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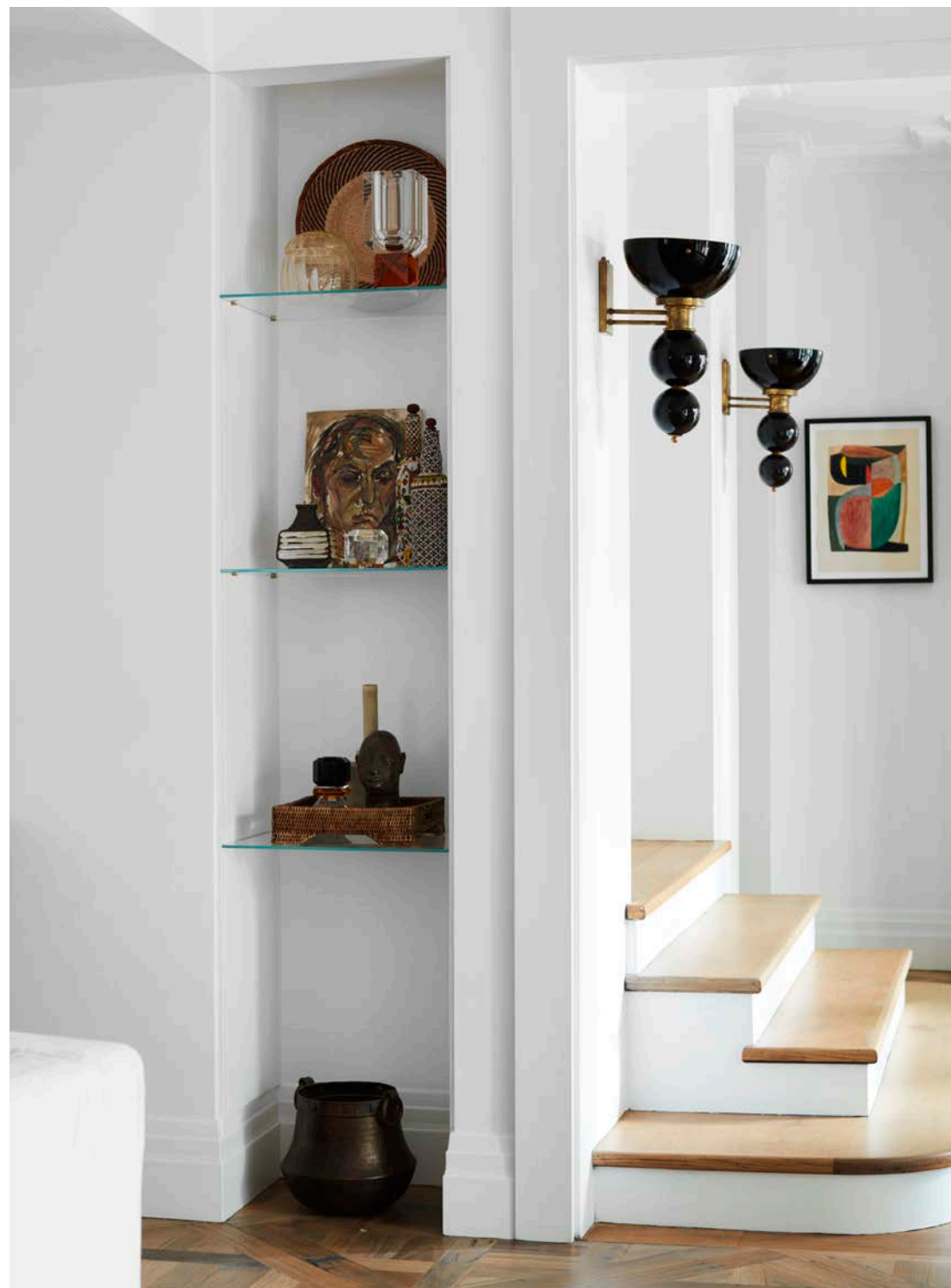
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Holding court

A lush courtyard is the centrepiece of this stylish yet practical home in Sydney's eastern suburbs, offering easy living and entertaining for a family of five.

