

AUSTRALIA

FLOWER MAESTRO

Jeff Leatham's
SENSATIONAL
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APARTMENT

Luxe traveller
SRI LANKA



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INTERIOR
DESIGN
AWARDS
2013

*the finalists
revealed*



beautiful &
GLAMOROUS

A WORLD OF INSPIRING & INTRIGUING HOMES



BLACK tie

Greg Natale has brought a pleasing formality to this family home in Sydney, while still managing to include a sense of playfulness.

PHOTOGRAPHS ANSON SMART WORDS CHRIS PEARSON

THIS PAGE Archways from AllPlasta and panelling from Classic Architraves & Skirting give the home a sense of the traditional as do the wall sconces 'Ventana' three-tier chandelier and wall light from Jonathan Adler. Wedgwood Harlequin collection 'Butterfly Bloom' plates. OPPOSITE PAGE The imposing entry sets the scene. 'Meurice' chandelier from Jonathan Adler. Marble and granite tiles from RMS Natural Stone & Ceramics. Linger artwork by Martine Emdur.



THIS PAGE Lofty ceilings in the formal living and dining areas give the house a grand air. 'Lampert' sofa, 'Haines' armchairs, 'X' benches, 'Preston' coffee table and 'Nixon' side table, all from Jonathan Adler. Cushions in a Kelly Wearstler fabric from Elliott Clarke. Christopher Guy mirror from Laura Kincade. Rock Solid artwork by Gabrielle Jones. Greg Natale 'Lake Como' rug from Designer Rugs. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP C Jeré 'Sputnik' sculpture from Jonathan Adler (also available at Jason Mowen Gallery) in the entry hall. Broad black granite steps lead drama to the living room. The black and white palette is warmed by oak floors in French Grey from Royal Oak Floors.



With its elegant columns, chequerboard tiles and sweeping arches, this gracious home in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs could have been born into Art-Deco-inspired grandeur. Hard to believe it was once a frumpy wallflower, but it has donned a lustrous black tuxedo with a crisp white shirt, and now struts its own impeccable style. Handsome and dapper, it really turns heads.

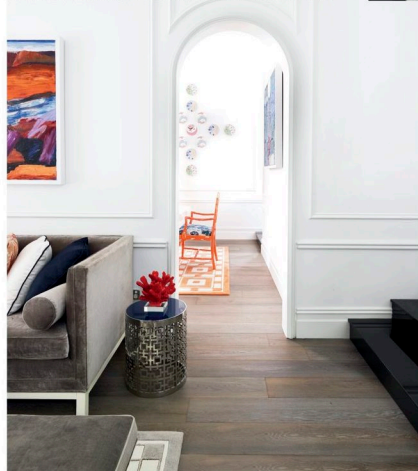
When owners Emma Forster-Mitrovski and Toni Mitrovski first saw the house in 2006, it was a plain Art Deco brick duplex, with one apartment occupying the top floor and another downstairs. Emma admired the building's solidity, as well as its sinuous curves. "It had a timelessness, but it was post-war grim, not elegant Deco," she says.

Initially, the couple carried out a short-term renovation and rented out the apartments. But Emma realised it had good bones and wanted to make it into something special for her, Toni and their two sons, Alex, now seven, and Sam, five.

"It was an ugly duckling. We could have knocked it down, but we would have lost its wonderful scale. We wanted to make the most of the ceiling heights to give a real sense of drama," says Emma. Also on the wish list was a better connection with the outside and, with two young boys, the couple wanted it to be robust and practical, with a sprinkling of a little good fun.

In 2011, builder Toni gutted the building and merged the two apartments into one. He lowered the floors in the front rooms nearly a metre to make them level with the garden, while keeping the ceiling heights to create a sense of loftiness. Also, he knocked out a wall to combine the former lounge and sunroom into one formal living room, with a dining area beside it.

At the rear, he expanded the kitchen and added an informal living area. The apartment upstairs was converted into three bedrooms – the main bedroom was once a living room – a study and a media space. French doors and balconies ensured an indoor-outdoor connection.





For the interiors, Emma was toying with many influences, including Art Deco, Hollywood Regency and classic French, the last thanks to a stay at LA's elegant boutique Portofino Hotel & Marina, with its Franco-inspired public areas that she much admires.

