

renovate + revamp

INSIDE OUT At the junction of the formal living area and verandah, exquisite timberwork and parquet flooring uphold the original craftsmanship of the Federation-era house. Christopher Guy armchair from Laura Kincaid.

VERANDAH The contemporary outdoor sofa and table from Parterre establish a resort-style ambience on the sea-facing verandah.

Smart buys: Penelope velvet cushion in Mallard (on armchair), \$39, and Denver striped cushions (outdoors), \$38/each, all from Rapee. For Where to Buy, see page 220.



Seaside attraction

In a prime position on Sydney's eastern beaches, a Federation beauty awakes to a new chapter and a new storey.

STORY CHRIS PEARSON | STYLING VIVIEN WALSH | PHOTOGRAPHY MAREE HOMER





DINING "Restraint in the palette means it is complementing the views, not fighting them," says interior designer Brendan Wong, pictured here. Chairs from Ke-zu. Bryant chandelier from Laura Kincade. The framed piece is an African textile found on the owners' travels.

Designer buy: Willow dining table, from \$4000, Zuster.

KITCHEN Luxe limestone benches are paired with cabinets in Evener EcoSilkwood from Elton Group. Timber and leather stool by Brendan Wong Design. Window seat upholstered in Lombardy fabric from Westbury Textiles. Laura Kirar armchair from Cavit & Co. **For Where to Buy, see page 220.**

Perched above a beach in Sydney's eastern suburbs, this Federation semi with its ornate timber verandah was Michelle and Craig's dream home when they bought it in 1996. "It had the view, it was close to the water and we knew we would never be built out," says Michelle.

Inside, however, the layout was less expansive. As their four children, now aged 16 to 24, grew older and needed more personal space, the house seemed smaller and smaller.

Previous owners had converted what was originally a three-bedroom home into a makeshift five-bedder by partitioning the smaller bedrooms. Meanwhile, a 1960s rear extension had a single door connecting the living areas to the pool, with a laundry monopolising the space between.

"The house didn't flow," says Michelle. "We wanted to see the ocean and the pool, and get breezes throughout. And we had this wasted space underneath that was full of junk."

With no room to extend up or outward, the solution to the family's space dilemma would come from below. They decided to add an extra storey by excavating into the bedrock.

The couple approached New York-based expat Stephen Wang to undertake the architectural aspects of the makeover and interior designer Brendan Wong to revitalise the interiors.

"The idea was to give the kids more personal space, as well as better-quality shared areas," says Brendan. The brief also called for more natural light and a stronger connection to the ocean at the front and the pool at the back. Quality and attention to detail were paramount, as the couple were attached to their oceanfront position and were in no hurry to move.

The end product is light and airy; an inspired transformation that gives this venerable home room to breathe. >

ADD VALUE

'The not-so-visible electrical and lighting upgrades and the sustainable worth of solar are often overlooked, but all homeowners understand the true value of a working home.' STEPHEN WANG



FORMAL LIVING A touch of teal in this neutral scheme relates to the blue of the Pacific beyond. Sofa in Pollack Hmong Plush from South Pacific Fabrics. Lotus floor lamp from Laura Kincade. Cushions on sofa from Rapee. Michelle found the oriental rug on her travels overseas. *Winter View* artwork by Kathryn Ryan from the Tim Olsen Gallery. **Smart buy: Mohair throw in Silver, \$170, Laura Ashley.**
LIVING, DETAIL Thomas O'Brien Longacre table lamp from Laura Kincade. *Still Waiting to Dance* artwork by Robert Dickerson. **Designer buy: Baker Lexicon console, \$8314, Cavit & Co.**
INFORMAL LIVING Soft furnishings amp up the comfort factor in this airy spot with pool views. Ingrid chair from Jordan. Table from Cavit & Co. Blue Bird Collections cushion from Patina. **For Where to Buy, see page 220.**

Colour palette

Dulux Grand Piano (quarter strength, walls throughout)

Dulux Lexicon (half strength, ceilings and trim)

Add a dash of...

Porter's Paints Isis

Porter's Paints Rubble

Sea blues add vibrancy to a neutral palette and play up the ocean vista.

< Just off the entry hall is the open-plan living room, dining room and kitchen, plus an informal living area overlooking the pool. An old servery between the kitchen and dining rooms has been replaced with an open archway for a seamless flow between the spaces.

The top storey, gutted to the joists, now accommodates a main bedroom suite with ensuite and dressing room, plus another two generous bedrooms with shared bathroom. To optimise ocean vistas from the main bedroom, a sunroom along the front was removed and a new double-sash window installed on the northern wall. In the new basement level, complete with its own entrance, are two more bedrooms, a steam room, bathroom and laundry.

To create consistency between new and existing architecture on the top level, Brendan has replicated Federation features such as corning, deep skirtings and doorways with fanlights. The classic decor throughout the house sits comfortably within a Federation envelope, while artworks and antiques have been chosen for their timeless elegance.

"The aesthetic reflects the personality and spirit of the family: relaxed, calm, vibrant," says Brendan. "It may be a beach house but it has a sense of worldliness and sophistication." >

Architect: Stephen Wang+Associates; thenewyorkarchitect.com. Interior designer: Brendan Wong Design, Surry Hills, NSW; (02) 9699 3228 or brendanwong.com.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes will allow.

This is the life

Each family member has their own space, thanks to the reconfigured bedrooms. The parents' sunny suite, with its new balcony and north-facing window, is now bathed in light and enjoys sweeping ocean views, making it perfect for quiet time. Downstairs, the living level has been opened up to create seamless connections between social zones, fostering family interaction and providing a perfect venue for entertaining. These zones can be separated if privacy is desired. "While the kids are watching TV, Craig and I can close the sliding doors and go into the front living room or sit on the front balcony," says Michelle.





ENSUITE Marble walls and floor tiles and limestone bath surround all from The Rock Masonry. Sconce from Laura Kincade. **Designer buy: Dornbracht Madison Flair basin tap set, \$3312, Meco.** **MAIN BEDROOM** The bedside tables from Tyrone Dearing feature oak drawer fronts. New flooring in American oak. Black and white cushion from Rapee. Rear cushion in Pollack Tiki from South Pacific Fabrics. **Smart buy: Thomas O'Brien Crystal Block table lamp, \$950, Laura Kincade.** **INSIDE OUT** Quality details abound in both interior and outdoor spaces, including the Bowmont chandelier from Laura Kincade and an Ixit outdoor bench from Parterre. **Smart buy: Megan Park embroidered cushion covers on bench, \$253/each, No Chintz. For Where to Buy, see page 220.**



The renovation

THE GOAL
To create more private spaces and a better flow of communal areas, and to capture sea views.

WHAT THEY DID
Excavated into the bedrock to create a third level and free up space for larger bedrooms upstairs; opened up living areas to create better continuity and flow.

WHAT THEY LOVE
The sense of openness and fluid connection between living zones indoors and out.

SAVE
"We retained two types of timber flooring rather than replace them all to match," says interior designer Brendan Wong. "It gives a subtle distinction between formal and informal areas."

SPLURGE
Quality fittings such as Dornbracht tapware are an indulgence that the owners appreciate on a daily basis.

TOP TIP
✳ Consider your long-term plans and do as much work as your budget permits in one phase to minimise disruption. **H&G**

ADD VALUE

'Generally kitchen and bathroom renovations add the most value to a property. Here, the usable area of the house was also increased by excavating the lower level to create bedrooms and utility space.' **STEPHEN WANG, ARCHITECT**

FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



BASEMENT

