

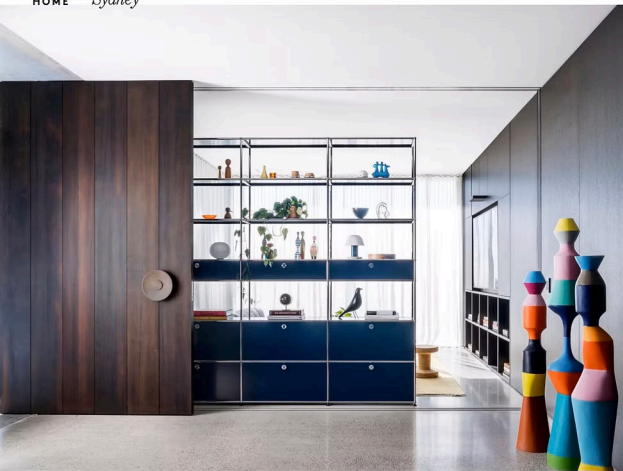
# Stepping up

Words JUDY PASCOE Photography JUSTIN ALEXANDER



Terraced back on its *sloping site* this Sydney eastern suburbs house *makes the most of the ocean outlook* with a simple, quietly luxurious design.

*These pages* The rumpus room on the first level of the home opens to a lawned terrace and the pool via sliding pocket doors providing the ideal indoor/outdoor connection. B&B Italia 'Tuffy-Time 15' sofa from Spase. Vitra 'Clark Family' stools. 'Querschnitts' coffee table in Walnut and low table, both from Living Edge on an Armadillo 'Agra' rug in Byzantine. USM shelving unit in Steel Blue from Anibou. On the shelves, Vitra 'James House Bird', 'Wooden Dolls' and 'Desk Clock' from Living Edge. Totems by Stephen Ormandy from Olsen Gallery. Curtains by Simple Studio. Joinery in smoked oak. A guest bedroom is behind the timber batted screen. A crepe myrtle lends its shade to the entrance.



Facing a steeply sloping site that promised a spectacular ocean view in Sydney's eastern suburbs, architect Matthew Krusin, principal of Tobias Partners, knew that a terraced design was the answer.

"We had a challenge – we knew how many levels we needed to go up and we didn't want to create a straight-up monster," says Matthew. However, it's one thing to terrace down but very different to terrace up. "We had to ensure that as you ascend the site each level is an experience. Otherwise you just feel you are constantly walking up."

The single-storey house that occupied the site squandered its dress-circle ocean views. Having lived in the neighbourhood for some time the owners wanted to be close to the beach for their two young children and were excited by the possibilities of the block. They needed space but also wanted a simple design where all the levels of the house felt connected.

The family and the architect began discussions on the rebuild in 2013. "We worked slowly and took our time with the design, looking at the different conditions," says Matthew. "It was a nice collaborative process and we wanted to be sure everyone was happy with how we were using the site. We wanted to create a beautiful finished product but we didn't want to overcapitalise."

The resulting house steps back up the slope from a sandstone-encased underground garage and timber-battened foundations at street level. A series of concrete frames form the structure that rises more than 13 metres from the road with a "delicate hat" sitting at the top. The lift and stair are set off to one side to allow the full width of the fairly slender site to be utilised.

Volumes are modest but the design manages to pack in five bedrooms, three and a half bathrooms, living, dining, rumpus and various outdoor terraces. To ensure plenty of natural light enters the house a massive skylight was specified for above the stair, which is concrete on the first levels giving way to open-tread timber leading to the bedrooms. Gardens designed by Sticks & Stones on each floor create a connection with the outdoors that adds to the sense of openness. Yet, privacy is foremost with timber screens, external louvers, frosted glass and judicious planting creating the feeling of a sanctuary.

