

BREEZE ON THROUGH

LAIID-BACK LUXURY Take the basic elements of an Aussie beach house, then add the impressive scale of a Hamptons build and the busy lives of a modern-day family and this is what you get - a new build that already feels well established on its Sydney northern beaches perch. Homeowner Renee worked hard to balance detail with simplicity in the home that she shares with husband Anthony, son Hugo, 12, and daughter Charlotte, 10 (pictured). The floorboards are extra wide (1900mm Prestige Oak engineered boards in Parana from Preference Floors) and, overhead, wide exterior-grade Weathergroove boards from Weathertex flow to the outdoors. Other holiday-style ingredients include a sandstone gas fire created with a Regency GF900 gas log flame fire from Abbey Fireplaces and Mt White sandstone from Gosford Quarries. An ottoman from Mayvn Interiors and armchairs from Globe West complete the scene. >



LIGHT, BRIGHT AND AIRY, THIS HOME ON SYDNEY'S NORTHERN BEACHES IS THE EPITOME OF RELAXED SUMMERY STYLE

Story ANNA McCOOE Styling SALLY PATERSON
Photography SIMON WHITBREAD

If life in this northern beaches home looks effortless, it really is. But that's because of all the work – and the nights spent lying awake finessing every detail – that went into it. In the years leading up to its build, owner Renee lived and breathed design. By day, she was in a high-level human resources role. By night and on weekends, she was a renovation aficionado, armed with a photo file of tiles, handles and landscapes, which she snapped as she moved through life, banking ideas and refining her wish list. “Throughout my corporate life, I was constantly thinking about renovating and building houses,” says Renee, mother to Hugo, 12, and Charlotte, 10. “I’ve always loved architecture, design and how a well-designed space can transform the way you live.” She and husband Anthony previously renovated homes they lived in. Then, when it came time to find their ideal family base, nothing was quite right, so they bought a shabby old house on a large block near the harbour and beach with a view to a knock-down and rebuild.

As pen went to paper, the dream was already well formed. The couple knew they wanted a private guest bedroom for in-laws and separate living zones for the kids and adults. A main suite, open-plan kitchen with butler's pantry and a media room were also high on the agenda. Over time, with the help of architect Tony Gray, the pieces of the puzzle came together over two levels. Downstairs, an internal courtyard adds natural light and marks the transition to a spacious cathedral open-plan kitchen, dining and lounge area that flows to the back of the house and garden. Upstairs is home to two kids' bedrooms and a family bathroom, as well as the parents' retreat incorporating an ensuite and walk-in robe. “We knew how we wanted to live and building from scratch meant we could achieve it,” says Renee.

She describes her style as “pared-back Hamptons”. But while she loves the detail and warmth of the classic East Coast US style, Renee craved a more relaxed, Australian take on the look as she juggled two children, a full-time job and house plans throughout the design and build. “That’s the relaxed vibe that is really nice to come home to on a day-to-day basis,” she says. In real terms, that breezy mood translated to light timber floors and walls, V-joint panelling, vaulted ceilings and a strong connection to the outdoors.

The bright and beautiful family house ticks every box, leaving a big question to answer. What happens after you achieve your dream? For Renee, an entrepreneur at heart, the answer was to go forth and multiply. The family recently sold their perfect pad and are now building again. Meanwhile, professionally, Renee has turned her passion on the side into her main hustle, partnering with interiors, design and styling expert Sally Paterson to launch Heliconia, an end-to-end design and facilitation service through which the pair basically serve as building and renovating guardian angels. As Renee says: “The time was right to go all in.”

KITCHEN Anthony, Hugo, Renee and Charlotte congregate in the spacious kitchen (pictured), where a cantilevered benchtop – topped with a luxurious Quantum Quartz benchtop in Calacutta Primo Quartz – is key to bringing the family together. The cabinetry is custom-made with a Shaker profile and polyurethane finish in Dulux Saint Clair Quarter, with handles imported from Restoration Hardware in the US. Louvre windows bring views and breezes inside. “It was absolutely critical for me to bring the outside into the kitchen,” says Renee. “The birds of paradise outside that window took about 18 months to form a green wall.” >

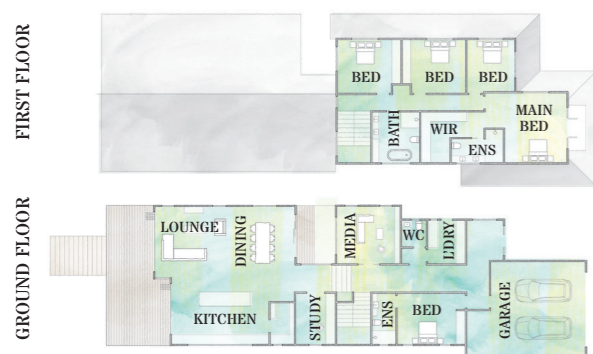
“THE ABILITY TO SIT AROUND THE BENCH WAS *really important*. WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME AROUND THAT HUB” ~ *RENEE*



