

These pages The living room has a Minotti 'Freeman' sofa from De De Ce, Bonacina 'Eva' cane chairs in a lacquered finish, Christophe Delcourt 'Hug' sofa upholstered in Pierre Frey 'Candice' in Coquillage, a Cassina 'Rio' coffee table in oak with a marble inset and Nichetto 'Laurel' side table from Spence & Lyda, all on a custom oval cashmere rug from Cadrys. Lindsey Adelman 'Branching Bubble' chandelier. Isamu Noguchi 'UF4-L10' floor lamp. Artwork by Guan Wei from Martin Browne Contemporary.



When interior architect Romaine Alwill of Alwill Interiors was tasked by architect Luigi Rosselli to design the interiors of this Sydney eastern suburbs home, the brief was it should be of the ilk of Gio Ponti or Oscar Niemeyer. “No pressure!” says Romy. A further request from the architect was for something to “make his Milanese design pedigree proud”.

Romy certainly rose to the challenge. Well versed in creating individual looks for expansive, mid-century houses, she tackled the empty shell with verve. The owners were a family of five with teenaged children and a large dog, and they had lived in the house for around six years – updating it cosmetically – before embarking on this major renovation. Laid out with an arrangement of unconnected rooms leading to a kitchen at the back, the house nevertheless boasted a private aspect and an enviable location. Dark joinery, tiled and inlaid floors, and heavy curtains made it less appealing.

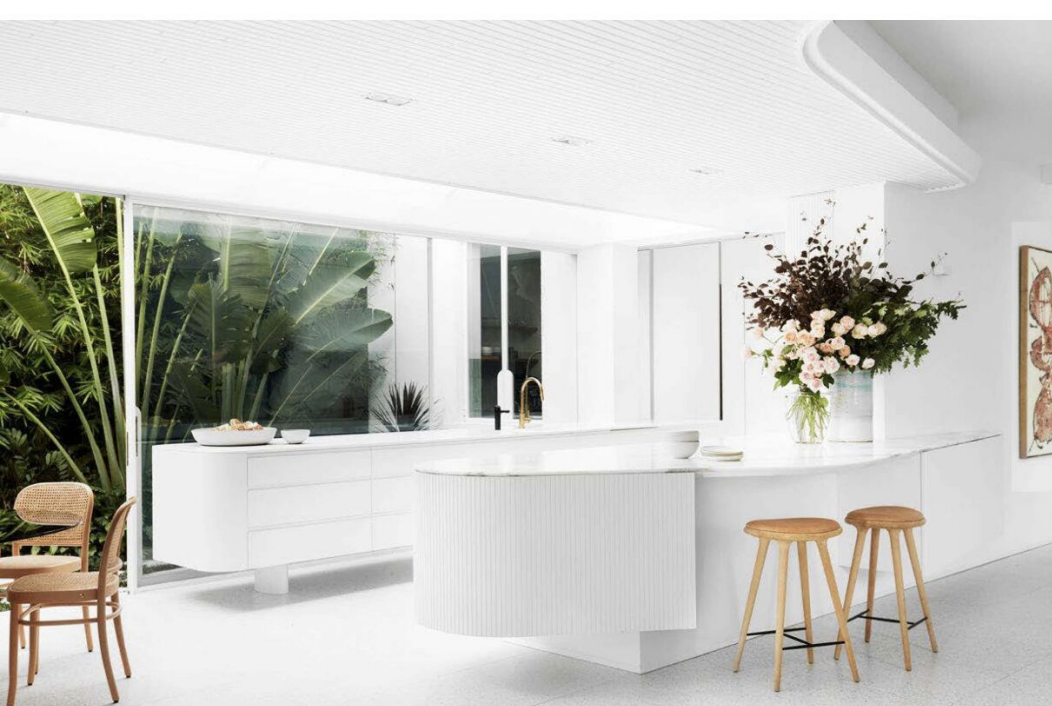
The original, classic modernist design by architect George Reeves included five bedrooms, six bathrooms and three living spaces set over two storeys, with a sprawling terrace, a pool and a tennis court. Appreciating the space and the history of the property, the owners wanted to give it the best renovation they could, paying respect to its heritage and unique architecture while creating a contemporary family home. Luigi, along with project architect Manuelle Schelp of Studio Schelp, used “the lightest touch to reinvigorate the existing design”.

As the house was already large there was no need to increase the footprint, but rather to reconfigure what was already there and improve the connection between indoors and out. Relocating the eat-in kitchen from the back of the house to connect with the formal living and dining as well as the outdoor entertaining area was key to a more contemporary feel. The use of Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances, finishes such as marble and Corian benchtops, and a walk-in coolroom gave it a luxurious element. The slatted finish on the joinery echoes original details found throughout.

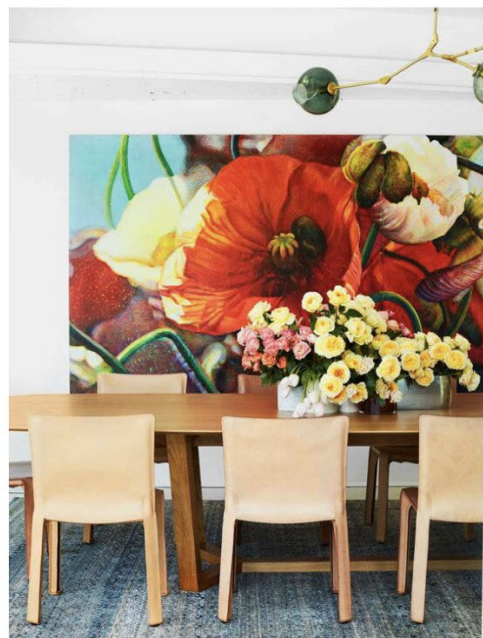
Features such as the cantilevered switchback staircase were carefully retained, albeit with a raised glass and brass balustrade to comply with building codes. Complementing the staircase, which is a focal point and seems to float within the central void of the house, is a custom silk runner from Whitecliffe Imports and a pendant light by David Weeks Studio that sits precisely on the line between mid-century and modern. “There were no compromises on this renovation and we wanted to treat the house with respect,” explains Romy. “Everyone saw it as a jewel that we needed to be careful with.”

Angles and curves are the architectural language of the house. Dramatic original features, such as the curvaceous awning over the entry and the curved ceiling bulkheads were replicated in a similarly curving kitchen bench and the curling, sunken slat seat that surrounds the outdoor fire pit. New steel and glass doors and windows as well as skylights amplify the light and the connection with the garden.

While the clients requested high-end fittings and finishes they also wanted the house to be family friendly and not overly formal. “It needed a fresh, contemporary feel to straddle its strong mid-century style,” says Romy. That was the tricky part. Marrying the »



This page, clockwise from top The bright white kitchen sits under a curved, timber-lined bulkhead, which is echoed in the shape of the bench topped with Statuario marble from Euro Marble, Astra Walker 'Icon' tapware from Candana, Mater oak and leather bar stools from Cult, Thonet 'N811' oak and rattan dining chairs. The formal dining area has a Lowe Furniture 'Atticus' table from Hub and Cassina 'Cab' chairs in natural leather from Space. Artwork by Tim Maguire from Martin Browne Contemporary, Rug from Cadrys. Outdoor furniture from Robert Plumb. **Opposite page** William Dangar's exuberant plantings provide a lush backdrop, Lowe Furniture 'Atticus' table from Hub and Cassina 'Cab' chairs from Space on a Cadrys rug, Lindsey Adelman 'Branching Bubble' chandelier, Mater bar stools from Cult.



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