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CONNECTION



A discrete site set into a leafy bushland reserve gives this home's owners incredible access to Clovelly Beach without the crowded suburban feeling that often goes with proximity to Sydney's famous beaches.

LOCATION Gadigal Country / Sydney, Australia **ARCHITECTURE** Andrew Burges Architects

BUILD Robert Plumb Build **LANDSCAPE** Dangar Barin Smith

PHOTOGRAPHY Peter Bennetts

STYLING & WORDS David Harrison





Looking east, the brickwork screens are shown to the right, and the oak joinery of the kitchen is shown to the left. The use of oak extends into a ceiling void that connects to the bedroom level above and allows light to penetrate into the heart of the house. Integrated internal planter boxes and external planting soften the outlook to neighbouring properties.

When Simone and Justin Drape bought the existing house ten years ago, they ignored how dark and uninspiring it was, safe in the knowledge that they would one day build an airy and bright house for their young family within a 100-metre walk along a leafy pathway to the beach.

They researched suitable architects, settling on Andrew Burges because of his quiet, calm demeanour, rigorously considerate approach and apparent lack of ego. They loved his preference for honest, tactile materials within a clean, modern architectural style, “We didn’t want anything artificial or faux,” Simone says. “We wanted every material to speak for itself and be durable, straightforward and real.”

Simone and Justin are both creative, working in the advertising, media and design industry. While they had plenty of ideas of what the house should deliver, they were also astute enough to understand the point of bringing in an expert was to listen to what they had to say. “Andrew suggested some innovative ways to make the most of this steep, narrow site and how to provide all the things we valued most – a green outlook, privacy and plenty of natural light and airflow,” Simone says.

Burges recalls one of his client’s most heartfelt requests: a north-facing kitchen where they could see down to the pool to watch the kids swimming. This informed the decision to pursue a split-level approach that allowed the house to unfold into the gully, from which Gully House takes its name instead of stacked floor plates that would raise the house above it. “Our concept conceived the house as an extension of the gully, proposing continuous, connected views through the length of the site,” Andrew says. The original pool, located at the southern end of the site, was retained and refinished, with the architects choosing to refine the shape within the existing footprint while incorporating a spa.





The dining room and kitchen face north and capture ample winter sunlight while enjoying the lush outlook provided by the front garden. The crazy paving extends from the inside to out through double-height glazed doors, extending the internal space and bringing the garden into the house.





The split-level design allows for a visual connection to the kitchen and dining areas at the front of the house and the garden beyond. Oak furniture pieces like the Carl Hansen & Son Hans Wegner CH22 armchair and the Arper Ghia coffee and side tables by Altherr Désile Park maintain the tightly controlled material palette and balance the bookshelf wall on the left.



Large operable windows on the inside of brick screens allow cross ventilation and filtered light to penetrate the interior. Here the stairs from the lounge room meet the landing of the bedroom level. A central garden courtyard (shown on the right-hand page) adjoins the master bedroom and is a gradual reveal as you climb the stairs.





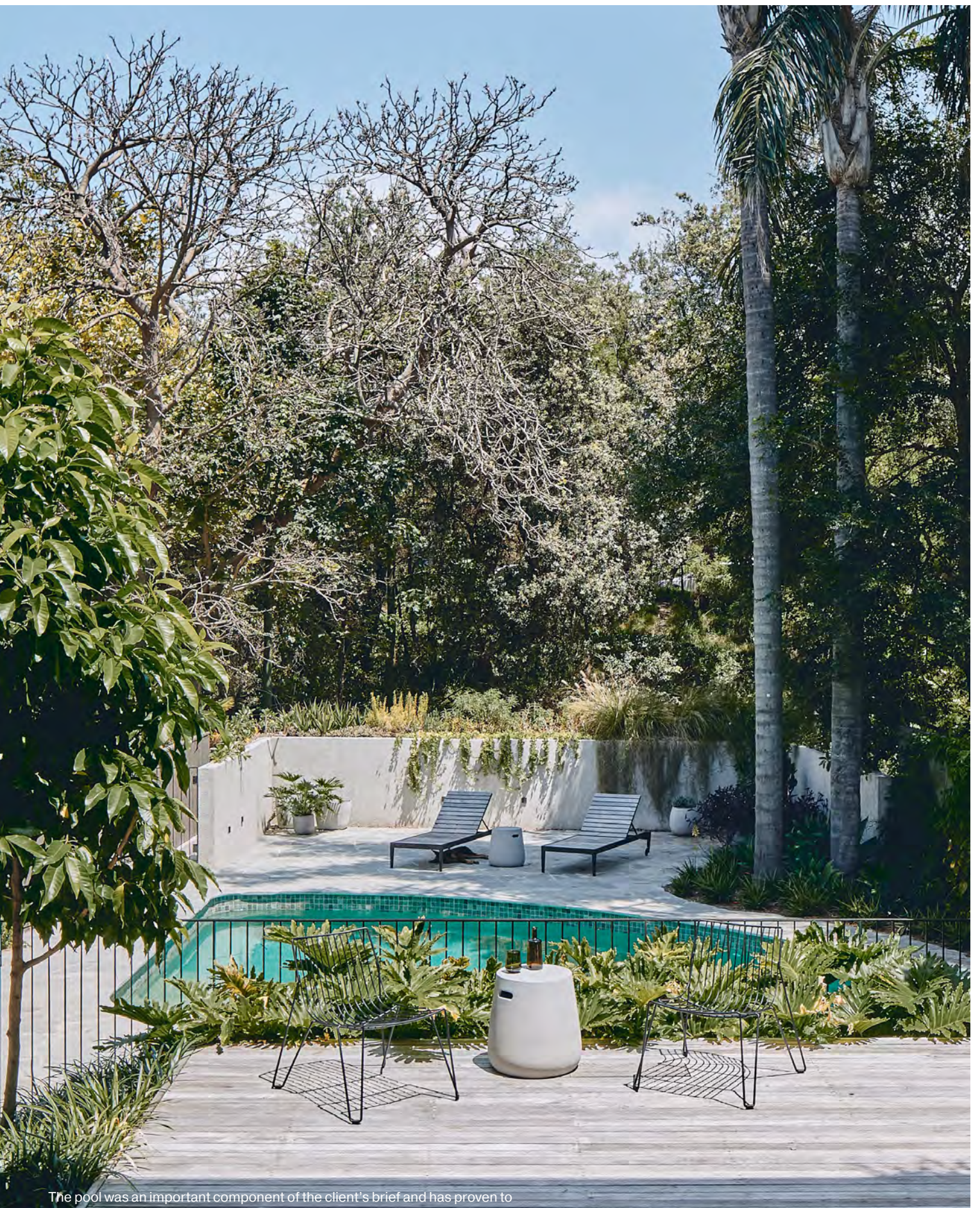


The master bedroom features a circular wrap around curtain that can completely encapsulate the bed. When the curtain is retracted, views of native trees in the gully reserve are revealed on one side and the internal courtyard on the other.



The monolithic concrete bath is open to a planted balcony ensuring a genuine sense of open-air bathing. Brick screens and internal planting on the eastern wall provides additional privacy.





The pool was an important component of the client's brief and has proven to be a much-used focal point of the house. The borrowed view of the adjacent reserve extends the garden into the distance. Timber decking and tiered seating provides a natural place to barbeque and watch children swimming.

