



## beachside bliss

This coastal home in Sydney's east combines indestructible design with style in spades for Rebecca and Andrew and their trio of active boys

STORY & STYLING NATALIE WALTON PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS WARNES





Old and new blend beautifully in the home of Andrew and Rebecca and their three sons, with original features – stained glass and timber floors {opposite, top left} – preserved and complemented by classic features, including a butler's sink from Belfast Sinks {opposite, bottom left} in the new kitchen. Their brood of boys meant practicality was a top renovation priority. "Because the boys are always out in the backyard playing sports, we had a dead patch of dirt that used to drive us crazy," says Rebecca, who eventually decided to lay artificial lawn from RenoGrass. "It's the best decision we ever made." >





"I wanted a *timeless* look for the house. I'm not a fan of ultra-clean, minimal interiors - I wanted it to feel *lived-in*" ~ Rebecca

With its classic inky black and white-trimmed exteriors, chic dark floorboards, and fuss-free interiors, Rebecca and Andrew's house would be equally at home on the east coast of the United States as in its actual location, on Sydney's eastern beaches. Yet, while their renovated home captures the simple graciousness of Hamptons style, the couple – who bought in 2009 with two young boys in tow and welcomed a third during the home's makeover – were far more concerned with practicalities than aesthetics when visualising their dream home. "It was more about creating a loving, inviting, coastal-style family home that was 'bulletproof' for three young boys," says Rebecca, mum to Oscar, nine, Harry, seven, and Oliver, three.

It took the very patient couple nearly a year and a half to find the right fit for their family. "We'd been to so many auctions and missed out – it was really quite disheartening," recalls Rebecca. Their patience was rewarded when this house popped up; a typical circa-1920s Californian bungalow with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The property ticked every box, with its level block and north-facing backyard, easy-living floor plan and a single storey that would enable them to do their own upstairs extension. "Andrew and I could quickly see the potential in the house and we knew straight away this was the one," says Rebecca.

The family lived in the home for a year before making any changes. Stage one, completed over two months, involved opening up the rear of the house to the back garden and pool, knocking out a wall that divided a small 1970s kitchen and tired, dark living room, as well as levelling the floors to create a seamless plan. A large L-shaped open-plan kitchen was designed around a "chef's table", a priority for Rebecca, who was a hospitality and tourism industry senior executive for 17 years before starting a family. Timber bi-folds replaced rusty, sliding aluminium doors and a terracotta patio made way for travertine tiles. The finishing touch was the glass pool fence that completely opened up and modernised the yard. "The pool is a great way to relax and spend quality family time at home," says Rebecca.

In mid-2013, Rebecca and Andrew engaged building company Cape Cod for stage two of the renovation, creating a second-storey parents' retreat. "I realise it's unheard-of but we had the most wonderful, positive and enjoyable experience with our renovation," says Rebecca, who believes having a clear brief helped. "I could see how the home would look before we even started." It also helped that Rebecca was on site every day to liaise with the construction manager and subcontractors. "If there were discrepancies or issues, and there weren't many, we dealt with them on the spot, and quickly moved on," she adds.

Once the renovation was complete, Rebecca, who wanted a relaxed, neutral decor and timeless fixtures and fittings, called on interior designer Nicky Line (who has since relocated back to the UK). The result is a beautifully stylish home that is the epitome of easy living and is a low-maintenance space that the whole family enjoys. "It has such a serene sense of calm to it," says Rebecca, who also can't get enough of the view from the back living room. "Sitting here makes it feel like you are on holidays."

**KITCHEN (opposite & top)** A double butler's sink from Belfast Sinks, a mixer sourced online from Traditional Taps and white subway tiles create a timelessly elegant look in the open kitchen. Shaker-style cabinetry by Zarella Kitchens is typically Hamptons, while the glass-fronted cabinets allow Rebecca to add a personal touch by displaying her favourite kitchenware in blue seaside hues. Contemporary chairs from Nick Scali and glass pendants from Monduluce keep the space looking clear and uncluttered.



