

This page The property enjoys an enviable north-east harbourside location and the revamped swimming pool and entertaining area is a popular spot. The arch treatment on the poolhouse references arches elsewhere in the house. Outdoor furniture and lanterns, all from Coco Republic. Opposite page A symphony of furniture pieces including a custom-designed sofa by Studio Kate, a 'Laurent' armchair and 'Felice' small bench, both by Arteriors, and Palecek 'Callahan' cabinet, all from Boyd Blue, are arranged in the formal living room around a new 'Escea' 'DF960' fireplace from The Heater Man with Café au Lait marble surrounds from Granite & Marble Works, Maitland Smith 'Qing' side table from Laura Kincaid. Visual Comfort 'Fontaine' double wall sconces from Bloomingdale's. Bespoke cushions in James Dunlop fabric from Mokum and Lizzo fabric from Westbury Textiles. A vintage 'Sultan' wool rug from Robyn Cosgrove covers the chevron parquetry floors from Precision Flooring. Walls in Porter's Paints 'Cashmere' half-strength. 'Float' vase from BoConcept. Foliage from Mandalay Flowers. Accessories from CASA by Kate Nixon.



Glory days

Past and present are harmoniously aligned in this significant Sydney home where grand heritage features are enhanced by a chic contemporary overlay.



Words **JUDY PASCOE** Photography **MAREE HOMER** Styling **KATE NIXON**

This page An inviting corner of the living room with an Arteriors 'Turner' chaise from Boyd Blue upholstered in Pepe Peñalver 'Kibanda' fabric from Westbury Textiles with Cultiver 'Estela' throw from CASA by Kate Nixon. Julian Chichester 'Dante' side table from Laura Kincade. Visual Comfort 'Fliana' floor lamp from Bloomingdales. Custom curtains by Kate Nixon in Busatti 'Giglio Bicolore'. Chevron parquetry floors from Precision Flooring. **Opposite page, clockwise from top** The grand entry has 'Ardesia' glazed floor tiles in a check pattern from Design Tiles with Zellige 2103CH border tiles from Tiles by Ezra. Arteriors 'Stefan' outdoor wall sconce from Boyd Blue. 'Alpine' drum pot with bay tree from Flower Power. Custom-designed front door by Kate Nixon from Ganci with hardware from Art of Metal. Kitchen joinery by Kreative Kitchens painted in Porter's Paints 'Cinnamon Sugar' with Oxford Decorative Grilles handwoven diamond mesh from The English Tapware Company and marble benchtop from Granite & Marble Works. Brass and horn handles from Handles by Mood. Custom-designed windows by Kate Nixon from Ganci. Oven and cooktop from Wolf. Brodware 'Neu England' tapware and Turner Hastings 'Cuisine' undermount sink from Sydney Tap and Bathroomware. In the bar area, wine storage in TrueGrain veneer in Pinecone from Briggs Veneers. Brass bistro shelves from Wa Hoo Designs. White onyx splashback from Granite & Marble Works. 'Chiltern Double' pendant light from The Urban Electric Co. 'Frankie' bar stools from Boyd Blue. 'Dagar' pot from Garden Life. Foliage from Mandalay Flowers. Palecek bowl and decor accessories from CASA by Kate Nixon. 'Collection Saturne' cocktail bar set from Becker Minty. Walls in Porter's Paints 'Cashmere' half-strength.





The generous proportions and lavish original detailing in this 1840s house in Sydney's eastern suburbs is a reminder of times past when living was more genteel and romantic. In need of revitalising when the current owners bought it in 2018, four years later it is nothing short of a masterpiece, restored to its former grandeur while showcasing a new contemporary character.

With its enviable north-east harbourside location and 820sqm block the home has had a wealth of notable owners since its foundations were laid by convicts. From furniture retailing family the Waltons to Rupert Murdoch, the house has changed hands many times, with the previous owners in residence for 55 years.

For interior designer Kate Nixon of Studio Kate who was brought on board by architects Gina Geritis and Mariana Lorena of LiveinDesign it was an amazing project. Undaunted by the scale of work to be tackled in the three-storey home, Kate set to work on the interior architecture, referencing the Beaux-Arts style by reinstating symmetry, restoring the classic architectural detailing and creating new arched openings. A hierarchy of spaces was established from the grand entrance through to the more functional rooms, connected by new French doors that admit an abundance of natural light and highlight the impressive vista of the sparkling harbour. Linking the formal living room with the front courtyard gardens and the formal dining room and kitchen with the covered balcony also created a better flow, and enhanced the indoor-outdoor feel.

