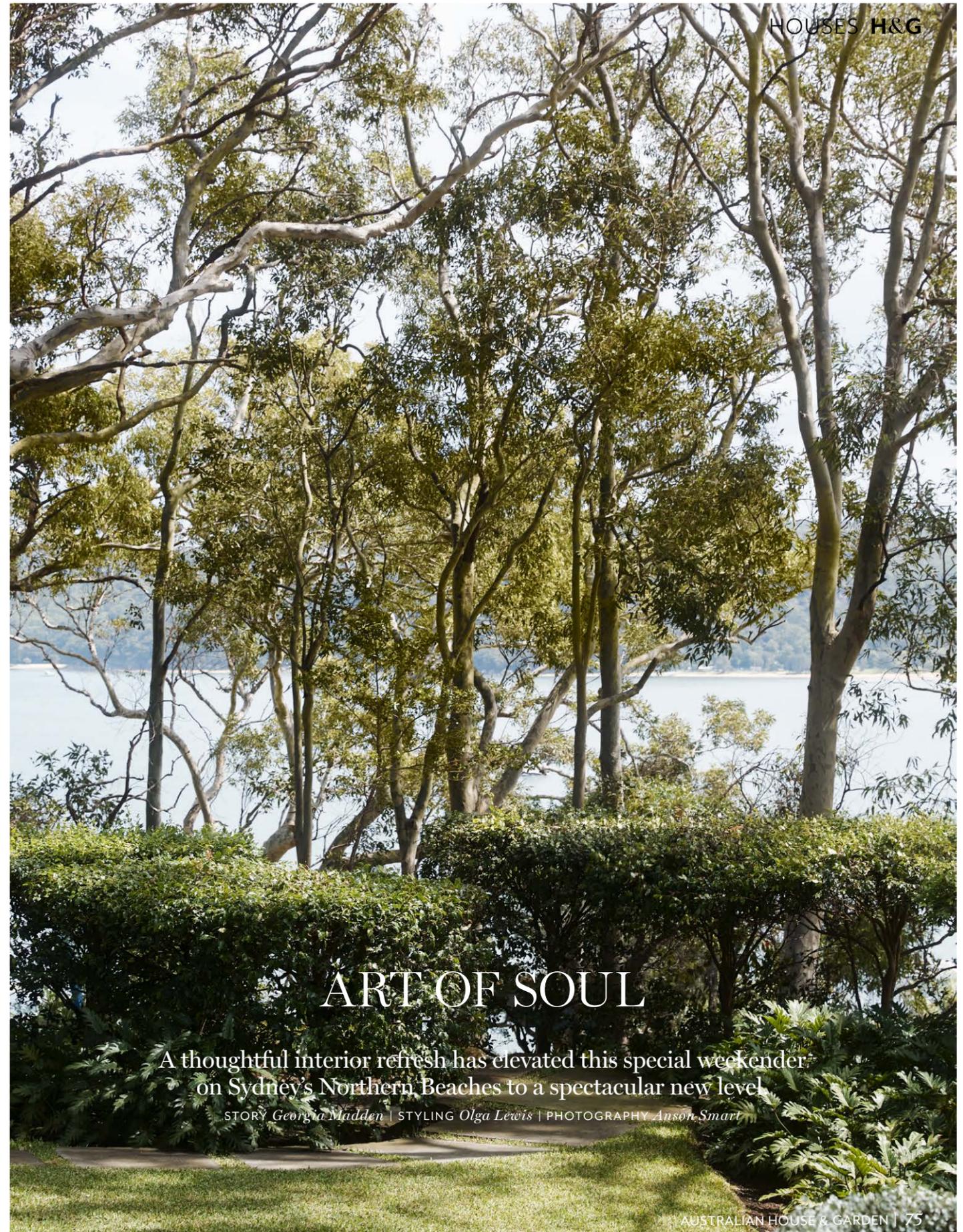




TERRACE *This page* An existing plunge pool was filled in to create a sitting area that would be used more regularly. Kettal 'Basket' armchairs, Mobilia. **GARDEN** *Opposite* The house is perched on a hill, completely surrounded by trees and has water views from different parts of the house.



ART OF SOUL

A thoughtful interior refresh has elevated this special weekend on Sydney's Northern Beaches to a spectacular new level.