"IT'S SO *practical* HAVING  
THE TABLE IN THE *heart*  
OF THE KITCHEN" ~ REBECCA



**DINING (above)** "I love that we can see the pool and garden while cooking and eating," says Rebecca (with Harry and Oscar) of the Grange table from Domo, which sits centrestage in the kitchen. >





**HALLWAY (left)** Decorative moulding was added to the upstairs and downstairs hallways as a way to seamlessly integrate the home's two levels and eras. Stand-out 'Marseille' pendants from La Maison illuminate artworks, including a Olivier Rasir painting, *Fun City*, from Art2Muse Gallery (on right). "It is such a happy, whimsical piece," remarks Rebecca. "Although the home has lots of blue accents, I loved that this brought some personality to an otherwise generic hallway. And the colours are so pretty."

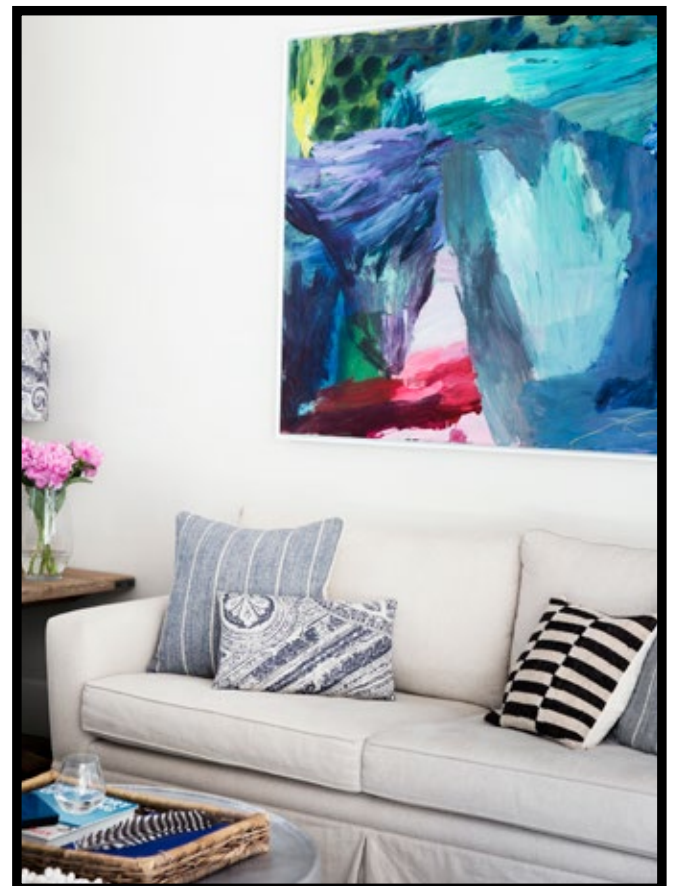
**STAIRS (bottom left)** A cluster of delightful hanging pendants from Fat Shack Vintage create a rustic focal point in the sun-drenched stairwell.

**LIVING (below & opposite)** Originally a separate room, the back living space was opened up to create an area that could converse with the rest of the rear of the house. "Nicky and I worked hard to make this space just right," says Rebecca, who wanted a functional spot with a touch of sophistication. "The fabrics Nicky selected for the accent pieces give it a beautiful feel," she adds. The raw linen sofas, manufactured by BedNest, are beautifully accessorised with cushions in hues of blue. Adding a lively hit of colour is a large painting by Catherine Cassidy. >

"I NEVER wanted THE SECOND storey TO LOOK LIKE IT WAS AN AFTERTHOUGHT" ~ REBECCA



PAINT  
Wash & Wear 101 Barrier  
Technology in  
Buff It Half,  
\$74.95/4L, Dulux.



Shades of blue and  
*natural* textures  
against a base of  
warm neutrals  
illustrate how a  
*coastal* interior  
can be subtle  
and elegant



RUG

'Sandrift' custom-made  
wool rug, \$246/sqm,  
Armadillo & Co.