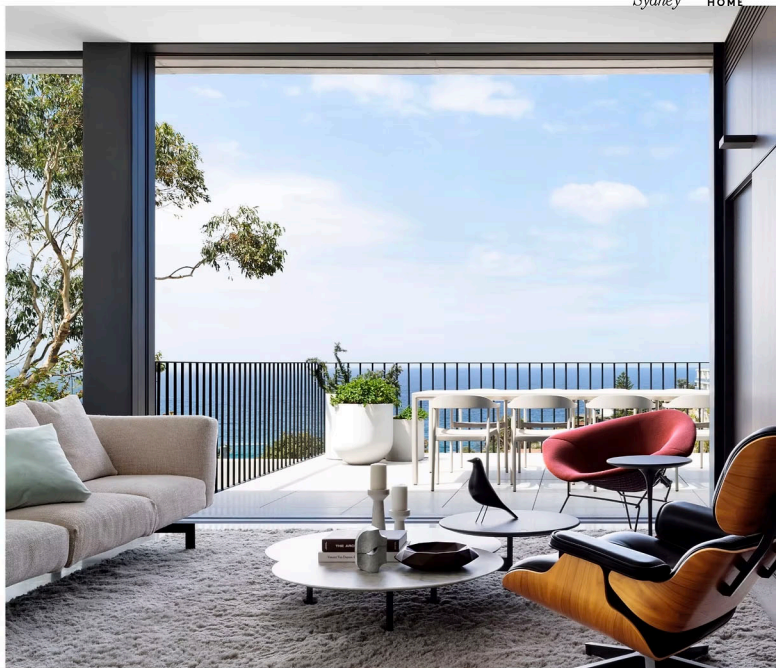
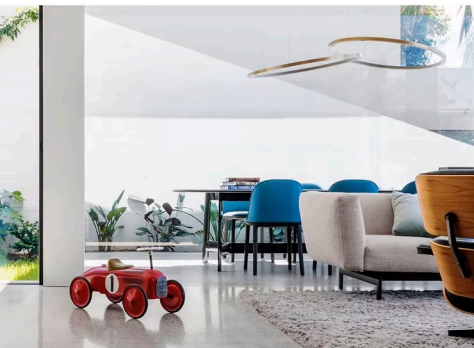
While the focus is firmly on the ocean view, glamorous features such as the showstopping 5.4-metre-long kitchen island bench in Verde Tinos marble draw the eye, while the light fixtures such as the Viabizzuno 'G2 Anelli' suspension lamps over the dining table and the Gubi 'Multi-Lite' pendant lights in the master robe are dramatic punctuation points in the interior narrative. »

This page The kitchen opens to the side garden allowing a connection with the outdoors and admitting abundant natural light. Smoked oak joinery. Benchtop in Verde Tinos marble from Euro Marble. Gebrüder Thonet Vienna 'Single Curve' stools from Space. When Objects Work 'HH' bowl from Hub. Artwork is Waaloomaalea Nights by Shaun Gladwell. Sculpture is Figure with Red Crown by Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran. Polished concrete floor. Opposite page The heavy front door is in stained cedar with a custom brass handle by Tobias Partners. USM shelving unit from Anibou holds Vitra 'Eames House Bird', 'Wooden Dots' and 'Desk Clock' from Living Edge. Totem artworks by Stephen Ormandy from Olsen Gallery. Smoked oak joinery.





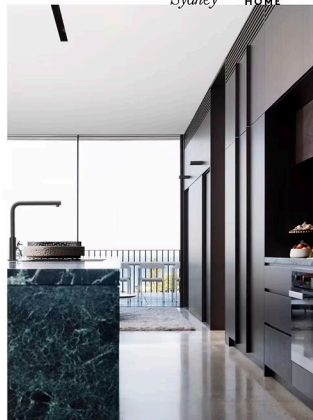
"THE CLIENTS WERE SO EXCITED DURING THE BUILD WHEN THEY REALISED HOW GOOD THE VIEW WAS GOING TO BE FROM EVERY LEVEL."



This page The living area enjoys panoramic views over the beach. Knoll 'Avis' sofa and 'Diamond' armchair, 'Saarinen Tulip' side table, 'Grasshopper' coffee tables, and Minotti 'Wisp' rug and bowl, all from De De Ce. Herman Miller 'Eames' lounge chair from Living Edge. Digital Organic Mineral V71 table sculpture in white marble by Stephen Ormrod from Olsen Gallery. Tribu 'Ilum' outdoor setting from Cosh Living. Opewelle pugs. Free top Tribu 'Ilum' outdoor table and chairs from Cosh Living. On the table is a custom oil container. The dining area has a B&B Italia 'Alix' table from Space and Vitra 'Softshell' dining chairs from Living Edge. Viabizzuno 'CZ Anelli' suspension lamps. Knoll 'Avis' sofa and Minotti 'Wisp' rug, both from De De Ce. Herman Miller 'Eames' lounge chair from Living Edge.