STORY *Georgia Madden* | STYLING *Olga Lewis* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Anson Smart*

FORMAL LIVING

“Unexpected colour combinations always bring dynamic energy to a space,” says interior designer Sarah-Jane Pyke. Mustard Meridiani ‘Prince’ sofa, Pure Interiors. Fat Tulip sofa, Cult Design. ClassiCon ‘Euvira’ armchair, Anibou. Custom coffee table by Arent&Pyke. Vitra ‘Akari 10A’ floor lamp, Top3 by Design. Segovia rug in Slate Blue, Robyn Cosgrove. Society Limonta throw, Ondene. ▶



“We wanted this holiday house to be just as lovely as our everyday residence.” MICHELE, OWNER

If you were to list all the features you'd wish for in a weekender, this two-storey hilltop house on Sydney's Northern Beaches would likely tick every box: privacy, water views and generous rooms that spill onto a gum tree-framed garden. For the last 12 years, Michele, her husband Andrew and their three now-adult children have escaped here at weekends from their inner-Sydney home, using it as a place to unwind, entertain and spend time together as a family.

They originally bought the four-bedroom property as a complete package from architect Susan Rothwell, who designed and furnished the house, and even painted

the artworks that hang on the walls. But by 2020, Michele and Andrew were ready to apply their own spin. "We wanted it to feel more modern," says Michele. "The kitchen needed upgrading and we wanted to include a study where we could work from home when needed."

They knew just who to call. "Interior design firm Arent&Pyke had done a number of other projects for us, including our current home, and their aesthetic very much reflects our style," says Michele. "And even though this is a weekender, we wanted it to be just as comfortable and lovely as our everyday residence."

Sarah-Jane Pyke worked on the redesign with Juliette Arent, her co-principal at Arent&Pyke, and Thea Kiel, ▶

