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Lessons in

COLOUR

WITH ARENT & PYKE

INSIDE *Belinda Fox's* ARTISTIC WORLD

RENAISSANCE WOMAN

HEIDI MIDDLETON SHARES HER FAVOURITE FINDS AND MUSINGS

These pages The street-facing facade of the harbourside home juxtaposes a period cottage with a new carport capped with a zinc roof and dormer window that echoes the arch of the Harbour Bridge.



Volume control

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Stretched ceiling heights and huge glass windows make a powerful design statement in this multi-level masterpiece.

The street-facing facade of this Sydney home is interesting but not overly remarkable – a period cottage juxtaposed with a new carport that's capped with a zinc roof and eyelid-shaped dormer window echoing the arch of Sydney Harbour Bridge. "When I first saw the property, the exterior was nothing to write home about," says the architect, Bronwyn Litera of Litera Design. The rear, however, told a different story.

Bronwyn didn't want her clients' guests to sidle in between cars to get to the front door, so she devised a suspended steel gantry down the side of the house that offers an intriguing flash of the bay and gun-barrel views of the bridge. But it's from the back that the house really lays bare its mind-blowing outlook. "It has killer views," she says.

Though shielded by two side walls and roof rafters, everything behind the existing cottage has been rebuilt. The dramatic structure spills down three levels and across a rock face to the water, each descent offering spectacular vistas. Given the site constraints and demanding challenge to maximise ceiling heights on every floor, the masterful feat of engineering took five years. "There was very little room for error. What we're left with is a result that feels generous, even though the arithmetic behind it was extraordinarily tight," says Bronwyn. "We refused to punctuate the view with columns, so everything became incredibly precise, with the ceilings and floors hard up against the steel." The lower-level excavation was particularly complex. "Some preliminary work had been done, but we went considerably deeper... it was trickier than anticipated," she says of the area carved out for a wine cellar, lift shaft and stairs.

Designed for a mature couple, the house needed to have private accommodation for guests and a future-proof floor plan with a lift, as well as considered details like a seamless connection from the garage to the butler's pantry so groceries could be transported with minimal effort. "The brief was very detailed and the clients knew exactly how to articulate it," recalls Bronwyn of their functional requirements and aesthetic preferences. "They wanted to feel like they were aboard a luxury vessel and have a nautical sensibility running through the house, with curved glass and ceiling transitions plus softened corners. That dissolved any sense of enclosure, so the views seem more infinite, bringing a fluidity that makes the place."

The home is planned around a ribboned spiral staircase scooped out from the internal core. Twisting through the triple-height void, the malleable-looking steel balustrade is wedged between a series of treads in White Fantasy dolomite. While expressive, it was also a practical design decision. "Each floor plate is modest and a spiral occupies the least footprint of any stair configuration," the designer explains. "We wanted to trace that drum from top to bottom, to give the vertical journey its own architectural identity."

Entry to the house is via the second storey (on street level) and the front door opens to a large open-plan space where the dining, living and kitchen areas unfold onto a generous balcony. The colour palette is soft – a creamy haze settling over the hard finishes with gentle interruptions of green Esmeraldo quartzite on the kitchen island and Astor metal finishes with real gold on the splashback. "The owners are very private people, which drove a lot of the space planning," says Bronwyn. "If they're hosting or a guest comes to stay, it can all be done on this level because there's no need to go anywhere else."

Upstairs is dedicated solely to two suites, both with bathrooms and one with an added walk-in wardrobe. Crowning the house is the attic, an area favoured for mahjong at an irregular Dylan Farrell pedestal table made from chunks of timber offset with brass plates, on 'Botolo' chairs by Arflex. "There's a great little vibe up there," says Bronwyn. Meanwhile, on the ground floor is a gym with space for tai chi, a rumpus room for karaoke, a kitchenette for snacks, and easy access to the pool. With enough storage for 1000 bottles of wine and display for magnums and oversized Jeroboams, the cellar is best described by Bronwyn herself: "To put it simply, it's pretty epic down there." *litera.design; kinn.com.au; sdastructures.com.au*

Opposite page "The clients wanted to feel like they were on a luxury cruise, as if they were sitting on the water, not just next to it," says Bronwyn Litera of the brief. 'Lily' sofa by Fanuli. Pink 'Ondine' armchair by Jorge Zalszupin from Mama Casa. Baxter 'Liquid' side table and Acerbis 'Lokum' side table, both from Space. Black oval glass coffee table, clients' own. Rug from The Rug Est. Wall and ceiling paint throughout this level is Porter's Paints Irish Linen.









Opposite page The home is planned around a ribboned spiral staircase scooped out from the internal core that twists through a triple-height void. Super White marble from Granite & Marble Works.

This page Soft and reserved, the colour palette of the living space is creamy with green Esmeraldo stone on the kitchen island and Astor metal with gold on the splashback. Eneer 'Cumulus' veneer from Elton Group. Handles from Halliday + Baillie. Tapware by Vola. Cooktop by Wolf. Vibia 'Flamingo 1540' pendant lights by Antoni Arola from Euroluce. Sheer curtains by Simple Studio. Azucena 'Catilina' chairs from Space. Pot from Great Dane. Vintage bowl from 506070. 'Bud' vase by Szilvassy. 'Eclipse M' wooden bowl by Michael Verheyden from Ondene. B&B Italia 'Cordoba' outdoor armchair from Space.