Crafting a contemporary and practical home for a family that includes three adult offspring while retaining a sophisticated European sensibility required an assured response and a deft >







This page Panels of Designers Guild 'Miyako Scene' wallpaper from IconRadford are an elegant backdrop to the formal dining room with its custom-designed table by Studio Kate and Palecek 'Edgewater' chairs from Boyd Blue. Currey & Company 'Brillien' black demi-lune cabinet with 'Metamorphosis' table lamp, both from Cromwell. Barlas Baylar 'Valiant' chandelier from Hudson Furniture. Custom steel doors from Ganci. Wall surrounds in Porter's Paints 'Pumice'. Chevron parquet floors from Precision Flooring. **Opposite page** Custom sofa by Studio Kate from Boyd Blue has custom cushions in James Dunlop fabric from Mokum and Lizzo fabric from Westbury Textiles. Palecek 'Callahan' cabinet and Arteriors 'Felice' small bench, both from Boyd Blue. Café au Lait marble fireplace surrounds from Granite & Marble Works with an Escea DF960 fire from The Heater Man. Visual Comfort 'Fontaine' double wall sconce from Bloomingdales. 'Sultan' vintage rug from Robyn Cosgrove. 'Float' vase from BoConcept. Foliage from Mandalay Flowers. Accessories from CASA by Kate Nixon.



« hand. From the oak parquetry and stone flooring, ornate wall and ceiling mouldings, brass, glass and alabaster light fixtures, marble bathrooms, stone fireplaces and sumptuous bespoke furnishings, elegance is the byword throughout. Diana Vreeland's oft-quoted comment that the eye has to travel is apt here where absolute beauty and an incredible level of detail vie for attention at every turn.

The comprehensive refresh has resulted in a six-bedroom eight-bathroom home with three kitchens, a bar and cellar, grand formal living and dining rooms, a library, entertainment and TV room, pool, poolhouse and outdoor entertaining area set in lush gardens. With the architectural details restored and beautified, the rooms were ready to welcome a magnificent rollcall of furniture, elegant window treatments, art and objets. Local and international artisans and suppliers yielded a refined selection of furniture, rugs, upholstery and decorative lighting that effortlessly melds new and antique. "A sophisticated palette of linen, leather, stone, brass, iron and cane sits lightly in the spaces with earthy accents complementing collected art and ceramics," says Kate.

The tone is set at the entrance where classic black-and-grey chequerboard tiles give way to oak chevron parquetry in the grand entry foyer with its sweeping restored marble and curved brass-railed staircase. Sleek, black steel-framed doors and a classic white background lend an au courant note to the surroundings, and the living spaces are personalised with open shelving to display books and treasured items. While the setting is sophisticated and lends itself to fabulous entertaining, it also sits comfortably with everyday family life. Window seats with harbour views offer the opportunity for quiet contemplation, and chairs grouped around sandstone fireplaces cater to more convivial engagement.

The decorative details add finesse and polish. In the dining room, the drama of a Designers Guild mural wallpaper framed in mouldings is complemented by a spectacular Murano chandelier suspended over the custom marble and brass dining table, >





This page The master bathroom is a glamorous space with walls and plinth clad in Arabescato Oro marble and vanity in Café au Lait marble from Granite & Marble Works. 'Garrison' sconce from The Urban Electric Co. Fluted glass in a brass frame from Art of Metal. Victoria + Albert 'Barcelona' bath, Brodware 'Manhattan' tapware and Hydrotherm heated towel rail, all from Sydney Tap and Bathroomware. Custom bench seat in TrueGrain in Pinecone from Briggs Veneers with 'Creel' seat cushion from Janus et Cie. **Opposite page, clockwise from top** The dressing room has joinery doors in Alpi Ikat from Elton Group with vanity topped in 'Emperador' marble from Granite & Marble Works. Custom mirror from Art of Metal. Flexform 'Bangkok' ottoman from Fanuli. Custom scalloped bedhead in 'Parissi' in Shell from Warwick Fabrics. Custom bedlinen in Busatti 'Burraco'. Cashmere throw from CASA by Kate Nixon. 'Hertz' bedside table from Brosa. 'Iyah' table lamp and wall art, both from Coco Republic. In the library, the custom marble bench has a cushion in 'Lovely' in Ochre from Warwick Fabrics. 'Lucia' side table and cashmere throw from CASA by Kate Nixon. Hudson Valley 'Colton' sconce from LightCo. 'Mykonos' chandelier on the balcony from Bloomingdales. 'Ardesia' tiles from Design Tiles.

