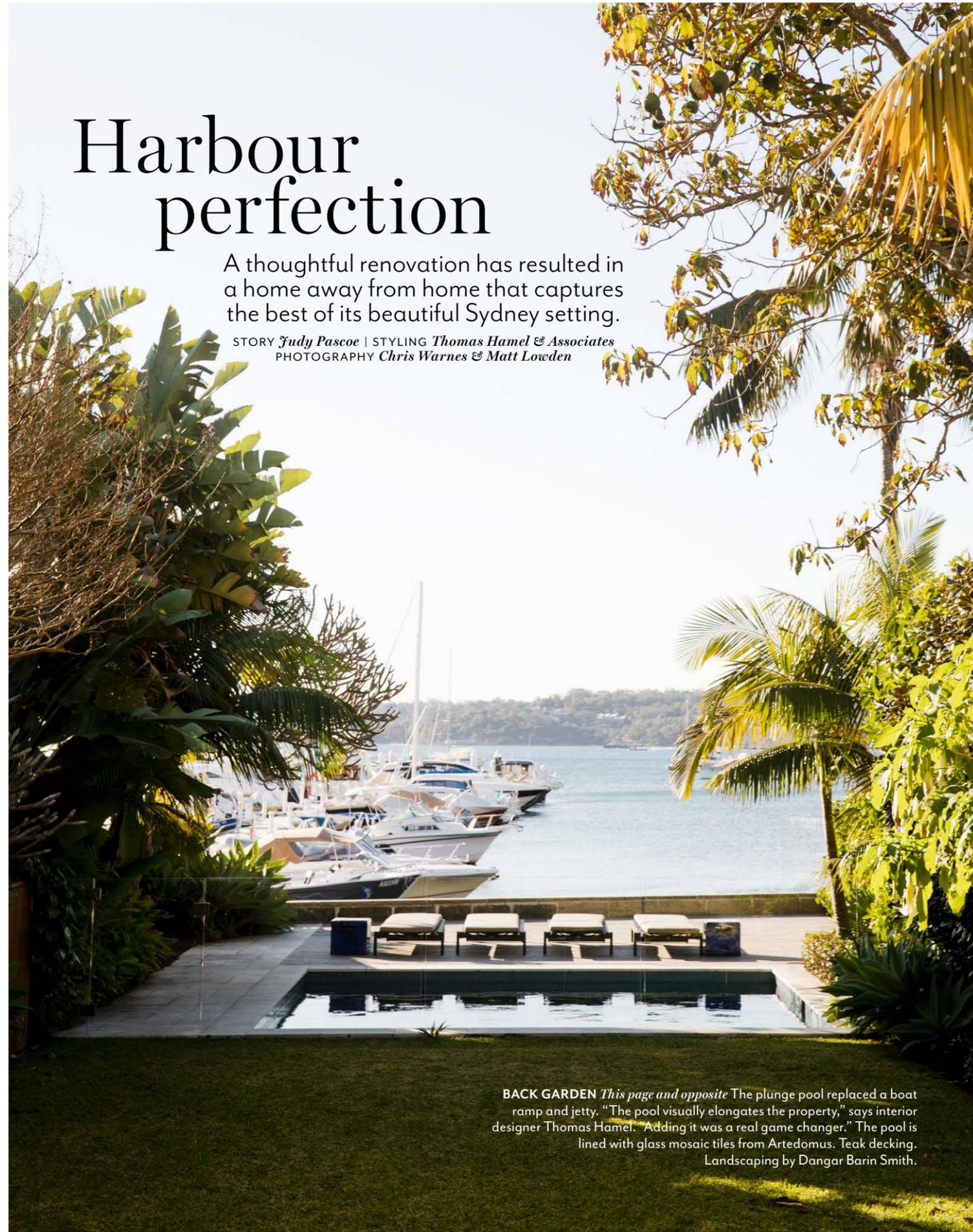




Harbour perfection

A thoughtful renovation has resulted in a home away from home that captures the best of its beautiful Sydney setting.

