

Interior designer Brett Mickan's Sydney apartment flows with a creative

A BENCH SEAT IN STRIPED FABRIC BY PAUL SMITH FOR MAHARAM FITS WELL AMONGST THE VERDANT COLOURS OF THE DECK AREA FEATURING 'LAUNCH' STOOLS BY BEN MCCARTHY FOR GO HOME AND METAL 'LUXEMBOURG' ARMCHAIRS BY COTSWOLD FURNITURE GROUP. OPPOSITE: A HAND-BLOWN GLASS VASE FROM ITALY FILLED WITH POPPIES FROM GRANDIFLORA PICKS UP ON THE COLOURS OF A 1960s ABSTRACT PAINTING. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.



use of colour, leading to an entirely green outdoor room.



COLOUR CODES

PHOTOGRAPHER: LISA COHEN PRODUCER/WRITER: ALEXANDRA GORDON

THE STUDY, WITH IN-BUILT DESK FROM DESIGN WAREHOUSE, IS TUCKED AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE DINING AREA FEATURING A 'LINKO' DINING TABLE FROM DESIGN WAREHOUSE, A MIX OF VINTAGE CHAIRS PICKED UP IN MIAMI AND GREY B&B ITALIA CHAIRS, AND A PALE BLUE DIAMANTINI & DOMENICONI 'CUCÙ' CLOCK



"Making it [all] fit in this space,

"I HEARD SOMEONE ONCE say their apartment is designed to entertain while they are preparing for the meal," says interior designer Brett Mickan, "I love that!" His two-bedroom apartment in Sydney's Surry Hills, where he lives with partner Nick English, is certainly an absorbing, colourful space full of art, objects and eclectic furniture. English adds: "When we have people come for dinner or for parties, often you will see people's eyes wandering, they are just drinking it all in."

The pair found the penthouse apartment, located in a Burley Katon Halliday-designed development, after looking non-stop for three months. Furniture was placed and all artwork hung a week later, having been shipped back from Miami where Mickan was working as a designer for eight years and English had been working in the banking industry.

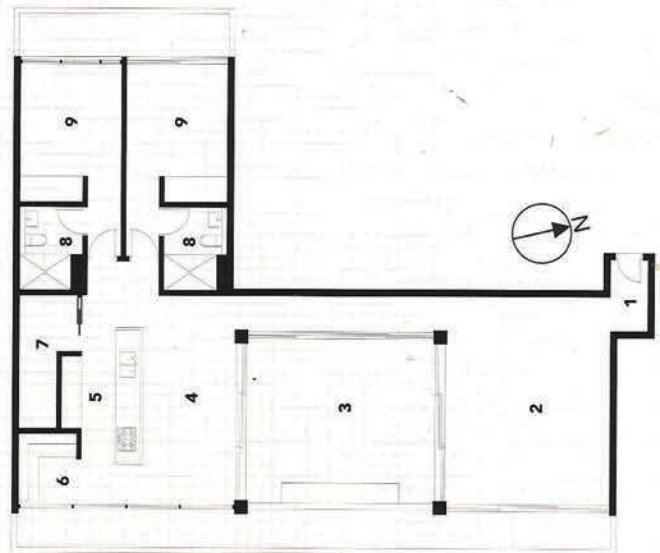
"It was a tricky thing because it is designed to be a minimal contemporary building and my style is hardly minimal, although I do call it contemporary," says Mickan. "Making it fit in this space, without feeling out of place, had a lot to do with the colours."

At the time, Mickan chose a strong neutral for the interior to pull together the clash of colours and style, and he has since changed the palette twice; first to an even darker hue before going back to something similar to the original shade.

While the bones of the apartment are in contrast to Mickan's self-proclaimed "1960s baroque meets contemporary modern" style, the layout (which remains intact) is something they both particularly like about their home. "I love our living room and the way that it connects to the outdoor space," says English.



FLOOR PLAN



NB. No structural alterations were made to this apartment

1 entry 2 living 3 deck 4 dining 5 kitchen 6 study 7 pantry/laundry 8 bathroom 9 bedroom

ABOVE LEFT: ENJOYING THE 'OUTDOOR ROOM', BRETT MICKAN (LEFT) AND NICK ENGLISH REST ON THE BENCH SEAT UPHOLSTERED IN STRIPED FABRIC BY PAUL SMITH FOR MAHARAM. ABOVE TOP RIGHT: ANIMAL FARM. THIS LITTLE PIGGY ON THE DINING TABLE IS ACTUALLY A CAST SILVER 'BANK IN THE FORM OF A PIG' DESIGNED BY HARRY ALLEN FOR AREAWARE.

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B+A

Aim of renovation The apartment had a very generic 'dressed to sell' feel, with dove grey walls, grey tiled floors and dove grey roller blinds. My aim was to inject colour and character while respecting the clean lines of the architecture.

How long did it take? The apartment was a new build, so it was a matter of paint and installation of furniture and decorative elements – done in one week. Custom pieces like the entrance fabric wall panels, curtains, built-in deck bench and office fit-out took around 10 weeks.

