

HEART OF GLASS

A harbourside home in Sydney's north revisits its art-deco roots via inspiration from a French modernist, topped off with a squeeze of West Indian colonial style.

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These pages The truffle shade on the formal living room walls adds "depth you couldn't achieve with off-white", says Alexandra Donohoe of Decus, who chose the colours and furnishings. Minotti 'Hamilton' sofa from De De Ce. Vintage Paul Kafka armchairs and footstools from Tyrone Dearing. Custom-made rug from Cadrys. Resene 'Blast Grey' on windows and 'Double Truffle' half-strength on walls. Painting by Bill Whiskey Tjapaltjarri.



This page The original glass bricks were refurbished with black grouting. **Opposite page** Formal and informal sitting areas were created at each end of the rectangular living room. In the informal area is a Carl Hansen 'Poppa Bear' chair and footstool from Cult. 'Round Stepped Deco' pendant from Charles Edwards, London. 'Art Nouveau' rug from Cadrys.

VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE! This home on Sydney Harbour, with its window shutters and metal grille work, evokes a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Architect Luigi Rosselli drew inspiration from both the luminescent Maison de Verre in Paris and colonial French West Indies, which lends a breezy, subtropical insouciance to the home's elegant rooms.

Originally, this five-level, four-bedroom home was a 1928 art-deco apartment block, later converted into a family home. Its triple-brick construction, panoramic harbour views and a pin-drop-quiet neighbourhood drew the owner to the house. However, it sported a renovated 80s decor of "beige, beige and more beige", he says. Any hints of its deco origins had long disappeared.

Hugging the harbour, the house needed reference to the coastal vernacular. The owner favoured French colonial style, found in the Caribbean. "There's a lot of art deco there and the effect is restrained and elegant," he says. Adds Luigi, "We wanted to restore the character of the original building, borrowing from 1930s P&O modernist design."

Maison de Verre's industrial take on art deco assumed a major role. The iconic modernist house boasts fluted glass, glass bricks, perforated metal facings and steel-framed doors – features seen here in the grid patterns on shutters, lift well and joinery. Faced with an ugly 10-metre wall of 1980s glass bricks that dominated the stairwell, Luigi's elegant solution took its cue from Maison de Verre, and he painted the grouting black.

He changed the floor plan little. Openings between the living areas were enlarged to create a sense of continuity, with the dining room and kitchen now separated by sliders hung from discreet tracks in the ceiling. What was an isolated kitchen now "belongs to the rest of the house", says Luigi.

Luigi moved the entry to the ground floor and an internal stairway now leads to the first-floor living areas. Three bedrooms are on the next floor and outdoor sitting areas occupy the upper two levels. The old entry became what Luigi terms "the Middle Eastern room", an exotic sitting area off the kitchen, defined by antique Turkish rugs adorning the walls and a Moroccan lantern. The second *pièce de résistance* is the lift, faced in fluted glass and semitransparent mesh, which "pulls the multi-level house together", says the owner. "I'm especially happy with it," adds Luigi. "It's beautifully detailed." Curves, a Luigi trademark, in the fireplace, joinery and the ceilings reference the flowing P&O style, with its constant dialogue between the arc and right angle.

With the luminous waxed walls, light shimmering through fluted glass and off the harbour beyond, the home has all the translucency of the faraway homes that inspired it.

Visit luigirosselli.com; decus.com.au.



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These pages French art deco cut crystal and glass pendant in the dining room from Eliza Jane Antiques. Dining table from MCM House. Eero Saarinen 'Executive' dining chairs from De De Ce. Glassware from Walter Herman Interiors. Afghan 'Hezari' rug from Cadrys. Joinery by Corelli Joinery. Artwork by Geoffrey Dyer. Sculpture by Katusha Bull.



This page The console sets a deco tone in the entrance. Flos 'Taccia' lamp from EuroLuce. Polished plaster walls finished in beeswax. Stone flooring from Cobblestones by JG. Opposite page Vintage Moroccan lamp from Elements | Love. Society 'Limonta' cushions from Ondene. Laotian rain drums from Orient House. Leather upholstery from Simple Studio. Patchwork kilims on walls from Cadrys.



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