STORY *Judy Pascoe* | STYLING *Thomas Hamel & Associates*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Chris Warnes & Matt Lowden*



BACK GARDEN *This page and opposite* The plunge pool replaced a boat ramp and jetty. "The pool visually elongates the property," says interior designer Thomas Hamel. "Adding it was a real game changer." The pool is lined with glass mosaic tiles from Artedomus. Teak decking. Landscaping by Dangar Barin Smith.

Occupying an enviable north-facing waterfront position in inner-city Sydney, this elegant house had plenty going for it. However, the owners, whose main residence is in California, wanted to maximise its potential by adding another bedroom as well as a swimming pool at the harbour's edge.

Interior designer Thomas Hamel came highly recommended - he had, after all, designed houses for the wife's sister and the husband's brother. However, that's where it becomes tricky, according to Thomas. "You don't want to do anything similar. You have to do a reinvention of the style."

Fortunately, Thomas has a vast array of ideas in his design arsenal, so he was able to deliver a substantially different home while keeping within the parameters articulated by the owners. With grown children and grandchildren, they wanted to use the home as a multi-generational gathering place when they visit three or four times a year. To that end, the desire was to increase the existing four bedrooms and three bathrooms to five bedrooms and four bathrooms - all of a generous size.

"The owners loved the idea of a beach house that was so close to the suburb's village-like amenities," says Thomas. "There's an intimacy that it offers." Says the owner: "The location and size of this home immediately attracted me. Everything I needed was just a short walk away and the house had a relaxed, holiday vibe."

As the block is very contained there was no opportunity for extending the footprint so Thomas, along with architects Michael Hesse & Associates, had to work within the existing roofline. "The pitch of the roof was significant so we were able to create a third level and tuck in another room and bathroom." That is now a multifunction room, fitted out with a desk, sofa bed and TV, and a Juliet balcony enjoying sparkling harbour views.

Extra bedroom delivered, attention was then focused on sprucing up the rest of the house. Thomas felt the flow could be better

so he repositioned the dining zone - formerly located alongside what is now the main living room - to near the kitchen, freeing up the space to become a second sitting area, linked by a double-sided fireplace. "I had seen this idea in a hotel in Paris," says Thomas, "and it works well here, providing a glimpse from one space to the other."

The larger sitting area is more formal, detailed with architectural moulding and furnished with plump sofas and arresting art. The cosier space is "more like a cabana", with its timber panelling and wall-mounted TV. Both lead to the outdoor terrace and garden, newly landscaped by William Dangar of Dangar Barin Smith.

It's the detailing in the house that has made such a difference. "Because the house overlooks the water, a beach vibe seemed natural, yet Thomas and his team managed to elevate those beach vibes to a sophisticated coastal look that was just right for a city home," says the owner.

Other alterations included moving the front door and adding glass side panels to allow extra light, enlarging the powder room and upgrading the kitchen with new appliances and cupboards with a limed, glazed and striated finish. Bathrooms were reconfigured and bedrooms dressed with tactile wallpapers and custom bedheads.

Then came "the icing on the cake" says Thomas, who went on a furniture shopping spree with the owners in the US. "We sourced most of the furniture over there and combined it with Australian art."

While the mood of the house is relaxed, sophistication comes from such pieces as vintage Italian armchairs, graphic art, striking mirrors and the generous dining table that can be split into two or joined together, depending on the number of guests who need to be seated. The neutral colour palette is enhanced by layers of textures in jute and aloe rugs, linen fabrics, cane furniture and rattan blinds, counterbalanced with the surprise of colour and beautiful drama in the art.

