



Ultramarine

The owners of this stunning home wanted a contemporary interior that was functional, while also reflecting the beautiful waterside surroundings Sydney does so well.

STORY GABRIELLE BAXTER PHOTOGRAPHY TYRONE BRANIGAN

AT HOME ON THE WATER





PREVIOUS PAGE: The patio opens from the family room and has louvres overhead to control the sun and shade as required.

ABOVE: The superbly streamlined kitchen has benchtops in CaesarStone with brushed stainless steel on the servery, and red Bisazza tiles as a splashback behind the rangehood.

OPPOSITE: The impressive hearth in the formal lounge area affords the luxury of a real open fire in winter, while the brush box floorboards meet the tiles at an angle so that the interior and outside flow seamlessly into one another.

“They were brilliant clients,” says Noela Coffey, the interior designer at Mageia Design in Sydney who worked on the place for almost a year. “They virtually said, ‘this is what we want – we’ve got three kids under 10, so it’s got to be practical, but it also has to suit the style of the house.’ Beyond that, they gave me free rein, which was really nice of them. And what was best of all,” she beams, “they loved what I did.”

WATER-FOCUSED

The four-bedroom house was built just over two years ago and as it’s near the water, this was one of its major features. “The architect designed it to ‘wrap around’ the pool and put the focus on that, and also the river beyond,” Noela goes on, and this was more than enough to give it the eye-catching style of a floating pavilion. “That’s also why it’s got a rather nautical air to it,” she says, “with the portholes looking out to the pool from the study enhancing it. Then I designed the staircase in stainless steel, and the cabling in the balustrade makes it even more boat-like. We actually won an award for the pool – from Bisazza, the tile company,” she adds.

Most of Noela’s jobs take about a year, and she says she can be running six or seven at a time. “People often don’t understand the difference between the terms ‘designer’ and ‘decorator,’” she declares – and explains obligingly that “designers are entirely responsible for all the internal elements, which includes kitchens, bathrooms, doors, furniture, pictures – everything from the ceilings to the electrical layout and floor plans. So all I get is the shell of the building and I take it from there, in consultation with







"THE NATURAL BRUSH BOX FLOORING THROUGHOUT
CREATES WARMTH"





PREVIOUS PAGE: The more formal of the two dining areas located off the kitchen demonstrates the emphasis on entertaining and enjoying the company of family and friends.

ABOVE: The main bathroom is suitably clean-lined and functional, in keeping with the overall design.

RIGHT: The master bedroom decor is muted and uncluttered, to give it an air of serenity and calm.

the client. A decorator, on the other hand, comes in towards the end of the project, paints it and furnishes it, and provides the finishing touches.”

CAPTURING THE ESSENCE

When approaching the design process, Noela describes how, rather than create a total theme, she prefers to capture the essence or flavour of the style required and adapt it to suit the environment – and the clients. The owners’ brief in this case was to create a contemporary interior that encompassed the idyllic surroundings, and their main criterion was a practical home that worked with the open-plan layout to accommodate their young family. As the family is Italian, entertaining is a given with plenty of relatives and friends dropping by.

The basic structure is concrete and the lower level has garage space, the study and the home theatre.

Then, in the family living area on the middle level, there’s not just one, but two, dining rooms off the central kitchen, both quite formal – and each different. “The kitchen has a stainless-steel











ABOVE: The architectural brief was for the house to 'wrap around' the pool, and the portholes enhance its boat-like aspect.
BELOW: This modern family home was designed to give the impression of a pavilion floating on the water that almost surrounds it.



rangehood over the cooktop with a splashback in red Bisazza glass mosaic tiles behind it," Noela relates, "and the cabinets are in New Age Veneers for that clean-lined timber look. The natural brush box flooring throughout creates warmth as well as a feeling of spaciousness. The benchtops are CaesarStone 'marine' and the servery area is also stainless steel – which is probably the only thing the lady of the house will hate me for," – she laughs – "just because of fingerprints and having to clean them!"

The family room has full-height windows on two adjacent sides – one leading out to the outdoor dining area – and a bar at the other end. "That's where the coffee machine is," Noela smiles. "The owner loves his coffee machine! And the fireplace in the formal lounge is real," she adds. "He was very specific about that too." All the furniture and fixtures were designed by Noela to suit the style of the home, and she then had them custom-made. The ceilings enhance the 'floating pavilion' effect with the use of shadow lines throughout, with the lighting designed in a grid formation.

BEFORE ITS TIME

Although the house was completed a few years ago, Noela regards it as considerably ahead of its time decor-wise. "It's all in greys and reds," she says, "and they're the big colours now." Overall, she's delighted with the result. "I feel the project has achieved a contemporary theme with clean lines and a minimalist look, while also evoking the essence of the surrounding water."

Scene-stealer

Stylish but practical, warm and welcoming but ultra-modern – this happy family's dream home strikes the perfect balance, thanks to interior designer Noela Coffey.



The red Bisazza glass splashback gives the home the bright, contemporary edge that the family wanted.

Noela brought the warm, clean lines of timber to the space with New Age Veneers on the cabinets.

Noela made sure to include plenty of comfortable seating to cater for the family's love of entertaining.



Square-edged, high-gloss surfaces are the hottest thing in kitchens right now. Noela perfected the look with these super-streamlined benches and the stainless-steel rangehood over the cooktop. Similar models are available from Miele.