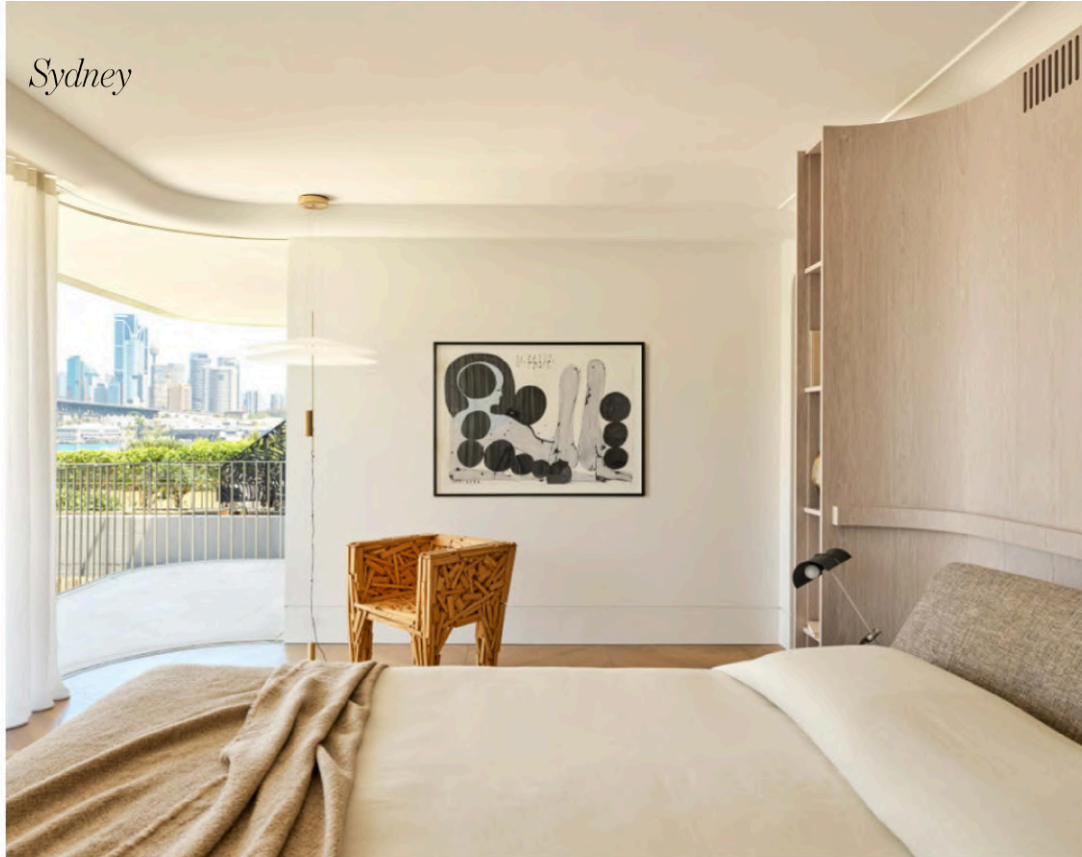
SPEED READ

» While this harbourside house in Sydney wasn't heritage listed, the period facade was retained by Litera Design out of respect for the street and to avoid the challenges they would likely encounter applying for building approvals. » Side access was created with a suspended steel gantry that provides gun-barrel views of the Harbour Bridge. » The owners' desire to have a home like a luxury liner on the water drove its curved edges and glass corners. » Excavating the site allowed the house to drop down three storeys to a ground-floor pool. » At the top of the structure, an empty roof cavity was made into an attic with an arched dormer window.

This page Adjacent to the side entrance is a statement pendant light by Lindsey Adelman. Baxter 'Lagos' dining table from Space. 'Kazuki' chair and 'Locus Solus' chair from 506070. Bowl, stylist's own. Table lamp attributed to Romeo Rega from The Vault Sydney. Large artwork by Aly Bennett and round dish by Katie Manekshaw, both from Saint Cloche. Small artworks by André Piguet, and Mark Maurangi Carrol from Nasha Gallery. Ceramic bowl by Szilvassy. Opposite page (from top) The attic is a favourite spot for the owners to host games of mahjong. Pedestal table by Dylan Farrell. Arflex 'Botolo' chairs from Space. Stilux 'Domingo' lamp from 506070. // On the lower level is a casual living area with a Kartell 'Aaland' sofa and armchair from Space.







This page A curved corner rounds off the main bedroom. Artwork by Heather B Swann from Station Gallery. Edra 'Favela' armchair from Space. Fratelli Martini 'Picchio' lamp by Mauro Martini from 506070. Society Limonta bedding from Ondene. Naturals Sumek rug by Cadrys. Wardrobe joinery in E veneer 'Silver Birdseye' and 'Cumulus' timber veneer from Elton Group. Esmeraldo quartzite from Granite & Marble Works. Vase by Terunobu Hirata from Craft Victoria. **Opposite page** The dramatic structure spills down three levels and across a rockface to the water, each descent offering spectacular vistas. "There was very little room for error, and what you are left with is a result that feels generous, even though the arithmetic behind it was extraordinarily tight," says designer Bronwyn. Outdoor furniture, clients' own.





SIGNATURE STYLE KEY PIECES



1 Champalimaud 'Lomme' chandelier in Soft Brass with Clear Glass, \$5090, The Montauk Lighting Co. 2 'Lu Lu' swivel armchair, POA, Fanuli.
3 Baxter 'Tia' chair, POA, Space. 4 Kartell 'Shanghai' vase, \$465, Space. 5 Viccarbe 'Common' low table, POA, Space.