalls delayed the build (handled graciously by AJP Constructions), the owners are besotted with the results. They've vowed to never move out of their new-but-old-looking abode.

"This house is beautifully designed," says one of the owners. "It's made our lives a lot easier. We have space, storage and a swimming pool... this is the first time as adults we've had a garage. Any parent would love a garage!"

► *Michael Cumming Architect: michaelcummingarchitect.com.au. AJP Constructions: Sydney, NSW, ajpconstructions.com.au. Formed Gardens: Brookvale, NSW, formedgardens.com.au.*



KITCHEN Joinery in American oak, Improva Joinery. Brescia marble, World Stone. Large 'Penny' vase, Martyn Thompson Studio. Artwork on bench by Ella Dunn, Saint Cloche. Oven, Fisher & Paykel. Brodware tapware, and sink, both Candana. 'Luna' rattan lamp, Dunlin. **STAIR** The sculptural steel-fabricated stair channels light and air through the home. *White Extract, 2011* by Donna Marcus, Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert. Totem, Martyn Thompson Studio. **DINING** *Magnanimous Serendipity* artwork by Zoe Young. 'Tumby' table, Mr and Mrs White. Inoda + Sveje 'DC09' chairs, Great Dane. DGA 'In&Out' lights, Est Lighting. 'Remnant' side table, Marlo Lyda. *On table* Vase, Secondi. Vessel by Katie Manekshaw, Saint Cloche. Yellow 'Penny' vase, Martyn Thompson Studio. **FAMILY ROOM** 'Thursday' sofa, Jardan. Rattan armchairs, Portofino. De La Espada 'Kim' bench and 'Laurel' side table, and accessories, all Spence & Lyda. *Um, 2022* on shelf by Kristin Burgham, Michael Reid Clay. 'Chromatic Rose' rug, Halcyon Lake.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



THIS IS THE LIFE

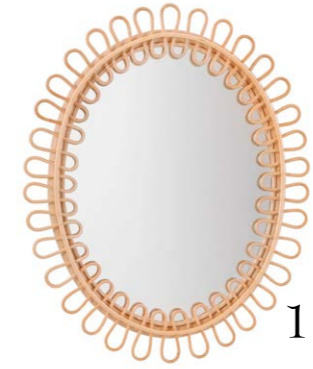
The owners love entertaining their large extended family at the Mr and Mrs White dining table. The vibrant painting by Archibald Prize finalist Zoe Young informed the palette for the dining, kitchen and living space – including the marble-topped island. "It has many of the blues and greens that feature in the painting," says Michael. "It looks like a wave crashing and sea foam."



MAIN BEDROOM *This page and opposite, below left* Linen curtains, Fybre Furnishing. Vintage Artifort armchair, Vampt Vintage Design. *Just Started Walking* artwork by Claudia Bagnall, Saint Cloche. 'Roy' wall light, Viabizzuno. Bronze pot by Nicolette Johnson Ceramics. Side tables and Missoni throw, all Spence & Lyda. Bed linen, Cultiver. 'Samurai' carpet, Bremworth. **ENSUITE** *Opposite, above and below right* Vanity by Granite Marble Works made with Arabescato Vagli marble from Worldstone. Brodware tapware in Weathered Brass, Candana. Limestone wall tiles, Onsite Supply & Design. Vases on vanity and in the shower, and De La Espada 'Carlo' side table, all Spence & Lyda. Through doorway, Tacchini 'Costela' chair, Stylecraft. Toogood 'Cobble' side table, District.



FAMILY ROOM The family loves to watch sport in this playful room, which opens onto a poolside terrace. On the ceiling over the ground-floor balcony, operable shades protect from the harsh summer sun. E15 'Backenzahn' oak stool, Living Edge. 'Thursday' sofa, Jordan. Armchairs, Portofino. Rug, Halcyon Lake. Artwork by Zoe Young. **GARDEN** 'Linton' pavers, Eco Outdoor. Pool built by Senator Pools.



THE SOURCE

Classics with loads of character and charm pair with pops of colour and quirky shapes for a stylish coastal theme.



Produced by Andrea Healy.

1 'Luella' mirror, \$560, Finnish Design Shop. 2 'Elysian' gooseneck shower rail set in Brushed Copper, \$799, ABI Interiors. 3 'Faro Sky' tablecloth, \$185, L&M Home. 4 &Tradition 'Betty TK8' bar stool, \$1150, Cult. 5 Artemide 'Callimaco' floor lamp, \$3590, Stylecraft. 6 Melting Pot No. 1 artwork by Annie Mangen, \$1500, Sainte Cloche. 7 'Thursday' modular three-seater sofa, from \$7454, Jordan. 8 Linen pillowcase in Chambray, \$89, Sage+Clare. 9 Sika Design 'Fox' lounge chair, from \$1125, Domo. 10 'Atrium Polo' rug, \$279, Life Interiors. H&G