Which aspects of the renovation are you happiest with? The transformation of the outdoor deck into an outdoor room in the sky, achieved through the green paint, or instant greenery. It creates the illusion that the garden extends into the green treetops in the distance.

Any tips for those doing a similar project? It's important not to exactly match colours as this will create a space where any slightly off hues will look out of place. Match tones not colours, so you make a space where mixed elements sit comfortably.

Materials used? Main wall colour, Dulux 'Antique'; ceiling, Dulux 'Blue to You'; quarter walls on deck, Dulux 'Swamp Shrub'; deck, Dulux 'Kelly's Flower'; bedroom walls, Dulux 'Winter Waves'.

Interior designer

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Upholsterer

The Furnishing Salon, 0410 517 516.



TOP: COLOUR AND PATTERN IN THE LIVING ROOM, WITH SOFA IN FABRIC FROM FLORIDA'S KIRK BRUMMEL (A CUSTOM-DYED STRIPE ON WHITE SAILCLOTH). A 1960s CHROME AND MARBLE COFFEE TABLE FROM LINCOLN ROAD OUTDOOR ANTIQUE & COLLECTIBLE MARKET IN MIAMI SITS ON A WOOL UZBEKISTANI RUG BOUGHT IN VIRGINIA. LEFT: A NEPALESE RUNNER BY JAN KATH, FROM CADRYS, LEADS THE WAY FROM A VINTAGE BAR CABINET WITH CERAMIC BUDDHA LIGHT, BOTH FROM MIAMI'S ART & ANTIQUES. A HEADLESS DOG VASE FROM BOXX HOLDS BLOOMS.



THE LIVING AREA EXTENDS THROUGH SLIDING GLASS DOORS TO THE OUTSIDE AREA, PAINTED ENTIRELY IN GREEN. INSIDE, THE SCENIC PILLOWS ON THE ARMCHAIRS, COVERED WITH A GOLDEN KVADRAT MAHARAM 'ARIA' FABRIC, ARE FROM SUKIE IN THE UK.





Space is achieved through a flow of common areas that open

THE KITCHEN IS DESIGNED TO BE BOTH A PART OF THE APARTMENT AND CLEVERLY HIDDEN AWAY, WITH FLUSH CABINETS AND LAUNDRY ENTRANCE PAINTED THE SAME WALL COLOUR. ACCESSORIES SUCH AS THE ANTIQUE LAMP AND CRYSTAL DECANTER OF SCOTCH BLUR THE LINES BETWEEN FUNCTIONAL SPACE AND DECORATIVE FURNITURE. THE RAISED SPLASHBACK AREA, ENCLOSING THE KITCHEN, WORKS TO HIDE THE MESS OF DINNER PARTY PREPARATION.



onto an outdoor room



ABOVE: LIPS POUT ON A JONATHAN ADLER VASE, PLACED ON A VINTAGE ONYX BEDSIDE TABLE FROM MIAMI. THE 1970s CHROME FOUR-POSTER BED, ALSO BOUGHT IN MIAMI, IS DRESSED WITH FRETTE LINEN AND AN ITALIAN COVERLET BLANKET. THE PALE TONES OF A WATERCOLOUR BY TOM KLEMM IMPART A DREAMY MOOD IN THE ROOM. IN THE BATHROOM, TOP RIGHT, A LITTLE BLUE CERAMIC RABBIT FROM MIAMI'S LINCOLN ROAD OUTDOOR ANTIQUE & COLLECTIBLE MARKET HOLDS A SHOCK OF PINK FLOWERS. MULTI-COLOUR CONTINUES IN A STRIPED MISSONI BATH TOWEL, FROM SPENCE & LYDA. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.



A feeling of space is achieved through a continuous flow of generous common areas that open onto an unusually large outdoor room, painted green.

Mickan explains: "You enter this small lift in a contemporary building and you walk through this narrow corridor, and then the apartment opens up for you – it feels light and open to the sky. The ceilings are high, so it feels like the luxury of space inside a small square metre-age, and that's what I really love about it."

What makes the apartment home, however, are the pieces that Mickan and English have collected along the way. "I have a little obsession for fifties, sixties and seventies stuff so a lot is from antique stores, a lot from my dealer Carlos Castellar of Art & Antiques in Florida, and then a lot of the art is from that period," says Mickan, adding, "I am constantly looking for clients and it's just too irresistible to not buy for myself!"

While travel is an inspiration for Mickan's design work, he and English also bring something back from each place they go. "That's why we bought that big Murano vase when we were in Venice. I am not necessarily into buying a kitschy souvenir, I just want something I think is beautiful that's from that place," says Mickan.

"Everything has a little story to it, a lot of the artwork is from friends that have come to stay, and as a gift they have given us something," says English of the photographs, paintings and drawings hung in clusters running from the corridor all the way into the bedrooms and bathrooms.

Mickan adds: "You come in and there's a hundred little things to look at which are stories of our lives, vendors we know and artists we've met. That's what it's about." **VL**