

POOL PARTY

This harbourside home on Sydney's lower North Shore was designed to create an indoor-outdoor setting that's perfect for entertaining.



Photographs ANSON SMART Words CHRIS PEARSON Styling STEVE CORDONY



Clean and crisp, this home might be Modernist in its inspiration, but brimming with sunshine and energy, it thinks way beyond the minimalist box. Its architect Shaun Lockyer labels his take “subtropical Modernism” and, with foliage seductively cascading from the roof, and light-soaked, airy, yet intimate spaces seamlessly blending inside and out, there’s nothing chilly and unwelcoming here.

The owners had been living in the same street on Sydney’s lower North Shore when they saw this property for sale. It was then occupied by a 1980s home, which failed to optimise the sloping site with its dress-circle harbour views. They hired architect Shaun Lockyer and interior designer Justine Hugh-Jones, both of whom they had worked with on previous projects, to design a brand-new three-level house that would blend with its setting, creating a seamless indoor-outdoor connection and offering year-round outdoor living.

“I love the modern Brazilian look of glass, steel, stone and rich woods, the inside-outside concept, with sliding doors that disappear and incredible gardens that look like part of the room,” says the owner. “I wanted a modern family house, sophisticated, but down to earth and liveable, and also for entertaining and dinner parties – super-glamorous at night, casual by day near the pool.”

Drawing inspiration from the work of Brazilian Marcio Kogan, other South American architects and some from South Africa, Shaun has designed a home with walls of glass and dramatic cantilevers, in timber, stone and concrete. On one side is a courtyard, created by excavating down into the site, so the garden on that side connects uninterrupted through walls of glass to the living areas and then to the pool and harbour beyond. As a result, the house appears transparent.

Deep cantilevers create all-weather outdoor living areas, while ensuring the home retains its green credentials. Shaun’s design not only celebrates the lush landscaping by William Dangar, but the cantilevers control sun, providing shade in summer and warming sunlight in winter, while the concrete construction provides thermal mass, storing heat or cool when necessary.



This page Roda ‘Spool’ outdoor furniture from Domo. Opposite page On the terrace, firepit and outdoor setting by Restoration Hardware. ‘Butterfly’ chairs from Les Interieurs.



This page: 'Artichoke' lights in the informal sitting area were a vintage find. Flexform 'Happy' leather armchairs from Fanuli. Gervasoni sofa from Anibou. Coffee table from Pure Interiors. Tuareg mat from Kulchi. Cushions from Seneca Textiles, and black and white cushion and throw from Spence & Lyda. Guaxs yellow vases from Conley & Co. White ceramic vase from Orient House. Artwork by Chris Cox. Opposite page, clockwise from top: In the informal eating area, 'Celestial Pebble' pendant light from Ochre. Upholstered bench in Fortuity 'Cama Isola' from Ascraft. Eero Saarinen table and executive chairs from De De Ce. Guaxs vase from Conley & Co. White ceramic bowl from Hub. Artwork by Richard Lewer. In the ground floor entertainment area, sofa by James Perse. Vase from Becker Minty. Artwork by Darren Sylvester. In the dining area, 'Cloud' chandelier from Apparatus Studio. Christian Liaigre dining table and Yelin chairs bought in London. Bowl from Ondene. Artwork by Frank Thiel.

Copious concrete is used both structurally and for the finishes. Board-form concrete softens the ceilings: "Concrete when smooth can be brutal and hard. With board-form, it takes on the form of timber grain. The brain sees it differently – it's a warm, beautifully textured material," says Shaun, who has also used slicker off-form concrete on the walls to create a counterpoint. But, lest the rooms become "a timber sandwich", says Justine, instead of wood, the floors feature terrazzo in its infinite variety of colour and pattern.

Throughout, rich textures and pops of colour add warmth and interest. "The living area is like a jewellery box, with the teal velvet sofas, the gold-leaf accessories and the rich, deep silk rug," Justine says. Sapphire blue chairs in the adjoining dining area heighten the effect. "The beautiful jewel-like colours are reflective against the raw concrete. The contrast gives it an energy; it may surprise when you expect to see a more minimalistic style, but I wanted impact."