This page A Ralph Lauren wallpaper, 'Ellsworth Floral' from IconRadford, provides a restful backdrop in the master bedroom. Custom bedhead by Kate Nixon in Ascraft 'Bloom Velvet' in Sand Dollar. Custom bedlinen in Busatti 'Raso Egitto'. Custom cushion in Lizzo 'Idyllic' from Westbury Textiles. Bolster in Designers Guild 'Palladio Natural'. 'Midge' circular bedside table from Bloomingdales. Derive Vienna art deco alabaster pendant light from 1stdibs. Accessories from CASA by Kate Nixon. **Opposite page, clockwise from top left** Custom desk in the third bedroom in TrueGrain from Briggs Veneers. 'Donato' chair in cream bouclé from James Said. 'Dana' wall lamp from About Space. 'Agra' rug from Armadillo. Roman blind in Busatti 'Gauguin' and duvet in 'Burraco'. Basket and desk accessories from CASA by Kate Nixon. Custom balustrade from Art of Metal and treads in Café au Lait marble from Granite & Marble Works make the staircase feel grand. Custom ottomans in 'Badru' in Umber from Warwick Fabrics. Arteriors 'Skylar' mirror from Boyd Blue. Visual Comfort 'Bonnington' chandelier from Bloomingdales. Parquet floors from Precision Flooring. The master bedroom's walk-in robe is luxurious in size and appointments. TrueGrain joinery in Pinecone from Briggs Veneers by Kreative Kitchens with 'Emperador' marble trim from Granite & Marble Works. 'Garrison' wall light from The Urban Electric Co. Custom-designed chair by Kate Nixon and accessories from CASA by Kate Nixon. Custom roman blind in Busatti 'Damasco'.



SPEED READ

» Called on to revitalise a significant 1840s house in Sydney's eastern suburbs, interior designer Kate Nixon of Studio Kate worked with architects LiveinDesign and JMichael Constructions to restore the classical architectural detailing and enhance the home's European sensibility while creating a practical, contemporary home for a family of five. » On a sizeable harbourside block and with impressive views, the three-storey home has welcomed a sophisticated makeover with oak parquet and stone flooring, ornate wall and ceiling mouldings, brass, glass and alabaster light fixtures, marble bathrooms, stone fireplaces and sumptuous furnishings. » Creating new and enlarged windows and doors has maximised natural light, allowed a better flow throughout and connected the home to the garden and pool.



« giving even everyday dining a sense of occasion. It is just one of the spaces in the home the owner describes as “more than beautiful and beyond our expectations”. The dining room is separated by new steel-framed fluted glass doors from the kitchen, another favourite space with its hand-painted biscuit-hued joinery and horn handles, arched steel windows and backlit onyx slab in the wet bar.

Bedrooms are sanctuaries of calm, swathed in lavish Italian linens, velvets and cashmere, hand-spun wool rugs and kilims, and complemented by study areas and luxurious marble bathrooms and, in the case of the main, a walk-in robe with glamorous shoe display and make-up table. Other significant bespoke details include the Axolotl Florentine brass joinery set against original sandstone walls in the lower ground floor entertainment room, the double onyx-clad vanity in the main bathroom, and the floating marble bench seat with velvet upholstery in the library.

Vestiges of the magnificence of the heritage home remain, such as the exposed sandstone walls that were cleaned and retained, and the original tiling that is referenced in the new material selection. Walls were replastered, floors replaced, internal timber doors custom designed and new hardware introduced. Where privacy was required sheer window treatments were selected to maintain views.

Kate describes the transformation as “epic – delivering the elusive juxtaposition of classic and contemporary, the best of old and new for luxurious everyday living”.

The owners say they are “extremely grateful” for the design team and builder, JMichael Constructions. “It was very important to us to support original design and to create a European sensibility and authenticity in our home. We absolutely love the outcome.”

There’s no doubt the home is a complete triumph, offering its inhabitants the best of both worlds – practical and beautiful contemporary living spaces within the surrounds of a romantic and lavishly detailed past. ■

katenixon.com; liveindesign.com.au; jmichaelconstructions.com.au

