

The front door of the Penn home opens onto a formal living area, where interior designer Babette Hayes has orchestrated a masterful mix of textiles. Sunlight is filtered through curtains in Destiny & Design Bob Pano in colour 2 from Verve Designer Collections. Wing chairs in Aalto in Birch from Mokum. Zanotta Giro coffee table from Space. Altone Moe side tables from Fanuli Furniture. A Marc Chagall print and adjacent artworks have been reframed in contemporary silver. Trio of artworks by Tania Chaitow. The golden orb sculpture is by Thomas Hoffman. For Where to Buy, see page 248.

TIME TRAVEL

A classic Sydney terrace has morphed into a contemporary family home that celebrates the best of past and present.

STORY CHRIS PEARSON | PHOTOGRAPHY RODNEY WEIDLAND & MAREE HOMER

Photograph by Rodney Weidland.
Styling by Babette Hayes.

This is the life

This home's interiors were designed in consultation with the entire family, resulting in a harmonious balance of social and private areas. Each family member took the opportunity to personalise their space. Parents Wendy and Brandon's retreat is the essence of serenity, while daughter Carla's dramatic 'cave' features inky shag carpet and dark fabrics and daughter Natasha's room is funky in luminous white with touches of bright red.



When they bought this terrace on Sydney's lower North Shore in 2006, Wendy and Brandon Penn resolved to give the Victorian grande dame a complete makeover, honouring its heritage while embracing the 21st century. "The house had all the appeal of a terrace, but I thought it would become really special if it was opened up," says Wendy. "A previous renovation had preserved all the heritage features, but I wanted to modernise it."

They briefed Dennis Rabinowitz of JPR Architects to let in the light, merge indoor and outdoor spaces, and give this 1880s home a contemporary twist. The Penns were also keen to create separate zones for themselves and their daughters - Carla, 23, and Natasha, 18 - plus an attic office with harbour-view deck.

Perhaps the boldest stroke was to replace the original staircase with a new one in blackbutt and glass that links the three floors, rising like a sculpture to form the spine of the house. "Some people were horrified that we took out the old staircase, but there wasn't enough light," says Wendy. Internal walls on the ground floor were also removed to foster an open flow of spaces and the kitchen was extended. In another unusual move, a family room at the back of the house was requisitioned for the main bedroom suite, which now looks out across a tranquil courtyard. >

BELOW Family and guests gather regularly at the Sushi Alucompact dining table from Fanuli Furniture. Nelson Swag Leg chairs from Living Edge. At left is an artwork by Anthony Breslin.

OPPOSITE High-impact pendant lights from Z Two Lights and concealed lighting in the blackbutt staircase risers illuminate a globe-spanning collection of art and sculpture. Artworks by Diego Mendoza. **For Where to Buy, see page 248.**

Photography by Maree Homer (this page), Rodney Weidland (opposite). Styling by Babette Hayes (opposite). Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes will allow.



Colour palette

Dulux Natural White (half strength, throughout)

Add a dash of..