"All the elements were there, but I struggled to get clarity," she says. She had seen two previous projects of Greg Natale's in *Belle* and realised he could help to crystallise her ideas. An initial consult, a Christmas present from Emma's mother, blossomed into a major collaboration.

"Greg was my creative director," she says. "He would say, 'no', 'no', 'yes' to what I liked." Greg adds, "I was really a facilitator, taking what was in Emma's mind and mixing our styles." The interiors skillfully blend all her favourite aesthetics but, if any one predominates, it is perhaps Hollywood Regency, thanks to the Jonathan Adler furniture and lighting throughout. "It was a natural direction," says Emma. "Without being ostentatious, it's classic with a sense of drama, but it also makes me feel comfortable."

Another defining feature of the transformation is the architectural detailing, which lends solidity and tradition. "Emma loves white walls, but too much white can be bland. So first we panelled the whole house," says Greg. "It's very French." He also added columns, cornices and moulded ceilings to bring a sense of scale to the living spaces. For softness, the dramatic black and white palette has been tempered with shades of grey, while coral and navy, two favourite hues of Emma's, have been used as accents in the dining room and the guestroom.

Little wonder the cheerful dining room is her favourite space. "It's brave, with its coral chairs and rug, as well as the Wedgwood plates on the wall," she says. "It's sunny and fun, without any sense of gimmickry."

The house offers plenty of chances to wind down. "When we moved in, we would go from room to room, with a glass of wine in our hands and say how much we love it," says Emma. "We own a beach house, but often we'd rather stay here. It feels like our very own boutique hotel."

For more go to gregnatale.com.



THIS PAGE The informal living area has a "Butterfield" sofa and "Regent" armchair from Jonathan Adler. Roll & Hill "Superordinate Antler" chandelier from Space. Greg Natale "Palm Springs" rug from Designer Rugs. Octopus candleholder from Coco Republic. Emeco stools from Corporate Culture. "Filament" chandelier from Restoration Hardware. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Faux bamboo chairs from Casa Mia painted in Wattle! "Big Parade" and upholstered in Schumacher "Chiang Mai Dragon" fabric from Orient House. The floors at the front of the house were lowered to make them level with the garden. In the study, an existing armchair was recovered in Kelly Wearstler for Lee Jofa "Fuji Moderne" fabric. Baker "Bauble" drum stools from Cavitt & Co.

"We wanted to make the most of the ceiling heights to give a real sense of drama."

THIS PAGE Red and navy add pizzazz to the main bedroom. 'Woodhouse' bed and 'Claude' bedside tables from Jonathan Adler. Williams-Sonoma bed linen. Zebra rug from Orson & Blake. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT the bathrooms continue the black-and-white theme. Brodware 'New England' tapware from Sydney Tap Centre. In the ensuite, a freestanding Victoria & Albert 'York' bath from Sydney Tap Centre. A Leila Jeffreys photograph hangs above a table and chair from Shack in the boys' bedroom. Striped awning above French doors. 'Pipa' side table from Coco Republic is matched with resprayed chairs found at a garage sale.



SPEED READ

Sydney couple Emma Forster-Mitrovski and Toni Mitrovski have converted a 1940s two-apartment brick duplex into a grand family home that's also comfortable and family friendly. + Builder Toni knocked out walls and lowered the floors in the formal living area to create a sense of drama and scale, in keeping with the building's Art Deco bones. + Emma hired Greg Natale of Greg Natale Design to crystallise her many ideas for the interiors. She wanted elements of her favourite styles, Art Deco, Hollywood Regency and early 20th-century French – the challenge was making it all work. The palette is black and white, with shades of grey, and coral and navy highlights. + Jonathan Adler designs feature strongly in the furnishings, while the accessories have been gathered both overseas and locally. + Architectural detailing, such as pillars, cornices and mouldings, lend a timelessness and a French accent.



WANT MORE?

Join editor-in-chief Neale Whitaker, interior designer Greg Natale and owner Emma Förster-Mitrowski for a tour of this house. Simply download the free Viewa app, select the Belle channel and hold your phone or tablet over this page. See p16.

