



# Harbour House

location: Sydney, Australia | architecture: Shaun Lockyer Architects | interior design: Justine Hugh Jones / Shaun Lockyer Architects | interior décor: Justine Hugh Jones | photography: Scott Burrows

On a spectacular waterside location in Sydney, an existing post-war house was demolished to make way for a new build. The clients liked the work of the Brazilian modernist architects – typically in concrete, stone and timber – which is a style of architecture that also resonates with the values of the appointed architect, ex-South African, Shaun Lockyer. ➤





He recalls: 'They wanted a design that would create a series of courtyards while also engaging with the Sydney Harbour views to the south. Further, this had to be a timeless home that encouraged the best of waterfront living and lifestyle. What resulted is a built structure of 1 100 square metres on a site of 1 720 square metres.'

To execute this brief the architects conceived a multi-level courtyard home with gardens at every ground

level as the site steps down to the water, as well as on the roof areas as 'green roofs'.

Says Shaun Lockyer: 'We wanted to engage with the landscaping, water and light at every opportunity. The house is deliberately played down from the street and largely hidden behind an understated garden. We further minimised the notion of formality and entry to the house is via a sunken, north facing landscaped courtyard. ➤



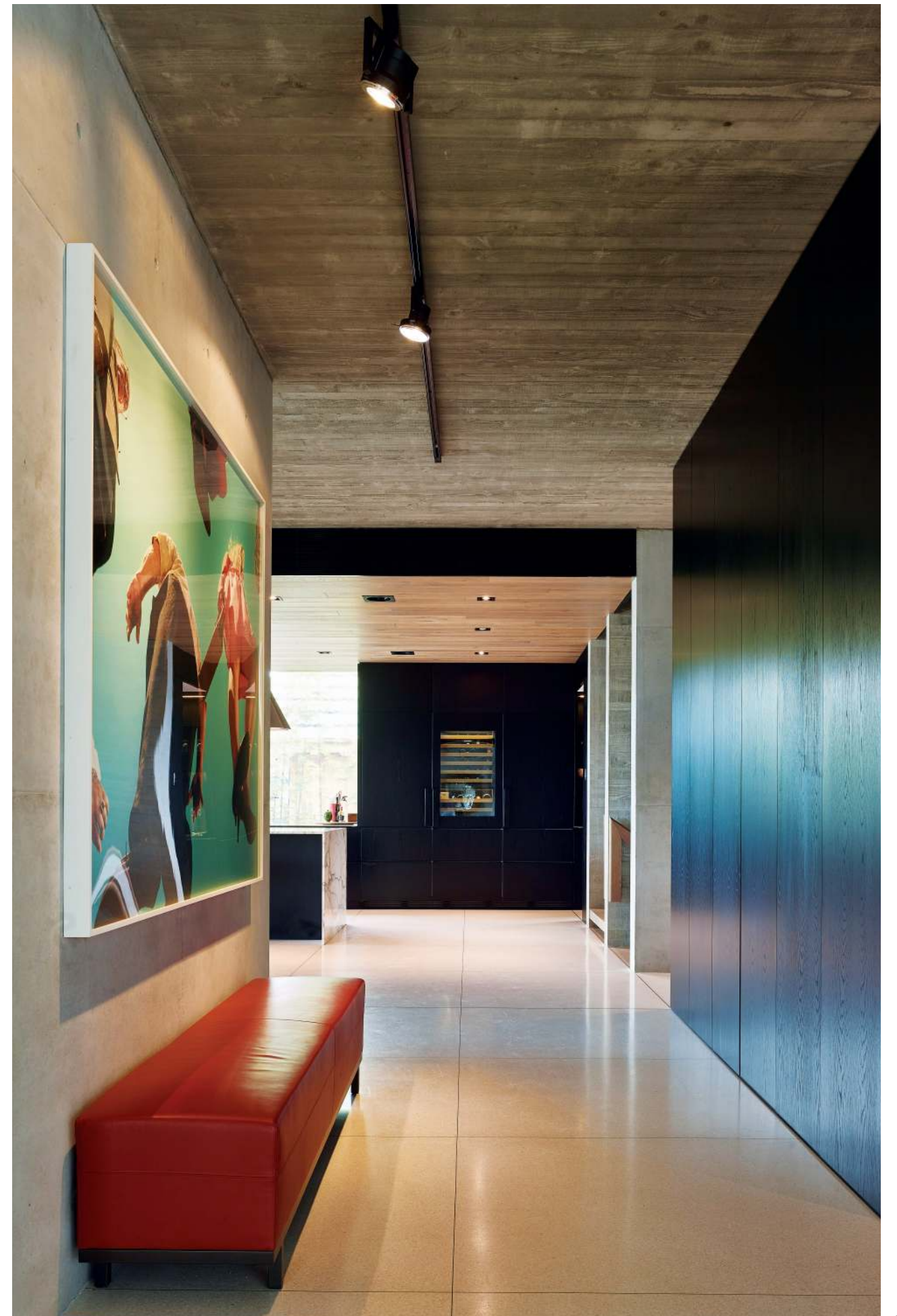
previous page & these pages:

The landscape design by William Dangar and the décor by Justine Hugh Jones have succeeded in complementing the architecture.



these pages:

This interior plan epitomises multipurpose lifestyle. Access to the exterior and vistas of Sydney Harbour make the space even more impressive.





these pages:

Inside, board-formed concrete ceilings offset against smooth concrete walls are a major part of the overall signature. Equally, this raw visual weight is balanced with the use of French oak timbers and Japanese black-stained cabinetry. The use of terrazzo floors adds a layer of refined sophistication and is a counterpoint to the texture of the concrete. The skylight over the concrete and timber internal stairway (opposite right) is a highlight and a defining point of the architectural journey.



'From this – the primary living level – the house expands as a transparent pavilion throughout which Harbour views can be seen at every level; the ground floor comprises the primary living spaces, while the first floor deals with the bedroom accommodation. The lower ground level is all about the Harbour, the garden, pool and entertaining and it includes a bar, a truly spectacular wine cellar and the gym.

'Planning regulations in this area are a real challenge with anxious neighbours wary of any new building. It was

necessary to take time to plan carefully and engage with all the required parties to make sure we had all our bases covered, which all worked to plan. The client brief required five bedrooms, two studies, three living areas, multi-car garaging and a storage house.

'The clients appreciate the use of concrete and timber and wanted a very restrained but rich and textured home, which is what we sought to deliver; the result is a design heavily influenced by South American modern architecture. The legacy of this genre of work



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The shuttered concrete ceilings continue through to the main bathroom and are a textural foil for more sophisticated finishes.



is all about bold concrete forms playing with ideas of transparency, weight and juxtaposed cantilevers. Timeless, heavy and textured materials such as stone and timber all contribute to this dialogue. It's a very rational and controlled architecture that surpasses the immediacy of fashion.'

From the outset a prerequisite was that this should be a contemporary family home rather than a showpiece. The result is a splendid balance between relaxed and stylish living, which manifests further in the interior decoration; this as an appealing mélange of aesthetics and comfort, plus the connection to the

view and garden across the varying levels is engaging at every point. Lastly, the house is almost hidden from the street and is revealed on entry via the garden as a surprise of note.

Architect Shaun Lockyer sees this project as a defining work in his professional career and lists it as a team effort from the outset, given what a challenging home it was to build. He adds: 'It was both a painless and rewarding process with an overall result beyond our collective aspirations. Importantly, it was a project heavily driven and imagined by the clients who had a major part in the design and outcome.'

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