Bristol Hillcrest



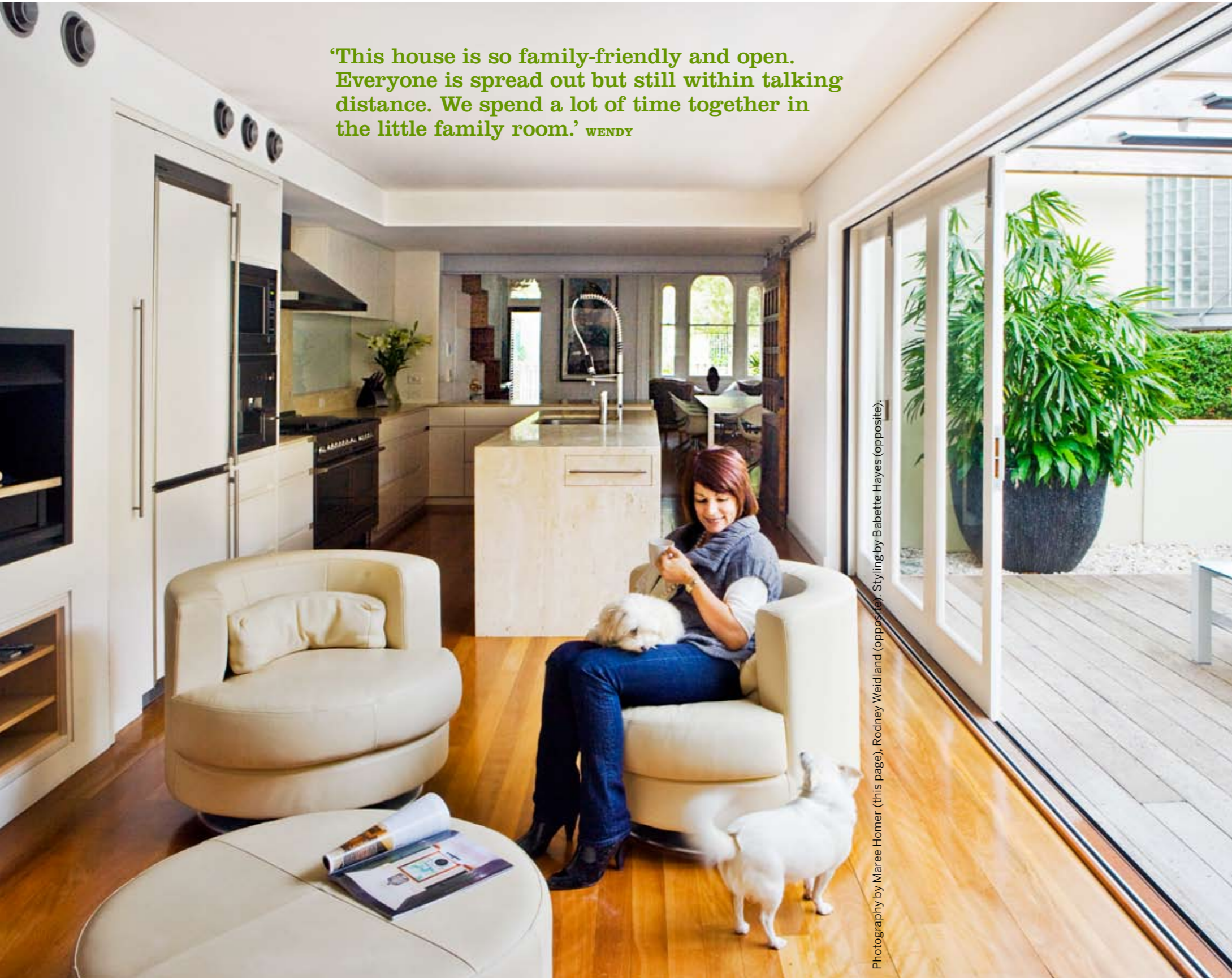
Porter's Paints Nut Brown



Dulux Pawn Broker

Deep red and brown tones add warmth to a neutral scheme.

‘This house is so family-friendly and open. Everyone is spread out but still within talking distance. We spend a lot of time together in the little family room.’ WENDY



Photography by Maree Homer (this page), Rodney Weidland (opposite). Styling by Babette Hayes (opposite).

< The front door opens onto a living room and adjoining dining area, which in turns flows into a kitchen fitted with generous bench space, well suited to frequent entertaining. At the other end of the kitchen there’s a cosy family area with sliding doors that connect to the walled courtyard. Beyond the family area, a passageway performs as a buffer zone that divides the open-plan social spaces from the parents’ bedroom and ensuite. A separate spiral staircase leads down to the three-car garage and a powder room.

On the first floor are the daughters’ bedrooms, each with ensuites. Carla and Natasha share a living area and study between their rooms, as well as a vast deck that extends the full width of the house. Up another flight, the existing attic space now houses Brandon’s study. Here, a double bed is cleverly concealed in the joinery, so the space can be pressed into service as a guestroom when needed.

The Penns called on interior designer Babette Hayes to brighten up the house while drawing on its past. “Wendy asked for a contemporary, fuss-free look and feel,” says Babette. As well as choosing luxurious surfaces – including expanses of creamy travertine in the main bedroom, kitchen and bathrooms – Babette reframed the couple’s art collection in line with the new aesthetic, swapping traditional gold frames for crisp, contemporary silver. She also re-covered their existing traditional furniture to give it a more modern spin. The result is a family home that’s fresh and contemporary, but with a reassuring nod to its past. >