Words **JUDY PASCOE** Photography **PRUE RUSCOE** Styling **OLGA LEWIS**



This page The lush planting scheme by Richard Unsworth envelops the courtyard. Timber outdoor chairs and coffee table from Robert Plumb, with custom cushions made of vintage Moroccan kilims by Hugh-Jones Mackintosh. On table, marble *parat* plate from Water Tiger and black pot from LuMu Interiors. Emu mesh chair from Ke-Zu. Pots from Garden Life. Artwork by David Larwill. Opposite page In the entry vestibule, a niche was fitted with glass shelves for displaying a rotating array of pieces, such as the glassware from Fred International, portrait and vintage vase from Rudi Rocket, and woven tray and beaded bottles from Orient House. Brass pot on the floor is from Water Tiger. The wall lights flanking the stairs are vintage and were sourced by Hugh-Jones Mackintosh. The artwork is by Caroline Denervaud.



A stay at El Fenn in Marrakech inspired the aesthetic of this fabulous home in Sydney's east. The clients bought the relatively new build while living in London, then engaged designers Justine Hugh-Jones and Katrina Mackintosh, of recently relaunched studio Hugh-Jones Mackintosh, to freshen it up, introduce more light and create a stylish, contemporary home for their family of five.

While the bones of the detached, five-bedroom house were good and no structural work was needed, the look was dated, and the designers opted for a fresh white palette enlivened with green accents throughout. The courtyard at the front of the house is a showstopper, welcoming visitors, acting as an extension of the living space for entertaining or as a private sanctuary for relaxation, so attention was focused here to get it right.

Says Justine, "This was a really critical part of the design. We worked to bring the courtyard into the house – and the house into the courtyard – and make a really beautiful, rich statement." They engaged Richard Unsworth of Garden Life to create a planting scheme that promotes a lush, cool environment, with palms and cactus, succulents and trailing creepers spilling from planter boxes and enveloping the high walls.

The clients had fallen in love with the deep-green zellige tiles in the Moroccan hotel and wished to feature them in the renovation. Luckily the designers had a contact in Marrakech who was able to track down the exact tiles which have been used to stunning effect to cover one wall of the courtyard. This dramatic feature is a masterstroke, a graphic and unique backdrop to the multifunctional space which is the pivot of the home.

Into this haven of green, the designers introduced layers of texture with Emu 'Heaven' black mesh chairs and built-in seating, »



This page The use of herringbone green tiles, sourced in Morocco, on the back wall of the courtyard was inspired by a stay at El Fenn in Marrakech. The reading room has a Cassina 'Maralunga' sofa from Space, vintage lamp and Spanish chair, with travertine coffee tables from Spence & Lyda. Candleholder from Ondene. Vintage ceramic sculpture from Rudi Rocket. Carafe and glass set from Becker Minty. Vintage Beni Ourain rug from Kulchi. Bamboo blinds from Simple Studio. Vintage plaster light fixture from The Vault Sydney. Artwork by David Larwill. Opposite page, from top A row of potted palms visually separates the courtyard from the entrance. Black mesh chairs by Emu from Ke-Zu. Custom cushions by Hugh-Jones Mackintosh made from vintage kilims. Timber coffee table from Robert Plumb with a black pot from LuMu Interiors and a marble parat plate from Water Tiger. Plants and pots from Garden Life. An India Mahdavi 'Bishop' stool from Studio ALM delivers a pop of colour. Artwork by Lottie Consalvo. USM unit from Anibou holds a vase by Louise Gelderblom. Vintage stools and mirrors above fireplace. Rug from International Floorcoverings.