These pages, from left: The 5.4-metre-long island bench is clad in glamorous Verde Tinos marble from Euro Marble. Smoked oak joinery, Gebrüder Thonet Vienna 'Single Curve' stools from Space. When Objects Work 'HiH' bowl from Hub. On the back bench, Zanot 'Nero' bowls and When Objects Work pottery bowls from Hub. Custom oil container. Polished concrete floor.



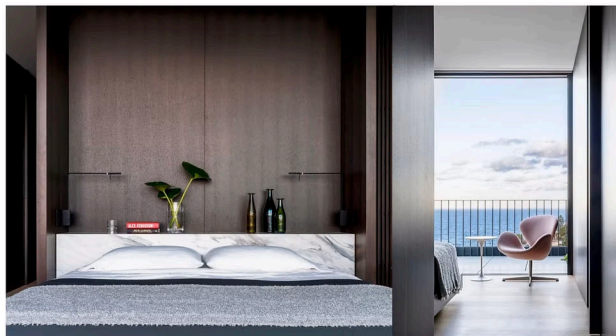
« Powerful artworks provide punch just where it's needed but do not overwhelm. The entry, accessed through a heavy cedar door with a custom brass handle, is a gallery-like space where colourful totem artworks by Stephen Ormandy make a strong statement against the dark veneer walls and concrete floor. "This space is formal enough to be a really grand entry," says Matthew, but with sliding pocket doors that open it up to the rumpus room and pool it never feels precious.

The mood of the home is definitely relaxed, and shoes off is a policy, not just a description. Matthew calls it "quiet", with the aura of restrained luxury coming from the consistent materials palette of concrete, smoked oak timber and stippled render, as well as the selection of style-savvy furniture pieces such as USM shelving units, Knoll tables and B&B Italia seating. "There's a luxurious feel to the finish but it's not showy," he says. Repetition also helps to reinforce the understated mood – the smoked oak joinery throughout, the Calacatta marble in each bathroom, even the crepe myrtles at the entrance and in the garden off the living room all lend a pleasing harmony.

While the location says beach house this is a much more sophisticated interpretation of the genre. The clients, delighted with the outcome, say it feels "very mature", reports Matthew.

It's a hardwearing yet elegant home that will sit comfortably on the site for a long time to come, and the spectacular outlook is the icing on the cake. "The clients were so excited during the build when they realised how good the view was going to be from every level," he says. ■

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#### SPEED READ

» The owners of this house in Sydney's eastern suburbs engaged architect Matthew Krusin, principal of Tobias Partners, to realise their dream of a stylish yet simple family home that maximised the ocean outlook. » With a steeply sloping site to consider, Matthew's design terraces the house back from the road so each of the levels is connected but the appearance of a monolithic structure is avoided. » A consistent materials palette of concrete, smoked oak and stippled render provides a hard-wearing yet elegant backdrop for punchy artworks, stellar light fittings and injections of luxe marble. » Gardens on each level and a vast skylight ensure the house receives plenty of natural light and feels connected to the outdoors.



This page, from top The house is stepped back up the sloping site allowing an easy connection between levels. External retractable louvers provide privacy for the master bedroom on the top floor. Looking down to the pool, Tribù 'Ilum' outdoor setting from Cosh Living and butterfly chairs from Angelucci 20th Century. Pots are planted with herbs. Opposite page, clockface from top left The master bed has a bedhead in Calacatta marble from Euro Marble. Viabizzuno 'Royal Parete' reading lights. Society Limonta throw and bed linen from Ondene. Fritz Hansen 'Swan' chair from Cult. Knoll 'Saarinen Tulip' side table from De De Ce. The ensuite has a Kaldewei bath from Sydney Tap and Bathroomware. Vanity and floor tiles in Calacatta marble from Euro Marble. Apparatus 'Trapez' wall lights from Criteris. Herman Miller 'Eames Walnut' stool from Living Edge. The powder room has a Calacatta marble vanity from Euro Marble with Vola tapware. Custom mirror designed by Tobias Partners. Viabizzuno 'Royal Parete' wall light.