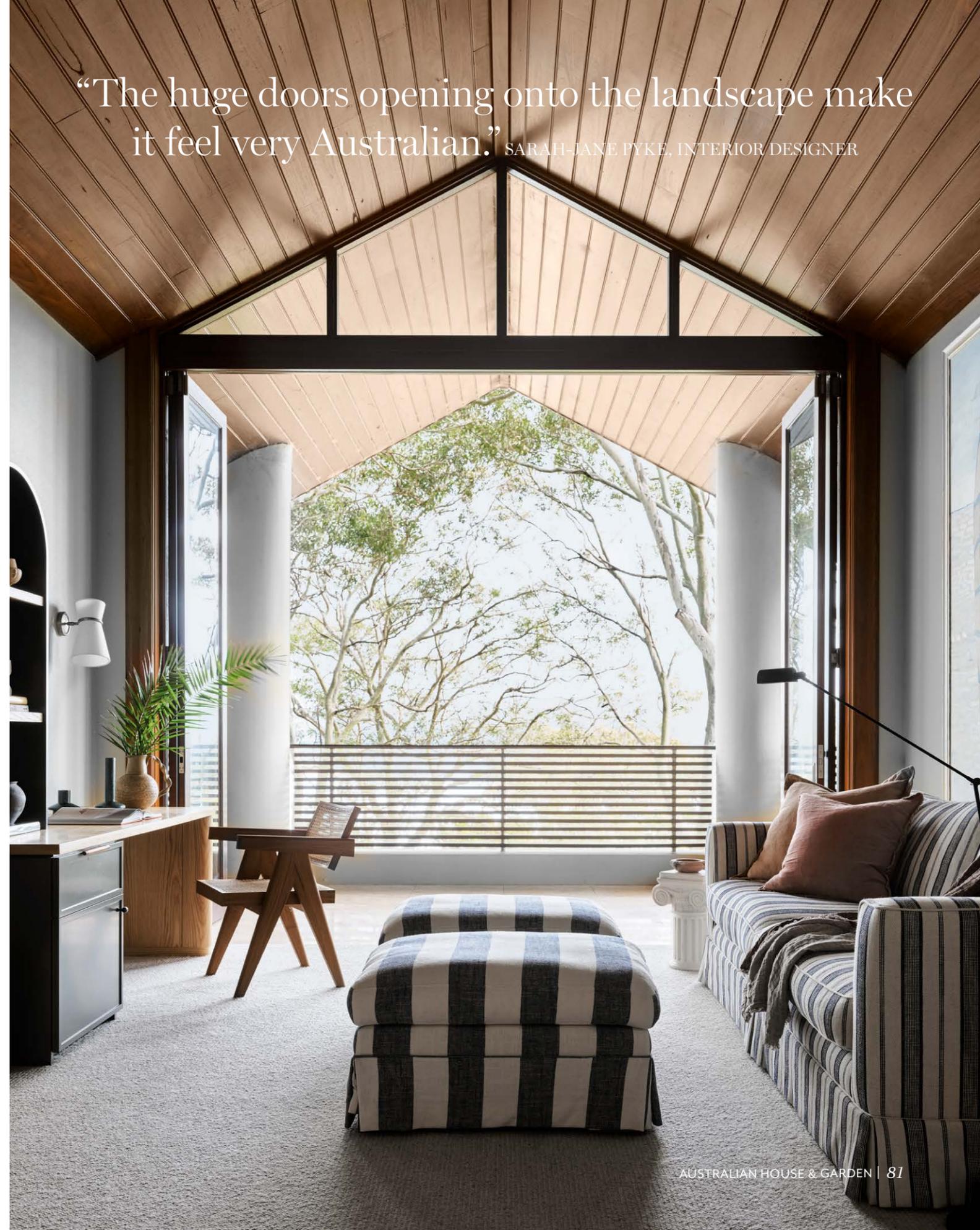


KITCHEN *Top left and bottom, left and right* The striking blue joinery is oak veneer finished in Dulux Hat Stand. Eos Neo swivel mixer tap, Franke. Boiling/chilled/sparkling water tap, Billi. Wall sconce, Studio Henry Wilson. Vintage pepper grinder. Bowls, all Ondene. Vintage vase, Conley & Co. A walnut veneer benchtop demarcates the dining zone of the island. &Tradition 'Pavilion' stools, Cult Design. X4 pendant light, Allied Maker. **BREAKFAST PANTRY** *Top right* "The breakfast cupboard can be hidden away but it looks beautiful open," says Sarah-Jane. Wall tiles, Surface Gallery. Dinnerware, The DEA Store. **LIVING/DINING** *Opposite* ClassiCon 'Euvira' armchair, Anibou. Custom coffee table. Bust, Mercer & Lewis. Rug, Robyn Cosgrove.



CASUAL LIVING *Top and above left* An artwork by the home's original architect, Susan Rothwell, hangs above the sandstone fireplace. Frigerio 'Davis' sofa, Pure Interiors. Zanotta 'Magiolina' chairs and Nau 'Molloy' coffee table, Cult Design. Artek trolley, Anibou. The custom TV unit is stained in Dulux Hat Stand. An old but loved armchair was reupholstered in fabric from Utopia Goods. Cushion, Hale Mercantile Co. Pieces on shelves, Water Tiger, Orient House and Ondene. **STUDY/TV ROOM** *Above right and opposite* The Susan Rothwell paintings inspired the room's colour scheme. The custom ottomans were upholstered in Kravet 'Basics' linen. Custom desk and shelves, Arent&Pyke. Pierre Jeanneret 'V Leg' chair, Tigmi Trading. Clarkson wall sconce, Bloomingdales Lighting. Column side table, Mercer & Lewis. Lumina 'Daphne Terra' floor lamp, Enlightened Living. Throw, Hale Mercantile Co. ▶

"The huge doors opening onto the landscape make it feel very Australian." SARAH-JANE PYKE, INTERIOR DESIGNER



THE PALETTE

Dulux Hat Stand (feature joinery)

Porter's Paints Alpen

Porter's Paints Grey Suede



senior interior designer. “It’s a really well-built house that was functioning beautifully, so it was about boosting the comfort level and giving it some more personality,” says Sarah-Jane. “The nature of the architecture, with huge blackbutt-framed doors that open onto the landscape, make it feel very Australian. It’s a very barefoot coastal vernacular and that was the vibe we set out to create, while adding a level of refinement so it didn’t feel ‘beachy.’”

Sarah-Jane also wanted it to feel ‘lived-in’. “There is nothing less relaxing than walking into a space that feels ‘box fresh,’” she explains. “The owners wanted people to be able to walk into this house, take their shoes off, relax on the sofa and not feel like they have to plump cushions the moment they stand up.”