▶ *Thomas Hamel & Associates, Redfern, NSW; thomashamel.com.*

MAIN LIVING ROOM 'Mindora' sofa in Castel 'Winstone' fabric in Ciel (left), custom 'Orleans' curved sofa in Elliott Clarke 'Quatra' fabric, and 'Moulton' console, all from Gregorius Pineo. Dessin Fournir 'Downing' coffee table with limestone top, and Ironies 'Antillen' mirror, Kneeder Fauchere. Double gourd lamp, David Sutherland. Custom wool-silk rug. Custom ottoman in Jerry Pair leather in Sandalwood. Barbara Barry Collection 'California' armchair and 'Bauble' side table, and McGuire outdoor chairs in Java resin finish, all Cavit & Co. Pot and olive tree, Garden Life. Pot and lavender on coffee table, Mandalay Flowers. Cushions on sofa, Ascraft and Tigger Hall Design. Throw, Busatti. Artwork by Patrick Hockey.



Styling by Kate Nixon.



THIS IS THE LIFE

“Having lived away from Sydney for so many years, waking up to the clinking of the buoys against bobbing boats and sipping a cup of tea while looking out to the harbour is just magical,” says the owner. Her only lament is that she doesn’t spend as much time in the home as she’d like to. “When I arrive, the house has that fresh and new feel, which is so special, but it’s time for the cushions on the sofa to sag a little!”



CASUAL LIVING *Right and above left* Paola Buffa armchair in Savel ‘Arcadia’ fabric (foreground). La Reine armchair (pink) from David Sutherland. Side table, Michael Berman. Alber sofa, Kneedler Fauchere. Summit floor lamp custom ottomans, Holly Hunt. Artworks (above) by Christopher McVinish (left) and Susan Norrie (right). Custom rug, Behruz Studio. **DINING** ‘Gramercy’ dining table, Gregorius Pineo. ‘Grand Klismos’ dining chairs in Jane Churchill ‘Albany’ fabric from Michael Berman. **KITCHEN** Shaker joinery, MSA Prestige Woodcraft. ‘Gibson’ pendant lights, The Urban Electric Co. Roman blinds and ‘Anemone’ lamp, Milgate. ▶

The Palette

Porter’s Paints Wood Smoke (exterior)

Porter’s Paints Rubble (joinery)

Porter’s Paints Riverstone (metal doors and windows)



RENOVATION *snapshot*

PIVOTAL DECISION Replacing timber and bifold doors and windows with fine steel windows.

UNEXPECTED BLOWOUT The swimming pool. "It made planning permission complicated but it was so worthwhile," says Thomas.

WHERE TO SAVE "Don't move the plumbing."

WHERE TO SPLURGE "Floor finishes, cabinetry details and doors," he says.

WORDS OF WISDOM "Adding layers of detail – in this case, mouldings and beadboards – gives a house its sense of stability and solidity," adds Thomas.



MAIN BEDROOM Custom bedhead in Lulu DK fabric. Custom ottoman in Perennials 'Nit Witty'. Cannula lamp, Michael Smith Jasper. Hilliard 'Tamil' pendant light, Kneeder Fauchere. 'Bramante' carpet in Rubio, Premier Carpets. **ENTRANCE** Venetian flatweave runner by Roger Oates, Milgate. Hilliard pendant light, Kneeder Fauchere. Artwork by unknown artist. ▶

'The bones of the house and the generosity of the room sizes were great.' Thomas Hamel



GUESTROOM Right and above left Carved bench, Interiors Online. Ralph Lauren 'Saugatuck' nightstands. Lamp, Circle of Light. Custom sofa. Crate tables and ceramic stools, all Orient House. **ATTIC/STUDY** Lucite coffee table, Plastix. Devon armchair, Restoration Hardware. Tortoiseshell sisal, Premier Carpets. Steel doors, Skyrange. **TERRACE** Pure sofa, Giati Designs. Lucy armchair, Cotswold InOut Furniture. Coffee table, Cavit & Co. Side table, Orient House. Vergola pergola. Existing limestone pavers. For Where to Buy, see page 230. H&G

The Layout

GROUND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

