

PROJECT

practice—Arent & Pyke | project—Rozelle penthouse |
location—Rozelle, Sydney, Australia | text—Gillian Serisier |
photography—Anson Smart



Rozelle Penthouse



Sumptuously elegant and of impeccable clarity, the interior for this double penthouse in Rozelle makes spectacular use of the abundance of light. *inside* co-editor Gillian Serisier discovers how it was achieved.

previous left—The curved form of the Baxter Bourgeois table (Criteria Collection) brings an elegant softness to the room. **previous right**—Reupholstered in Kvadrat Raf Simons fabric an existing love seat is given new life. **below**—Henry Wilson bespoke brass pull handles lend tactile luxe throughout. **opposite**—A Cloud 37 pendant anchors and defines this beautiful room

These two penthouse apartments designed by Turner Architects were purchased off the plan long before the owners intended to live there. Anticipating the way the apartments would eventually be realised, Arent & Pyke worked with the architect to reshape the pair as a single grand penthouse. During this process, structure and floor plan were addressed, but also elements such as appliance specs to ensure the electricals would be right for the way the apartment would eventually be used. Effectively, the apartment was required to exist as a completed entity with the SJB designed developer finishes in place for a full year before Arent & Pyke transformed the interiors to their current level of quality and beauty. Not a bad bit of foresight!

Designed for a client with an existing Arent & Pyke designed Heritage home in Haberfield, New South Wales, the penthouse was a significant departure from the old with everything intentionally contemporary. “We wanted to give them something with a strong personality that was incredibly comfortable and inviting - in part a contrast with the old home, it’s lighter and more contemporary,” says Sarah-Jane Pyke.

With the bones worked out in advance, the project was very much about creating the aesthetic and level of quality the client was accustomed to. “We gave it the consideration of a bespoke home from a developed home, bringing in the custom details and level of quality and finish they were used to in their old home,” says Pyke. With this in mind, the same joiner was engaged for this project, while key furniture pieces were reupholstered.

Driving the colour palette was a combination of client aesthetic and the super abundance of light that floods the apartment from all sides, as well as through huge skylights in the living room and master bedroom. “A pink curtain is not something you can get away with everywhere, but in this space it is just the softest and prettiest of colours. It still feels so light: it drinks it in and almost bleaches it out,” says Pyke of the light’s relationship with the long fine drapes (Simple Studio) that contain the space. This palest of pale pinks is picked up in the large geometric rug (Paul Smith, Split Bright, The Rug Company) that marries the blue, cream and pink of the room’s furniture beautifully (Utrecht single armchair, CULT and Minotti Seymour sofa, dedece and Classicon Pli table, Anibou).

Moreover, as Pyke points out, the rug brings a large swathe of colour into the room without dominating. As a major consideration for this client, it also allows art to be the final and most important layer of colour. “They have always had a lot of



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left—Monumental and defiantly sculptural, materiality, colour and form are robustly executed



colour and love it, so we were able to inject colour and art into the project and work with them on new art purchases,” says Pyke.

Tonal variations temper the room further, with the walls, for example, painted a soft stony grey (Palace Stone, Dulux), which only reads as colour toward the corners. The effect, however, is considerably cosy considering the large scale of the room. With no focus beyond its occupants being together and enjoying the view, the lounge is open and minimal with no shelving or television. Within this tableau the Cloud 37 feature light (Apparatus Studio, Criteria Collection) anchors the room without interfering with the view. Selected for its scale, aesthetic and physical presence, and ability to create a hub within the open plan, the design’s black linear element is also echoed in the black coffee table frames (Molteni Grado Tavolino, Hub).

Rugs are used well throughout – in particular the jewel-like Paul Smith rug (The Rug Company) in the entry foyer, which nicely contains and enriches this area. The burlled poplar cabinetry with smoky glass central detailing and custom Henry Wilson brass handles is arguably the hero of this area, but so too could the brass and marble table (Daniel Barbera, Catapult) or Melt Grey wall light (Articolo) be singled out for praise. It is, in fact, a delightful introduction to the home.

The brass handles are a beautiful repeated motif throughout the home. Arent and Pyke worked with Henry Wilson to create a bespoke solution, and the handles bring an essential warmth and tactility. “The handle was a way of bringing that level of hand-made detail into the project without having to embellish or frame the cabinetry,” says Pyke. Effectively, within a clean and simple design, the materials do the talking, as Genevieve Hromas, lead designer on the project, explains. “The brass handles lend uniformity, but at the same time bring in an artisan nature inherent to Henry’s process of casting.” Cast, tumbled and allowed both imperfection and patina, the handles are quintessentially Henry Wilson’s aesthetic and already ageing nicely.

The dining area is equally worthy of praise with a palette of warm caramel, chocolate and timber marrying perfectly with the pale pink drapes and lustrous silvery grey rug (Minotti, dedece). The Baxter Bourgeois table in walnut (Criteria Collection) provides a softened line within the room and works superbly with the clients’ chairs. The gorgeous

Circuit 7 pendant light (Apparatus Studio, Criteria Collection) adds further richness without clutter and succeeds in creating a stillness that contains the dining area without truncation flow, view or the overall sense of volume.

With no desire from the clients to eat at a counter, the monolithic block of inky grey marble (Pacific, STS Stone) is allowed a sculptural presence in the kitchen. His heavily veined with a green and white combination that makes the whole look fossilised; it was imperative that the natural stone used for the backbench and splashback be as beautiful, as figured, but significantly less dramatic (Calacatta, Artedomus). The cabinetry itself is in a super matt textured finish that allows no reflection, but rather, pushes the materiality of both the marble and Henry Wilson's handles.

The butler's pantry is another delightful moment or, as Pyke puts it, "A magical little pocket working very hard." With a dishwasher, Sub Zero wine fridge and additional sink it is indeed working hard. Its chief claim to fame, however, is its singular beauty. Clad in marble, glass and walnut, it is jewel-like, serene and a wonderful little intervention.

When Arent and Pyke say window treatments and cabinetry were upgraded, there is always a pause while a quick calculation of what that really means plays out. For the master suite, for example, the walk-in robe is now completely American oak-lined with solid brass rails, Henry Wilson's brass handles and back walls of a warm pink felt. "It makes the experience of getting dressed every morning like a special occasion. In apartments everything has to work hard, but feel effortless, thanks to the thinking that has gone into it," says Pyke. The bedroom itself is similarly cossetting with the soft pink drapes becoming nicely romantic when teamed with a Saarinen Womb chair (dedece) in pale pink and Lariat 2 cluster light (Apparatus Studio, Criteria Collection).

The balcony remains simple with Hay Palissade furniture (CULT) and plantings by Secret Garden. The choice of furniture makes a contemporary nod to the black framing of the windows, and the selection of plants softens the building line, while being rigorous enough for the exposed position.

There are myriad subtle and gorgeous elements throughout this project, which confirm Pyke's argument for the effortless thinking equation. Even the laundry is given its due with an Atelier Areti Ilios wall light (Mobilia) and solid brass rail for hanging wet coats and such. Nothing has been overlooked and everything feels natural and indeed effortless. An absolute triumph of design.



above—Walk-in robes feature oak cabinetry lined with pink felt and solid brass detailing, including Henry Wilson bespoke pull handles. **opposite**—A Knoll Womb chair (dedece) is paired with a lariat cluster in brass to create an elegant bedroom tableau

