

HOME *Sydney*

SUNNY DISPOSITION

Achieving a sense of grandeur while also delivering a functional family home was a gratifying outcome for the designer and owners of this Sydney beachside property.

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These pages in the sitting area, defined by an 'Abrash Solid' rug in Mist from Cadrys, a Living Divani 'NeoWall' sofa and Cassina 'Utrecht 637' armchair, both from Space, sit around a Foggia 'Big Sur' coffee table, &Tradition 'Little Petra VBI' armchair, 'Lato LNP' marble side table and Karakter steel side table, all from Cult. Marble tray by Greg Natale from Conley & Co. Next to the Escea DS Series gas fireplace, vessels by Greg Natale, Kati Watson and Humble Matter sit on the concrete plinth. The dining area nestles into one wall of the living pavilion with an &Tradition 'In Between' oak table and chairs from Cult with a banquette by Penman Brown covered in Pelle Leathers 'Panorama' leather in Moth. Vitra 'Akari' light from Space. A McLean Edwards hangs above the banquette. Ceramics on table by Kati Watson from Utopia Art Sydney and Damon Moon, with sculpture by Kristina Hoataja from Curatorial+Co. In the formal living room beyond are a 'Sunny' sofa from Jordan and a Tim Summerton artwork.



It's not often that an interior designer is able to fully explore the parameters of her own skill set but for Megan Brown, principal of Penman Brown, that opportunity recently presented itself to her. Faced with a dated California bungalow that was to be reconfigured for a young family of five, the designer also acted in the role of architect and landscaper. "It was an amazing experience," she says. "And while it was not without a degree of stress, it has certainly pushed me to another level."


The position, within flat walking – or cycling – distance of one of Sydney's northern beaches, was a winner. The house, not so much, but Megan could definitely see the potential in the block. "Although the back of the house faces south it was very private and did have this dramatic rock escarpment and stand of palm trees. I could see that we could harness that beautiful outlook to create something special."

That something special came in the form of a spectacular living pavilion that she designed to link with the original bungalow while also maintaining a separate identity. With a 5.5-metre high, cathedral-like mansard ceiling, views of blue sky, the treetops and the escarpment are captured through giant skylights in the roof. Though the space housing the living/dining area, kitchen and laundry – and a study in a curved central pod – measures only eight by 10 metres it feels so much bigger thanks to the restrained and consistent palette of materials, the intelligent placement of furniture and the wide thoroughfares.

"There is a wonderful sense of relaxation and serenity in this space," says Megan. "I wanted to create a sense of grandeur but I also put so much time into designing the floor plan for functionality, so it is a really easy house to live in."

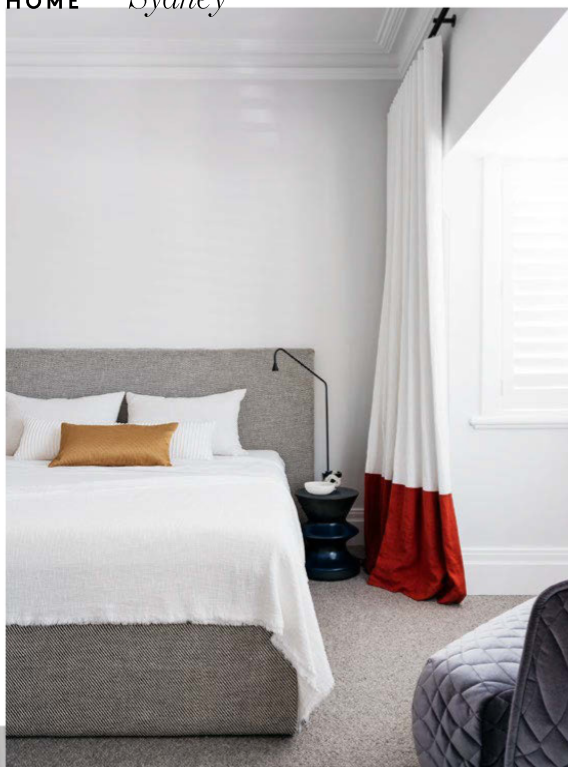
The main entrance is now to the side of the house along a decked path, planted with tall palms and fragrant with flowering star jasmine, straight into the pavilion. Here, a modular Living Divani 'NeoWall' sofa is positioned to enjoy the views of the pool and the lush outdoors, while the &Tradition smoked oak dining table nestles into a custom leather banquette designed by Penman Brown along the wall. »





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This page In the formal living room on a Baldwin & Bagnall rug from Nodi are an &Tradition 'Catch' chair from Great Dane, B&B Italia 'Colosseo' side table from Space and Folia 'Poppy' ottoman. Pietro Russo Design 'Apollo' pendant light from Criteria. 'Precision' wall sconce by Kelly Wearstler. Edra 'Gina' chair from Space. Custom cabinet by Penman Brown. Artwork by Ari Athans. Opposite page, from top In the hall, a Louis Poulsen 'PH5' light from Cult hangs above a Nunzio Miano artwork from Curatorial+Co. 'Zeus' side table from Cult. Ceramic sculpture by Gidon Bing. The kitchen island bench is clad in Cote d'Azur marble from CDK Stone with &Tradition 'Pavilion' stools from Cult. Fisher & Paykel integrated fridge and freezer in custom ribbed joinery. Apparatus 'Dyad' wall sconce from Criteria. Artwork by Laura Ellenberger from .M Contemporary. Sculpture by Carol Crawford from Becker Minty and a vase by Rina Menardi from Ondene sit to the right of the sink. The ceramics collection also includes pieces by Kati Watson and Brett Stone from Utopia Art Sydney, Anya Pesce from .M Contemporary and Humble Matter from Curatorial+Co.



