

These pages In the main living area at the bottom of the sweeping staircase sits a c1950 'MR7' sofa by Branco & Preto from Espasso, New York. Le Corbusier Trois Femmes Sur Fond Blanc tapestry from Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris, hangs above a c1950 sofa by Joaquim Tenreiro, from Espaço Cardeal, São Paulo. Bronze and glass coffee table by Fred Brouard from Lebreton, San Francisco. Custom silk and wool rug from Robyn Cosgrove. Skipper and Pollux c1970 'Eros' Carrara console by Angelo Mangiarotti from Pamono. Vintage Holmegaard set of three teardrop vases by Per Lütken.



or interior designer Brendan Wong, this home on Sydney's southern beaches was literally a dream project. Years previously, he had stood on the pavement, spellbound by its bold curves and biomorphic form, masterminded by renowned architect Reuben Lane in the late 1960s. It was vacant and had fallen victim to unsympathetic renovations but Brendan, admiring the rendered white exterior, yearned to return the local landmark to its former glory.

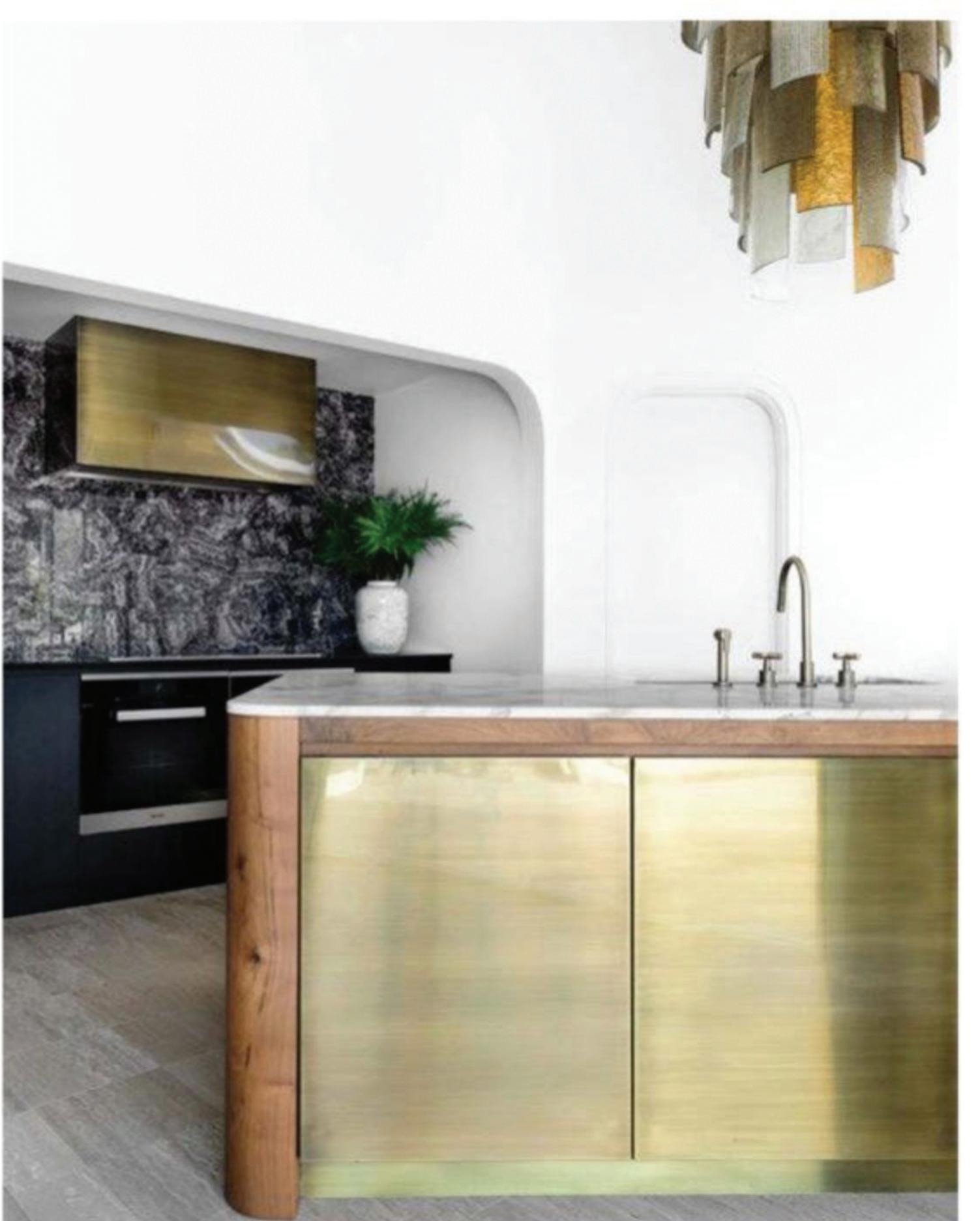
It was no ordinary home. Reuben had an impressive pedigree, having worked with masters such as Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer and Le Corbusier. The influence of the former showed in this kidney-shaped organic home with its dynamic, flowing spaces and vast picture windows with panoramic water views. With its unabashed celebration of the concrete curve, right angles and flat planes were virtually banished under its spiral cedar ceiling.