  
**BEDHEAD**  
'Oxford' bedhead with  
'Husk' fabric in  
Limestone, \$1399/  
queen, BedNest.



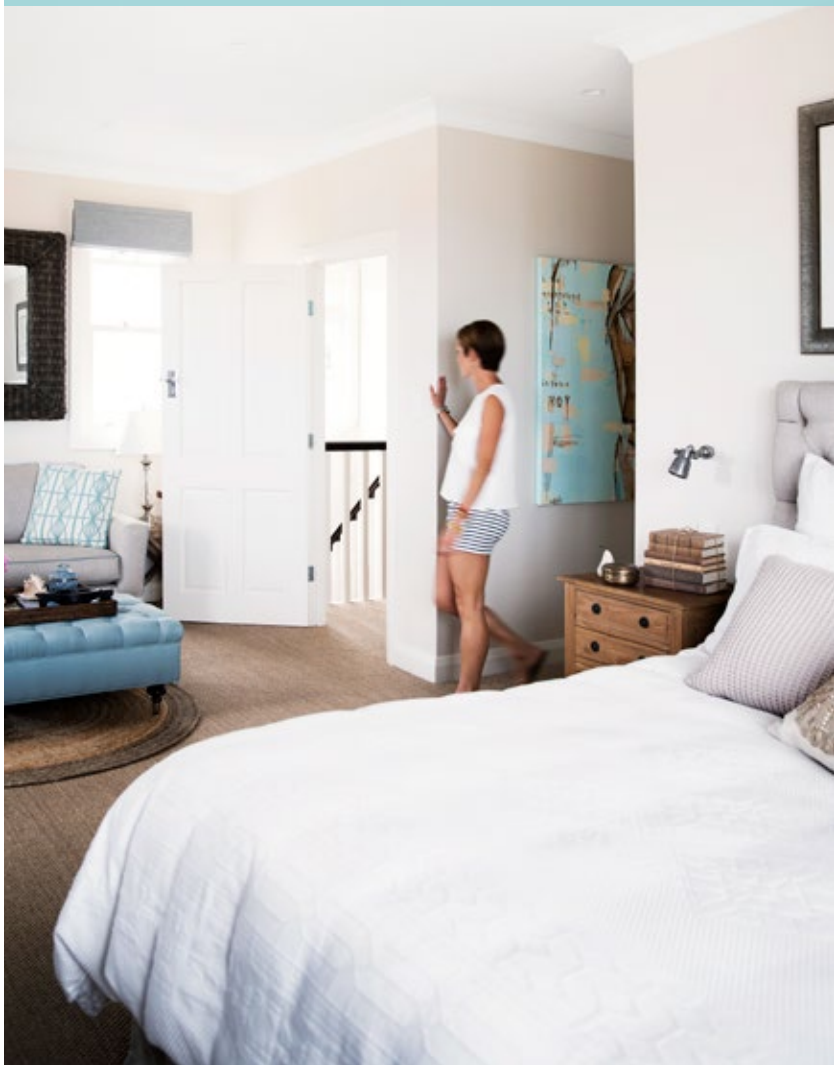


**MASTER BEDROOM (opposite)** The parents' zone has a luxury hotel-suite vibe, complete with a sitting room, walk-in robe and ensuite. "It needed to be a space that we could retreat to after a busy day and just chill out," says Rebecca. The BedNest-designed bedhead and valance, matched with white linen from Sheridan and a seashell cushion from Pottery Barn, create a calm palette for sleep. Traditional La Maison bedside tables are contrasted with industrial-style wall lights from Emac & Lawton.