« One of Megan's favourite features in the pavilion is the lack of a television – although the family uses a projector and the wall above the fireplace serves as a two-metre wide screen. “From a design perspective, it contributes significantly to the feel of the space. You don't realise how restful it is not to have the focus on a big television screen.”

The latest technology has been used to best advantage in the house. In addition to the Sony Short-Throw projector and Sonos surround sound system, in the kitchen there are Schweigen exhaust fans that operate silently, retractable doors with Hafele hinges on the butler's pantry and discreet Zetr light switches throughout which are beautiful elements as well as being state of the art, all underlining the home's streamlined look.

Abundant natural light washes into the house not just from the skylights – which are fitted with coated high-performance glass – but also enhanced by the Venetian marmorino waxed plaster finish on the kitchen splashback, the bulkhead and around the walls. “When there is so much white in the house this stops it from feeling like a rigid white box,” says Megan.

However, not everything is white. An interplay between light and dark occurs throughout, and while the original bungalow is rendered and painted white, the pavilion is clad in a dark-stained Victorian ash. All inside walls are white, with texture and interest coming from the Venetian polished plaster and the subtle repetition of linear patterns, whether in the meticulously detailed joinery, the VJ panelling, the ribbed C&C Milano linen cushions in the master bedroom, or the fluted glass window in the family bathroom.

While Megan was painstaking in the creation of the pavilion, the rest of the house was just as well considered. Some of the traditional features were retained, such as the original fireplace and the decorative ceiling in the formal living room, though she changed the architraves and skirtings as she felt the existing ones were “too fussy”. “I was very conscious of retaining what is of value – and I certainly didn't want to knock down a double brick house – but I wanted to create a feeling of simple elegance, and replacing some of the old-fashioned fussy elements helped to maintain the serenity that exists in the pavilion.”

When it came to furnishings the neutral backdrop allowed for some selective injections of colour, so the modular sofa is in a punchy teal, the Edra ‘Gina’ chair in the formal living room in the original part of the house pops in bright blue, and the master bedroom curtains are colour blocked in cream and rust. “It was very much about texture and pattern, and elements of colour could come and go,” she says.

The final flourish was the landscaping and Megan put herself forward for that job as well. The palms at the back of the house are replicated along the side entrance and create the vibe of a tropical resort, while the standout plantings are the giant tree aloes beside the pool that blend in well with the succulents and existing greenery.

While in many ways this is the quintessential beach house, it is so much more, offering elegance and refinement alongside the undeniable relaxed vibe. “For me the success of it is how you feel in the space,” says Megan. 174

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SPEED READ

- » Megan Brown of Penman Brown reconfigured an original California bungalow in a beachside suburb in Sydney's north for a young family of five.
- » With a dramatic rock escarpment on its back boundary, Megan made the most of the block by designing a tall pavilion adjoining the original house, with skylights to the north and south to admit abundant natural light and treetop views.
- » The pavilion has living, dining, kitchen and laundry areas and a study concealed in a central pod; it leads to the pool and outdoor living area.
- » Consistency of materials and subtle repetition of linear patterns unify the old and new parts of the house and, while the palette is predominantly white, there are pops of colour in the furniture, artwork and accessories.
- » Terrazzo flooring and beeswax-polished plaster walls provide subtle texture.



This page The new entrance is along the side of the house on a decked path planted with palm trees and star jasmine. Rakumba 'Standley' wall light from Design Nation. Exterior is clad in SculptForm Burnt Ash in Sorrento Wide. Opposite page, from top Bedroom curtains are in Dominique Kieffer 'Grande Largeur' in Blanc with trim in 'Lin Leger' in Pompei from South Pacific Fabrics. Custom bed by Penman Brown in Dedar 'Paletot' fabric in Silver from South Pacific Fabrics with Society bedding from Ondene. 'Zeus' occasional table by Prospero Rasulo from Cult with 'Austere' table lamp from Great Dane and Moroso 'Redondo' chair from Hub, all on a Ken Sparks Carpets 'Sherpa Doma' carpet from Prestige Carpets. The ensuite is tiled in 'S Tones Quartz' from Di Lorenzo and Moroccan zellige wall tiles in Sea Mist from Barefoot Living. Vanity in Calacatta Gioia with custom mirror in smoked oak. Artwork (reflected) is *Alteration History 111* by Emma Avery from Curatorial+Co. Brodware 'Yokato' tapware in Statue Bronze. Omvivo 'Latis' freestanding oval bath from Bathroom Collective. Articolo 'Slab' wall sconce. On vanity, sculpture by Thomas Bucich from Becker Minty.