"I LOVED THE FOCUS BEING THE
height OF THE KITCHEN" ~ RENEE



FLOOR PLAN



PANTRY The kitchen flows to a butler's pantry (above), which is equipped with open shelves, drawers and a handy second dishwasher (in the large drawer). From the kitchen, only the most beautiful kitchenalia is on display, but tucked around the corner, ingredients and supplies are easy to grab and go. The far corner is also home to a sink. "It's fantastic when entertaining for dealing with that overflow of glasses," says Renee. The chic seaside artwork here is from Africanologie.

DINING ROOM Renee's light and airy style comes to a head in the dining zone (opposite). Here, the engineered boards are met with walls in Dulux Mt Aspiring and an eye-catching beaded pendant from Emporium Avenue, which hangs from the vaulted ceiling. The table was bought by Renee (pictured) a few renovations ago, from Papaya. It is made new again with 'Lily' dining chairs from The Wood Room.

ILLUSTRATION KENZIEDESIGN.COM

WE LOVE...
new classic windows

These timber-framed windows with Stegbar Colonial glazing bars exhibit a grace that defies the home's infancy. Renee had the window custom made from western red cedar and installed by Stegbar. The key architectural elements function with modern-day energy efficiency but the look is ageless. "We wanted to create that timeless feel – that's what timber can do and what detail can do," says Renee. "In 50 years the house will still feel ageless and that's because of the windows." Visit stegbar.com.au >





HUGO'S BEDROOM To Hugo's great delight, a 'Llama' print from Warranbrooke adorns the wall of his bedroom (above). "Llamas are his random obsession," says Renee. The room is otherwise fairly grown up: the lamp is from Alfresco Emporium and the rug is from Heliconia.



"ALL THE LITTLE DETAILS MAKE A big difference - NOTHING WAS OVERLOOKED" ~ RENEE

BATHROOM Serene and clean with a splash of detail, the family bathroom (above) features a stone bath from Renovation Kingdom and Astra Walker tapware. The vanity is an off-the-shelf cabinet that Renee had customised with a stone top. Simple large-format grey and white floor and wall tiles from Tiles By Kate are balanced with marble subway tiles from Tiles 4 Less. Towels are from Sheridan.

LAUNDRY Combining hanging storage, tall storage, cupboards, drawers and baskets, the laundry (left) is one for the dream house file. Each of the Pottery Barn baskets acts as a shoe stow for each member of the family. "The kids come straight in from the garage and leave their running shoes and muddy soccer boots here," says Renee, of the laundry/'sand' room. The cupboards are used for beach towels and bags, keeping sand out of the house.

MAIN BEDROOM Designed as a retreat for the busy couple, their suite (opposite) departs from the otherwise white-on-white colour scheme to include a feature wall of V-joint panelling in Dulux Ohai Half. "The colour helped create a sense of sanctuary," explains Renee. A black velvet Brosa bed with buttoned detailing adds even more drama, alongside a plush Freedom rug. The bench seat is from The Wood Room and the throw is from Sheridan. >



EASY LIVING



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INSIDE STORY RENEE & ANTHONY'S HOME

Who lives here?

Renee, co-owner of design and planning business Heliconia; her husband Anthony; their children Hugo, 12, and Charlotte, 10; and Wally, a Burmese cat.

Best planning advice?

Renee: "Renovating to a budget means you have to be strategic with your use of wow factor. In our house, some pieces are expensive and some are more basic - it's about being smart with resources."

What would you do differently?

"There's not a lot I would change. I might add a door to the main living area, though - with kids, it's a noise thing."

Biggest lesson?

"There's so much thought that goes into a build - you have to be prepared to make the time or find a professional to help you. It's all-consuming and not everyone has the time or interest."



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CONTACTS

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Landscape design

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Realm Building, 0421 587 328,
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Colour consultant

Katrina Hill, 1300 769 217,
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Interior styling

Heliconia, 0404 810 395,
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1. The pool is by Interlink Pools & Landscapes.
2. Hugo, Renee, Anthony and Charlotte, with Wally.
3. Carrara marble subway tiles in the laundry from Tiles 4 Less.
4. Shutters from North Shore Shutters and a rug from Fab Habitat star on the balcony.
5. A custom-made office desk in spotted gum hardwood.
6. Charlotte and Renee out the front. Weathertex cladding in Dulux Lyttelton Half and Dulux St Clair Quarter trim.
7. For similar V-joint panelling, try Easycraft VJ panels, Bunnings. Painted in Ohai Half, Dulux.

ACTUAL PAINT COLOURS MAY VARY ON APPLICATION