The living room, adds Justine, "is a grand statement, but also very comfortable". While the Minotti furniture is elegant and glamorous, "at the end of the project, this animal appeared, the whimsical Baxter furry chair". That and other unpredictable, quirky touches ensure the house does not take itself too seriously. "The red door with its huge weathered brass handle is like a calling card – stylish, but fun and laid-back in its effect," she says. As is the camouflage fabric on the banquette, the citrus green dining chairs at the breakfast bar, and the turquoise-tiled spa on the ground floor. "I love the surprise of the colour against the silver travertine; it's another jewel space that says 'look at me!'" according to Justine.

By contrast – and she has used contrast to great effect throughout this home – the informal living area makes an earthier statement. In ochres, chocolates and terracottas, with brown leather chairs sitting on an ethnic rug under two massive vintage 'Artichoke' lights with an aged patina, it creates a cosy nook beneath soaring concrete ceilings.

The US-born owner is totally at home in this house with not only South American references, but a few North American ones, too. "It borrows on the US aesthetic of wide, flat houses with all the living spaces on one level and the bedrooms on another," she says. "It's a big house that doesn't feel that way. The rooms are intimate spaces, thanks to the use of texture and subtle divisions in the open plan."

The interplay between expansiveness and a human scale pervades. "My favourite aspect is the indoor-outdoor living," says the owner. "With all the doors wide open, there's no difference between inside and outside. All the outdoor spaces are covered, so you can sit there in comfort and watch it raining." 17

For more go to justinebughjones.com; lockyerarchitects.com.au; williamdangar.com.au.





"THE LIVING AREA IS LIKE A JEWELLERY BOX,
WITH THE TEAL VELVET SOFAS, THE GOLD-LEAF
ACCESSORIES AND THE RICH, DEEP SILK RUG."

These pages: Minotti 'Andersen' sofas and Tom Dixon 'Beat' floor lamp from De De Ce. Baxter 'Nepal' chair in blue from Criteria. Sculpture by Dario Goldaniga. Christian Liaigre dining table and Velin dining chairs from Christian Liaigre, London. 'Cloud' chandeliers from Apparatus Studio. Weplight 'Lora' pendant in kitchen from ECC Lighting + Furniture. Moooi 'Container' outdoor table and Accademia 'Vela' outdoor chairs from Space.



This page In the main bedroom, Minotti 'Aston' sofa and footstool from De De Ce. Double layered linen curtains, by Simple Studio, conceal wall-mounted TV. Society bedlinen and throw from Ondene. Vase from Space. Cushions on sofa from Seneca Textiles. Painting by Tim Summerton from Olsen Gallery. Opposite page, clockwise from top left In the main bathroom, Moda 'Lucia' freestanding bath from ACS Bathrooms. 'Pinch' tapware from Rogerseller. In the dressing room, 'Lumi' pendant from Articalo Lighting. Wardrobe doors papered in Phillip Jeffries seagrass wallpaper from The Textile Company. Vase from Conley & Co. Box from Becker Minty. In the steam room, green glazed Moroccan tiles from Onsite. Towel from LuMu Interiors. Flooring and bench seating in silver travertine from SNB Stone. Bedhead panels upholstered in Jim Thompson 'Isan' linen silk from Milgate.

SPEED READ

» The owners of this house on Sydney's lower North Shore were living in the same street when they saw this property for sale. It was then occupied by an 80s house which failed to optimise the sloping site with harbour views. » They commissioned architect Shaun Lockyer to design a three-level, five-bedroom house with a seamless indoor-outdoor connection, perfect for entertaining. » Drawing inspiration from Brazilian architect Marcio Kogan, Shaun created a 'subtropical Modernist' style with deep cantilevers and vast walls of glass ensuring outdoor areas can be enjoyed in all weather. » Interior designer Justine Hugh-Jones has filled the home with pops of colour and tactile materials, providing a light-hearted, whimsical touch.