Brendan's dream came true when the current owner bought the iconic home in 2014. He, too, had earlier admired it from afar. "We would surf across the bay from the house while it was being built in the early 1970s," he says. "It was very bold and memorable, both in size and design." Years later, he got much closer. "As we walked through the front door and saw the way the house had been designed to maximise the amazing view, we were sold," he says. "We could see the potential for a restoration that was sympathetic to the original architecture but allowed the reconfiguration of some areas to make them more open, spacious and consistent with the grand scale of the house." The owner, having admired Brendan's work in Belle, thought his aesthetic would make a good match – and the designer's thorough knowledge of the house and its provenance sealed the deal. Together with architect Jeffrey Clarke of Coastal Architecture, Brendan worked to honour its past, but not slavishly so, by adding a fresh, modern twist. "I wanted to work within the organic envelope, to enhance the architecture and remedy some of the poorer attempts at renovation, such as the kitchen," says Brendan. "The clients believed strongly that the sensibilities of the original architect should be respected, but sought a new life for the home with modern comforts that could take it forward." The central living volume was retained, while all the other areas were replanned or refitted to create generous spaces, improving both the flow of the home and sightlines to the spectacular view. Most significantly, seven bedrooms were reconfigured into four larger bedrooms and a study. Meanwhile the upper level living and kitchen spaces, suffocated from earlier interventions, were opened up by removal of walls, reoriented to soak up the water views and reimagined with bold new joinery. The new open-plan master suite resulted from combining bedrooms, nursery and bathrooms into one freeflowing space, again maximising the view to the bay beyond.

Comprising three levels, the home is accessed on the top level, which houses open-plan living and kitchen, and the dining area, together with a guestroom. Down a sweeping curved staircase is the home's centrepiece, the main living area or atrium, a music area in the original house where chamber concerts were often performed. It shares this level with the main ensuite, two bedrooms, a study and the cellar. A media room, gym and pool sit on the third lower level.

"It was important for us that the renovation and interior design was consistent with the architect's original bold vision," explains Brendan, but that created problems as well as possibilities, because it entailed myriad curves in new internal walls, ceilings, joinery and furniture. "The sensuous curvilinear





roofline inspired many interior solutions but presented challenges in execution," he says. "Prototypes, mock-ups and other innovative modelling techniques were required to achieve complex curves in the stucco walls, ceilings, joinery, glazing and custom upholstery.

By contrast, "unexpected" finishes, textures and patterns, never part of Reuben's relatively spare modernist shell, brought new layers of intrigue to the home. The opulent materials palette includes walnut, travertine, onyx, brass, leather, shagreen and silk, with the kitchen featuring amethyst splashbacks, forged bronze hardware, hand-turned walnut details and a vintage chandelier to accentuate the vertical volume. "It was important to create a deliberate aesthetic ambiguity between the old and new," says Brendan. "It is an aesthetic journey of brave yet natural materials coupled with fine interior detailing." The spirit of mid-century modernism features strongly in the curated mix of furnishings, with its frequent nods to the home's two muses. Streamlined vintage furniture with hints of Brazilian modernism pays homage to Oscar Niemeyer and a Le Corbusier tapestry makes a bold statement in the living room void.

It may be an iconic landmark, but the home maintains human scale for its owners. One of Brendan's favourite features is how it luxuriates in views and light, but carefully planned sightlines also preserve privacy. And, though known for its freeform shapes and curves, seven-metre windows and soaring timber ceiling, the much-photographed main living area – once captured in black and white by Max Dupain – is also a relaxed, family space. "It was the dream project with dream clients," says Brendan. "Our vision was aligned and we collaborated over four years to breathe new life into the home. We took our role as joint custodians of this beautiful piece of architecture seriously."

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This page, clockwise from top left In the dining area, Minotti 'Owens' chairs by Rodolfo Dordoni from De De Ce. 'Bangle' dining table from Hudson Furniture, New York. In the informal living area, custom sofa by Brendan Wong Design. Etched glass with agate inlay coffee table, c1978, from Galerie Stanislas, Brussels. Open-vein travertine flooring from Granite & Marble Works. In the guest room, Giorgetti 'Hug' armchair by Rossella Pugliatti from Space. Coffee table by Isamu Noguchi for Herman Miller. Picasso Le Peintre et Son Modele tapestry from Jules Pansu, Paris. Opposite page, from top In the media room, 'DS-600' sofa from Domo. 1950s Swedish intarsia coffee table from Nordlings, Stockholm. 1960s wall lights, by Holm Sorensen, from Moetkunsten, Arnhem, The Netherlands. In the kitchen, sliced amethyst splashback from Granite & Marble Works, Murano chandelier from Jean-Marc Fray. Tapware from Watermark Designs, New York. Joinery in turned American walnut with rangehood by Astor Metal Finishes.







