

This page ClassiCon 'Roattino' floor light by Eileen Gray from Anibou. Moroso 'Redondo' armchairs in pink velvet and Moroso 'Phoenix' coffee table all by Patricia Urquiola from Hub. Christophe Delcourt 'Ouk' side table from Ondene. B&B Italia 'Frank' sofa by Antonio Citterio from Space. Hay 'Crinkle' throws from Cult. Custom Bamboo silk rug from Robyn Cosgrove. **Opposite page** In the hallway, Decus console custom made by JP Finsbury. Custom mirror from Spectrum Glass. 'Cloche' desk lamp from Hay. Walls in Porter's Paints low-sheen 'Plaster of Paris'. Reflected artwork by Deborah Paauwe.



NEXT LEVEL

Raising the roof of this Californian bungalow provided the additional space required and provided a platform for a glamorous assortment of jewel-toned furnishings.

Photographs ANSON SMART Words CHRIS PEARSON





This page In the dining area, Lowe Furniture 'Atticus' oval table in American oak and bar stools from Hub. Gubi 'Beetle' chairs from Cult. B&B Italia 'Frank' sofa by Antonio Citterio from Space. Christophe Delcourt 'Ouk' side table. Society Limonta 'Rem' cushions from Ondene. Custom bamboo silk rug from Robyn Cosgrove. Timber bowls on bench from Orient House. Opposite page, from top 'Lariat 5' pendant in bronze from Apparatus Studio hangs over the Lowe Furniture 'Atticus' table from Hub. Gubi 'Beetle' chairs from Cult. Rina Menardi 'Lagoon' ceramic platters from Ondene. Curtains by Simple Studio. In the kitchen, ClassiCon 'Pli' side table from Anibou. Tekna 'Nautic' ceiling tube lights from Tigger Hall Design. Custom-made fluted glass and steel doors. Franke 'Verona' tap from Winning Appliances. 'Super White Dolomite' honed marble from CDK Stone.

With its rich, lustrous colours of ruby, emerald and sapphire, sheen and luscious textures, this elegant home in Sydney's eastern suburbs is like a jewellery box, packed with surprises and treats to tease the eye. But it has two personalities. Glamorous spaces for grown-up entertaining by night give way to simple practicality by day, perfect for a family with four teenagers.

When the owners bought the 1920s Californian bungalow, it was a bland warren of rooms that shunned the daylight. After renting it out for a few years, in 2012, they decided to make it their family home and approached architect Luigi Rosselli to, yes, raise the roof. "Its vast empty roof space begged for an attic conversion," says Luigi. Accordingly, he used it to create a parents' retreat, with a generous main bedroom, ensuite bathroom, dual walk-in robes, a separate sitting area and a sizable balcony.

But, as the house expanded, so did the scope of the project. The owners asked Luigi and interior designer Alexandra Donohoe Church of Decus Interiors to turn their attention to the downstairs area, to bring in the light and create more space for the family. "We needed to rationalise the living space. It was all broken up and needed a flow to the pool," says Luigi.

In a "neat nip and tuck", he transformed separate living and dining rooms and a poky kitchen into one large open plan, with the dining area now able to accommodate the owners' massive 3.5m table. Four bedrooms at one end of the ground floor in effect became the children's wing. And Luigi opened the windows to the garden. "Before, you couldn't see the sky because the windows were so low, despite the high ceilings," he says.

The brief from the owners was for an industrial look, with hard-wearing surfaces, "an industrial New York-style space prevailed, but not in an overpowering way. It had to pay homage to the original era without being a pastiche," says Alexandra. "It's a timeless intervention that could span over the past century. It's hard to pin down its age, but you feel it's been there for a while," adds Luigi.

He added skirtings and architraves as a nod to the house's era (the originals were casualties of earlier renovations), as well as coffered ceilings and cornices in the living areas. They are "a bit of theatre, adding texture and character", says Luigi.

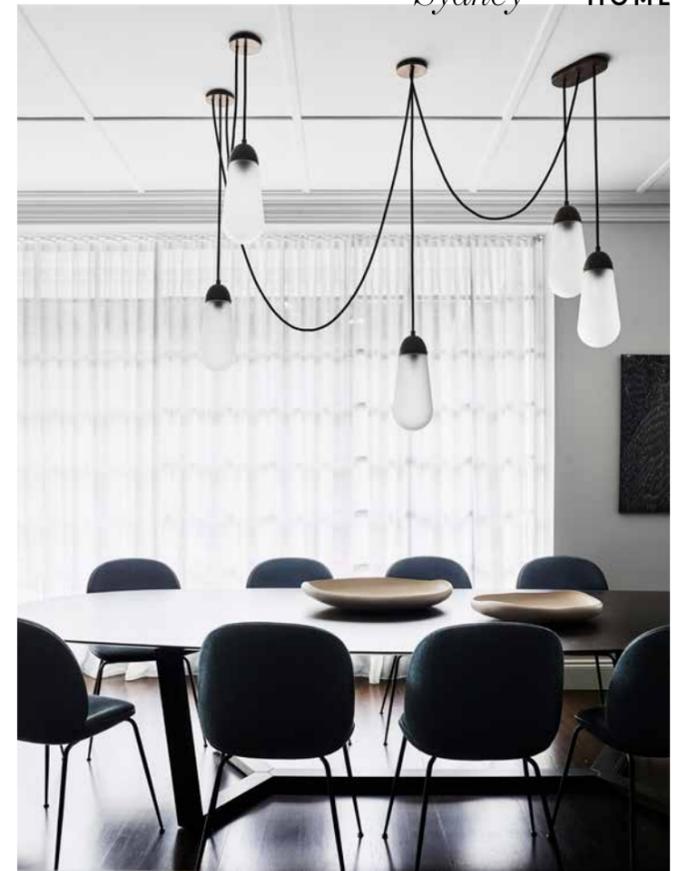
Each space had to be individual, but share a common language: dark floors and steel-framed doors and screens, the latter being Luigi's signature.

