

BUMPER BIRTHDAY ISSUE: 60 YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN HOMES

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Well rounded

In reshaping an Art Deco penthouse apartment with harbour views, the owners of this Sydney home have engineered a synthesis of heady 1930s glamour and 21st-century comforts.

STORY GERALDINE CARDOZO PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL WEE



HOUSES

The sitting room's upholstered window seat traces the round contours of the building's Art Deco facade. Coffee table from Domayne. Antique timber screens from Orient House. Limewashed American oak floors from Precision Flooring. Rug from Robyn Cosgrove Rugs. For Where To Buy, see page 285.

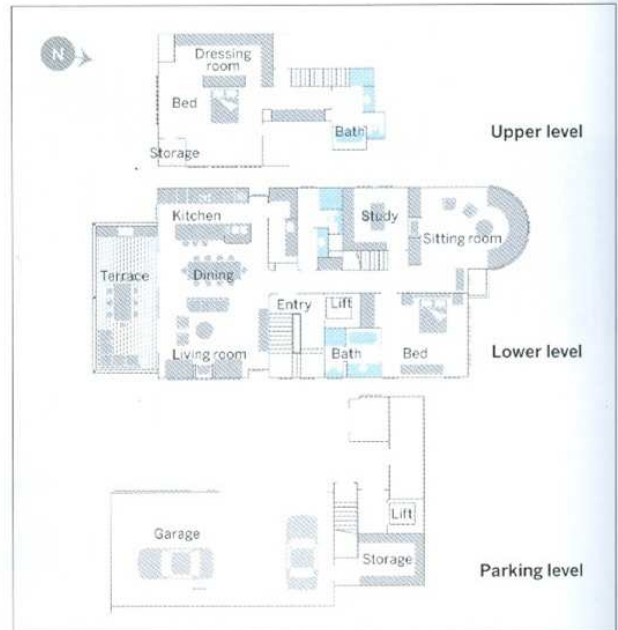


Prime location and heritage charm were major drawcards for the owners of this elegant Art Deco apartment overlooking Sydney's Balmoral Beach. With its parkside location and ocean views out to the harbour heads, it's easy to see what attracted the couple to buy two neighbouring 1930s heritage-listed duplexes, four apartments in total, and transform one into their own retreat, a state-of-the-art abode infused with old-time glamour.

Six years ago, while living in another apartment in one of the duplexes, developer Michael Stokes and partner Maryanne Collins snapped up the chance to buy the buildings, with a view to giving them a complete makeover. Renovating and extending, the couple created four luxurious apartments and kept this one, a north-facing penthouse, for themselves.

"We wanted to create a truly luxurious modern apartment, integrated behind the carefully restored facades," says Maryanne, who researched design and architectural details of the 1930s before bringing in architect Mohit Keni of Corben Architects and, at a later stage, interior designer Babette Hayes to advise on finishes, colours and furnishings.

The top floor of the two-level apartment houses the main bedroom, individual dressing rooms and ensuite; the entry ▶



'The choice of finishes is a respectful nod to the glamour and opulence of the Deco era. There is an Oriental influence – the '30s were a time when Shanghai was the new Paris.' MARYANNE COLLINS HOMEOWNER





THIS PAGE Bronze mirror surfaces illuminate the sleek, monochrome kitchen. Joinery by Reino Joinery. All kitchen appliances from Winning Appliances.
OPPOSITE A collection of vintage black-and-white photos from the 1920s and '30s is displayed in this sitting-room alcove. For Where To Buy, see page 285.

THIS PAGE Rain-sensitive metal shutters protect the outdoor terrace. Seating, coffee table and rug all from Dickson Avenue.

OPPOSITE top The stainless-steel balustrade features a marble corner pillar with internal lighting. The portrait was a gift from the artist, Sophie D'Abrigeon.

OPPOSITE bottom The Kinetic sofa in charcoal leather and an extendable wenge dining table in the open living/dining space are both from Oz Design Furniture. Dining chairs from Dall'Agnes. Jonathan Adler porcelain bowl from Orson & Blake. For Where To Buy, see page 285.



THE LAST DAYS OF DECO

"I've always loved the glamour of the 1930s," says owner Maryanne Collins (pictured left with Erlina, her Kerry blue terrier). For anyone refurbishing a period property, she suggests starting your research at the local library; hers provided excellent resources on the history of the street. The experience will come in handy for Maryanne and Michael as they tackle their next challenge: "We fell in love with a 100-year-old Federation house just up the road, and I'm very excited about it." So is Erlina, who no doubt looks forward to romping in the front and back yards of their new home.



◀ level has a guest bedroom, study, sitting room and open-plan living/dining room that opens to a deep terrace, effectively extending the entertaining space by another three metres.

“As the buildings are heritage-listed, the Art Deco feel had to come through,” explains architect Mohit. “We used a lot of shiny surfaces – mirror-polished stainless steel, chrome, large slabs and tiles of polished marble, mirrors – to reflect that feel.”

When it came to the interior, Babette took her cue from design elements Maryanne discovered in her research, incorporating features such as the mirror-polished stainless-steel balustrade, as well as taps and light fittings in keeping with the period. Babette suggested the polished stucco walls and the dramatic black japan finish on all the Tasmanian oak joinery.

The open-plan dining/entertaining area effortlessly bridges pre-war and contemporary aesthetics with its chunky charcoal leather sofa, wenge dining table and decorative accents in white. This chic monochrome scheme provides the perfect foil to the lavish formal sitting area, which conjures up exotic images of old-world opium dens. The curved window seat is dressed with dozens of cushions in a range of richly patterned and coloured velvets and silks, luxuriously tasselled and fringed with silk and bead trimmings. Finely woven grass cloth wallpaper brings subtle texture into this soft lounging space. ▶



The apartment's retro aesthetic conceals a sophisticated C-Bus automation system, which offers touch-screen control for airconditioning, curtains, security, lighting and entertainment systems.





At the touch of a button, microprocessors create different lighting effects in the main ensuite.

◀ It's here in the round sitting room that Maryanne has fully indulged her passion for vintage pieces, creating a period look that's both interesting and inviting. The ends of the curved seat are flanked by a pair of flamingo floor lamps, while antique timber screens frame the setting with theatrical flourish. Two period-perfect 1930s armchairs with fluted backs, discovered at the Sydney Antique Centre and now reupholstered in silk velvet with deep fringing, offer the perfect spot to curl up with a book. They've all been carefully selected to work with another of Maryanne's discoveries, a bright yellow 1920s rug with mauve, shocking pink and green floral details.

It's almost as if these and other decorating treasures had been waiting decades to be paired with the right owners, a match facilitated by a designer's professional insight. "I had been looking at the antique games table and stools and the 1920s dressing table for a long time, wishing I knew somebody who would appreciate them, because they are such great period pieces," explains Babette. "Maryanne just loved them, and they fit perfectly into this beautiful home."

H&G

Corben Architects, Neutral Bay, NSW, (02) 9904 1844 or www.corben.com.au.

Babette Hayes Design, Mosman, NSW; (02) 9968 2091 or www.babettehayes.com.au.

THIS PAGE Architect Mohit Keni designed a cosy window seat for the main bedroom, incorporating extra storage. Walls and ceiling in Dulux China White. Shutters from Sydney Plantation Shutters. **OPPOSITE TOP** Bedcover and chair in the main bedroom are in Karelian from the Mokum Winter collection. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** The main ensuite is clad in richly veined marble slabs and tiles from Interior Marble Australia. Bath from Kaldewei. For Where To Buy, see page 285.