The ground floor comprises two living areas - a formal sitting area in marble, tones of mustard and inky blue that flow through glass doors to the garden, and a cosy retreat to the side where the family read, watch television and play boardgames around a sandstone-clad fire.

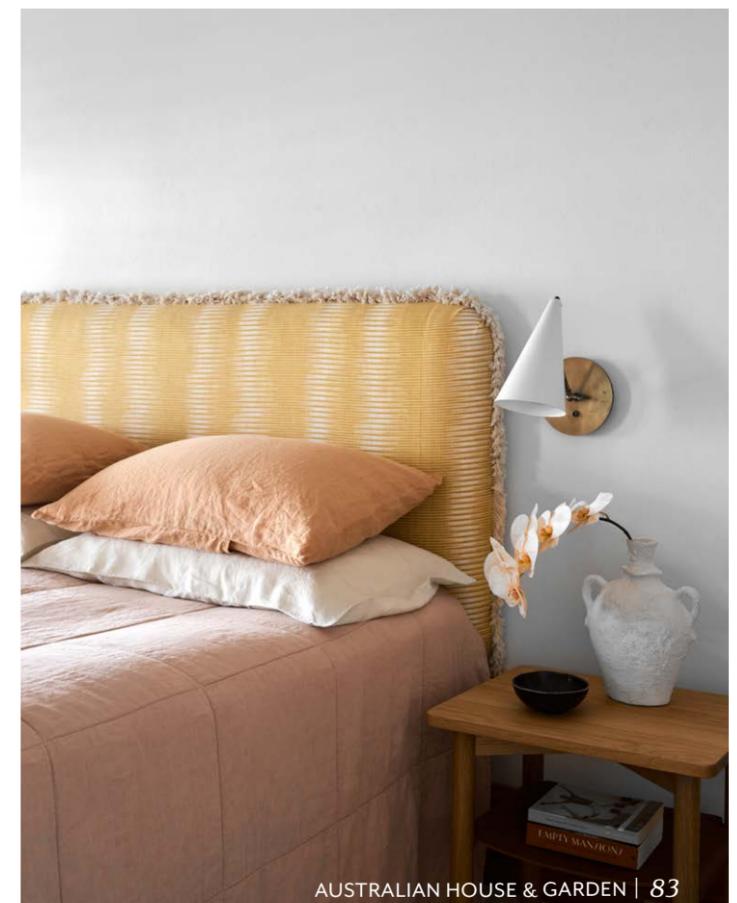
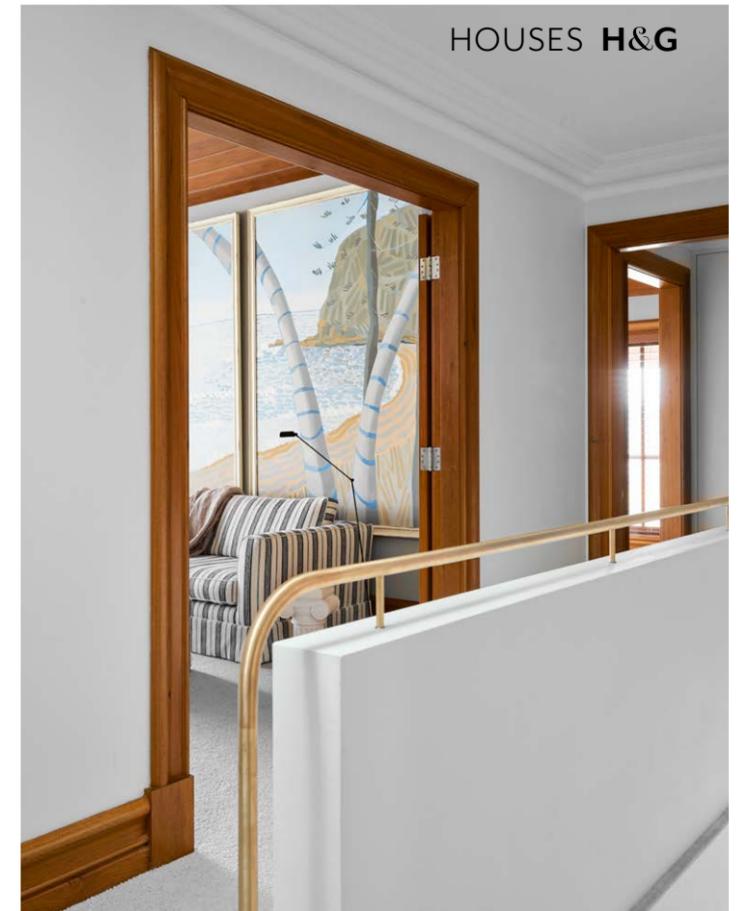
“They spend a lot of time in this spot, so we made sure it delivered,” says Sarah-Jane. “The coffee table is long and low to accommodate puzzles, the sofa and leather armchairs are comfortable enough to curl up in for a few hours with a book, and there’s a custom ottoman under the coffee table you can pull out and put your feet on.”