**SITTING AREA (this page)** A separate sitting area in the master suite was high on Rebecca and Andrew's wishlist. "We use the space to read at night or debrief at the end of the day over a glass of wine," she says. "It's a great place to just sit, make a quiet phone call, relax and reconnect." The pretty blue curtains in the bedroom were found at Pottery Barn and influenced the decoration of the whole space; the BedNest ottoman in Warwick 'Tilda' fabric in Duck Egg was designed to match, while the sofa and armchair (also by BedNest) are piped in the same blue. Rebecca took a pair of the curtains to local business Love is Blinds, which turned them into Roman blinds for the space. Natural fibres are layered in a round 'Zinnia Weave' rug from Armadillo & Co over sisal flooring from International Floorcoverings. >



"WHEN I NEED *me* time,  
I LOVE *retreating* TO THE  
MASTER BEDROOM" ~ REBECCA







"WE GET SO MUCH *pleasure* FROM  
WATCHING THE BOYS ENJOY THE  
*house* AS MUCH AS WE DO" ~ REBECCA



**OLIVER'S ROOM (left)** Oliver, the youngest in the family's brood, has a room he can grow into, courtesy of a simple colour combination of red, white and blue. Nautical details, including a set of oars and a lifebuoy from Siroccohome, add a sense of fun to the space.

**OSCAR'S ROOM (bottom left & below)** Before the second storey was added, this room was the master bedroom. Now it belongs to eldest son Oscar (right, next to seven-year-old Harry), who has plenty of room for sleepovers with a custom-made timber bunk bed from Beachwood. A beanbag from Siroccohome provides a cosy seat for quieter moments and sits beneath bookshelves from Pottery Barn Kids. Shades of blue and white – bedlinen from Adairs and a Armadillo & Co rug – continue the home's subtle coastal theme. >







WE LOVE

### *Beachside bathing*

Rebecca opted for luxury in the upper-level ensuite: enter the Clearwater 'Formoso' bath, exquisite

Bastow tapware and nautical wall lights from Designer Lights. The luxe masterstroke? Honed and filled travertine tiles (\$74.95/sqm, Amber Tiles), which are utterly glamorous and evocative of sandy shores.





**SITTING ROOM** "Until recently, this room was always my problem child – it never worked," Rebecca says. Interior designer Nicky Line replaced the modular sofa with new ones from BedNest and custom window seats that double as toy storage. Lovely Ikat cushions from No Chintz are a colourful addition.





## INSIDE STORY

### Who lives here?

Rebecca, a stay-at-home mum; her husband Andrew, an infrastructure executive; their sons Oscar, nine, Harry, seven, and Oliver, three; and Ruffy the dog.

### What is the highlight of your home?

Rebecca: "The master retreat has such a serene sense of calm to it. It's quite lovely sleeping with the French doors open and curtains dancing in the breeze. It's such a treat to open the curtains and catch a glimpse of the sunrise and ocean before three little tykes dive into our bed demanding breakfast."

### The benefits of a neutral palette?

"It allows you to inject your own colour and personality into a home. It's very easy to layer and change elements such as artwork, cushions or a rug if the fundamentals are there."

### What is your favourite artwork?

"Olivier's Rasir's piece in the hallway and Catherine Cassidy's artwork in the back living area. Visitors always comment that the house has such a great vibe."

### Any advice to someone renovating?

"Know what you want in advance. Planning and research are the keys to success."

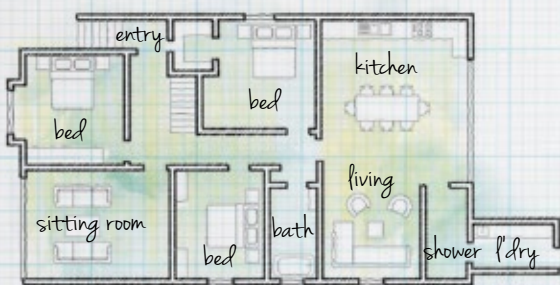


The upstairs extension transformed the look of this 1920s Californian bungalow, which is painted in Dulux Monument with crisp white trims.

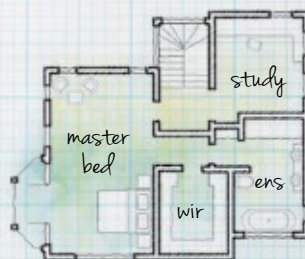


Outdoor chairs from Cosh Living are grouped for conversation.

## PLANS



Ground floor



First floor

## CONTACT

### Builder

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