Because this is an active and busy household, the home had to be robust, with heavy-duty finishes. "We used bold materials, such as steel-framed doors, panelled ceilings and terrazzo in the bathrooms, to bring a rich dimension to these high-traffic rooms," says Alexandra. "The terrazzo finish in the bathrooms is not super-fancy. It's a raw, pragmatic look."

"Steel-framed windows are a part of the Milanese landscape I grew up in, a nostalgic reminder of an industrial past," says Luigi. "And they are finer and so much stronger than timber or aluminium." They let in light and views, and their greater strength allows broader expanses of glass.

Such practical asceticism is overlaid with the rich hues and textures of the Orient. Freshly returned from a long stint in Hong Kong, the owners brought back such pieces as a huge antique apothecary chest, birdcages, hats, swords and artworks, which became the starting points for Alexandra's handiwork. "They wanted to include these artworks, which are dramatic and strong, with dark colours and plenty of contrast, but still tactile," she says. "The chest is old, worn and tactile and not super-perfect."

For the palette, she started with the owners' favourite blue, green and grey tones "and built it from there, with pink, aubergine, plum





and lilac to infuse it with something different. They were circuit breakers to create a tension between the base colours.”

The philosophy of the home is neatly encapsulated by a sitting area within the open plan, which features a ruby-red velvet settee under a painting of pearls placed next to the giant apothecary chest, Alexandra’s favourite space.

“It’s such an intimate, rich, dramatic little corner,” she says. “Within that open plan, this is one of many zones where the family can do their own thing, not being on top of each other, while also being together.”

The sense of privacy yet togetherness under the one – raised – roof is part of the genius of this house. Luigi has used his renowned steel windows internally, too, to create separation and airiness at the same time. “The house has been opened up,” he says, “but still has demarcated zones, thanks to the ceiling beams, steel screens and doors – you enter the living area through double-height steel doors that reach to the ceiling.”

Both Luigi and Alexandra are especially beguiled by the secluded master suite, the genesis of the project, its printed grasscloth wallpaper acting as an artwork and concealing a walk-in robe behind. With its “separate lounge to admire the sunsets and fireworks, and a balcony large enough to step out onto and enjoy a martini in the evening, it’s the perfect parents’ retreat,” says Luigi. 17

For more go to luigirosselli.com; decus.com.au.

This page, clockwise from top left In the sitting area, ClassiCon ‘Odin’ sofa, ‘Bell’ coffee tables, and ‘Pli’ side table, all from Anibou. Antique cabinet bought in Hong Kong. *Fallen Series #5 and #8* artworks by Sharon Green. In the powder room, ‘Heart’ mirror from Nicholas & Alistair. ‘Fizi’ sconces from Articolò. Brodware ‘Yokato’ tap from Cass Brothers. TeknoForm ‘Pittella Rapolano 35’ basin in Anthracite travertine from Sydney Tap and Bathroomware. Fibonacci Stone ‘Idol’ benchtop from Onsite. In a bathroom, ‘Eclipse’ sconces from Articolò. Fibonacci Stone ‘Nougat’ terrazzo benchtop and wall tiles from Onsite. Brodware ‘Yokato’ tap from Cass Brothers. **Opposite page** In the main bedroom, bedhead in American Silk Mills ‘Hemp’ and Spinneybeck ‘Velluto Pelle’ from Tigger Hall Design. Society Limonta ‘Nid’ blanket, and ‘Rem’ bedlinen from Ondene. ‘Clasp’ wall light from Allied Maker (NY). Tribal Moroccan wool rug from Robyn Cosgrove. Curtains by Simple Studio. Gervasoni ‘InOut’ side tables on balcony from Anibou.

SPEED READ

» When a couple with four now teenage children bought this 1920s Californian bungalow in 2009, it was bland and shunned natural light. » After renting it out for a couple of years, they decided to make it their family home, and commissioned architect Luigi Rosselli to raise the roof and create a new upstairs area for a parents’ retreat. » The project expanded when the owners requested him to open up the downstairs, creating a better flow of spaces that made the most of the light. » While boasting tough industrial-strength materials such as Luigi’s signature steel-framed windows and terrazzo finishes, ideal for a boisterous family, Alexandra Donohoe Church of Decus Interiors has imbued the home with glamour, with a rich, jewel-like palette and luscious textures, taking her cues from antiques and artworks that the owners brought back from a long stint living in Hong Kong.