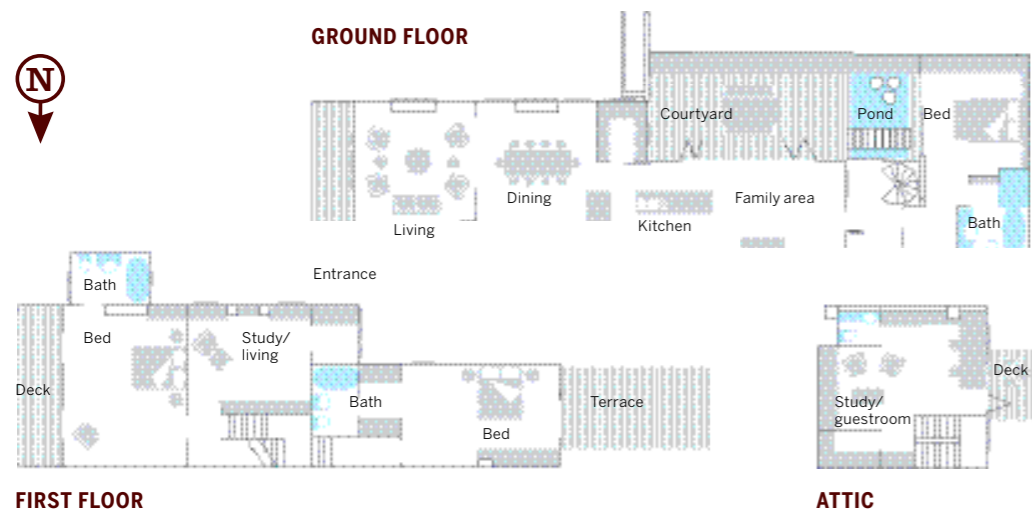
Architect: JPR Architects, East Sydney, NSW; (02) 9366 1133 or www.jprra.com.au. **Interior designer:** Babette Hayes Design, Mosman, NSW; (02) 9968 2091 or www.babettehayes.com.au.

LEFT Wendy settles in with Bindi the Moodle and Millie, a chihuahua-fox terrier cross, in the family living space. The adjoining kitchen features a lavish nine metres of bench space in Bianco travertine from Onsite Design Studio. The antique Japanese timber door visible at right leads to a pantry. Swivel chairs and ottoman from King Furniture. **BELOW** A built-in barbecue, retractable awning and outdoor heating make this courtyard a magnet for entertaining year-round. Table from Fanuli Furniture. Landscaping by David Ting, The Garden Guide. **For Where to Buy, see page 248.**





‘The colour palette creates an envelope of lightness, brightness and warmth. Warm white paint works well with both old and new, and gives the house a glorious, welcoming glow.’ **BABETTE HAYES, INTERIOR DESIGNER**



FIRST FLOOR

ATTIC



Photography by Rodney Weidland. Styling by Babette Hayes.

H&G loves

The main bedroom enjoys views of statuesque water features from David Ting, The Garden Guide. Above is Carla and Natasha's terrace. **OPPOSITE** For Wendy and Brandon's room, Babette Hayes designed an oversize padded bedhead to soften the streamlined cabinetry made by Tasker Joinery. A television pops out of the unit at the foot of the bed. To the right is a glass-walled ensuite. **For Where to Buy, see page 248.**

At night, clever lighting adds a dash of fantasy to indoor and outdoor spaces. Brightly coloured water features in the courtyard pond light up, as do planters on the first-floor terrace and, inside, the staircase risers.

What they did

THE BRIEF
Internal spaces were completely reworked to create three levels, each with its own outdoor living zone. The attic was turned into a study/guestroom with a deck.

KEY FEATURES
Central to the redesign is a spectacular staircase in blackbutt timber. Featuring glass balustrades, concealed lighting and pull-out storage on the side, it took six weeks to construct. Daylight cascades down the stairwell from a skylight on the top level. The risers are mounted clear of the walls, allowing light to filter around the edges.

WHAT IT COST
About \$1,000,000.

SAVE
Interior designer Babette Hayes modernised existing furniture with new fabrics.

SPLURGE
The antique Japanese pantry door is Wendy's favourite indulgence. Interior designer Babette Hayes had it lined with red silk and hung on a sliding track. "It's so unusual and it stands out," says Wendy. "It's hard to believe there's a pantry behind it."

HOMEOWNERS' TOP TIP
*Future-proof your home renovation by anticipating changing needs. "We wanted our bedroom on ground level," says Wendy, "mainly to avoid climbing stairs when we get older."