A custom joinery unit with arched rattan doors conceals the television, and is timber-framed and painted in the moody blue of the ocean outside. “The unit’s curves bring a sense of softness and playfulness to this rather angular room, while the lightness of the rattan balances out the heavy stone fireplace,” says Sarah-Jane.

The muted blue carries through to a new kitchen, with a generous granite and timber-topped island at its centre and plenty of concealed storage. “The family cooks and entertains regularly so the kitchen needed to work hard,” she says. “Many of the working parts are hidden away, including a wine fridge and a breakfast cupboard for all those essentials such as the kettle and toaster.” ▶

LANDING *Right, top* “We changed the balustrade from slatted timber to a low wall with a brass rail to make the stairwell less beachy and more sophisticated,” says Sarah-Jane. **GUESTROOM** *Right, bottom* Custom bedhead upholstered in fabric from South Pacific Fabrics. Pillowcases, In Bed. Society Limonta quilt, Ondene. Antonio wall sconce, Bloomingdales Lighting. Tuck side table, Jordan. Vase, Iggy & Lou Lou. Bowl, Planet. **MAIN BEDROOM** *Opposite* Custom bedhead upholstered in fabric from Arthur G. Society Limonta quilt and throw, Ondene. Profile side table, Zuster. Vase, Conley & Co. Athena Jahantigh ceramic bull, Becker Minty.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



Upstairs, the design team created a new study and TV room, with colours inspired by a pair of artworks by Susan Rothwell depicting the local coastline. One of the owners' original sofas was re-covered in a coastal blue-and-white striped fabric, and a custom desk and arched bookshelf installed so they can work from home in comfort.

Each of the four bedrooms was given a character lift with a bespoke patterned headboard in varying tones of umber yellow, coral and teal, along with new bedlinen, furnishings and a fresh coat of paint.

"You feel yourself relax the moment you step foot inside this house," says Sarah-Jane. "The spaces feel open yet connected, and the trees and water are all you can see when you look outside. It truly is magical."

Arent&Pyke, Surry Hills, NSW; (02) 9331 2802 or arentpyke.com. Wrightson & Co, Collaroy Plateau, NSW; 0497 808 587 or wrightsonandco.com.au.

"The garden doors are open day to night. It's lovely to watch the boats going by and see the water change colour," says Sarah-Jane.

THIS IS THE LIFE

Just a one-hour drive from their Sydney home, this weekend is the owners' spot to decompress. "We love having friends and family over," says Michele. "We use all the areas. Andrew can be in the study upstairs with the balcony doors open, the kids can be outside or in the dining area with friends, or we can all be together in the cosy TV area in front of the fire."



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THE SOURCE

Muted tones taken from the landscape and luxe-yet-laidback pieces make for sophisticated barefoot living.



1 Cire Trudon 'Louise' bust, \$195, Libertine Parfumerie. 2 Gypsum marble coffee table, \$6595, Coco Republic. 3 Dabee Winter artwork by Susan Rothwell, POA, Justin Miller.Art. 4 AYTM 'Varia' sculptural vase, \$165, Space. 5 Jaisalmer cushions, \$458/set of 3, Walter G. 6 Compagna lounge chair by Lucy Kurrein, POA, Spence & Lyda. 7 Austral Bricks 'Piccolo' pavers, \$88.75/m², Brickworks. 8 Akari 13a floor lamp by Isamu Noguchi, \$1668, Mr Kitly. 9 Rond vide poche, \$380, Studio Henry Wilson. For Where to Buy, see page 190. H&G

Produced by Saffron Sylvester.