« adorned with cushions made from vintage Moroccan kilims. “We made sure that the outdoor seating could be moved around easily if there’s a party,” says Justine. High walls provide privacy, enhanced by the sound of water from the fountain. “When you’re sitting in the courtyard you could be anywhere in the world,” say the owners. “It’s a wonderful place to entertain. We’ve had a cocktail party here for 80 people and yet it can also be a very intimate space for six or eight.”

The laidback mood extends through the green-painted doors into the house where the parquet floors were stripped back to a lighter shade to welcome an eclectic array of furniture and accessories. Accents of green such as in the India Mahdavi ‘Bishop’ stool and ikat cushions bring the idea of the garden indoors. “We used vintage pieces, European materials and a lot of layering of different finishes on top of each other to make it rich and visually interesting and to create a really cool vibe as well as be family friendly,” says Justine.

Many of the pieces were serendipitous finds. “It really helps to have brave clients,” says Justine, laughing. “People who will accept that weird lamp with heads up there is going to look cool,” she adds, indicating the Frank Howell-designed light fixture hanging over the custom-made dining table.

And sometimes it just requires a leap of faith. One of the owners says, “I couldn’t get my head around the Sarah Lavoine console at first but now it’s one of my favourite pieces, and I love the way it references the vintage cane chairs in the living room.” Justine agrees, “It’s hard sometimes for people to visualise it all coming together because pieces come from different places and at different times. It’s a journey of slowly building up the layers and adding pieces when you find them.”

That opportunity presented itself during Sydney Contemporary when Justine spied a Lottie Consalvo artwork that she felt was perfect for the living room. The clients were in London but “within 20 minutes I’d sent a photo and got approval to buy it! Unless you are able to make those snap decisions you don’t get anything different,” she says. Clearly there is a rapport between designers and the clients built on the foundation of having worked on a previous project together. Say the owners, “We love that Justine and Katrina understand how things can be stylish as well as practical. It’s a real win if you can get both.”

Certainly the house is as functional as it is beautiful. While the adult children all have their own rooms, as well as a dedicated TV room on the top floor, one of the owners works fulltime from home at a vintage desk from The Vault Sydney in a serene annexe off the main bedroom, overlooking a plant-filled balcony. Painted in Dulux ‘Bottle Green’, a deep and variable hue, the room feels lavish with a bespoke Kulchi rug layered over sisal, a Leisel Mott artwork and a Gebrüder Thonet Vienna ‘Targa’ chair.

The flawless composition of these eclectic pieces, the graphic artworks and the layering of texture gives the home its undeniable flair and personality. “Every house Justine and Katrina do is totally different, and I feel this is uniquely our home,” says one of the owners. “I feel that I had a lovely influence on it but I just didn’t have the artistic talent to pull it together. It’s really special.” bughjonesmackintosh.com; gardenlife.com.au



These pages The green-tiled wall helps to bring the garden into focus. Custom dining table by Hugh-Jones Mackintosh with Knoll ‘Spoleto’ chairs. Maison Sarah Lavoine console from Bastille and Sons below a Robert Malherbe artwork. On console, sculpture by Kristiina from Fred International, tall alabaster vase from Ondene and vintage glass canisters from Conley & Co. Bamboo blinds from Simple Studio. Light fixture from The Vault Sydney. Floors are original parquet sanded to a light finish.



These pages, clockwise from top left The son's bedroom has a vintage rug from Kulchi and an ottoman from Bastille and Sons. Sculpture by Kristiina from Fred International. Marble candleholder from Orient House. Ceramic dish from Studio ALM. On the balcony, outdoor chairs from Studio ALM and 'The Visitor' ceramic figures from Parterre. In the master bedroom a vintage ottoman sits at the end of the bed, which has a custom headboard by Hugh-Jones Mackintosh in Madeline Weinrib ikat fabric from Tigger Hall Design. Vintage desk from The Vault Sydney with India Mahdavi chair from Studio ALM on a bespoke rug from Kulchi. Artwork is a limited-edition Picasso print. A Gebrüder Thonet Vienna 'Targa' chair by GamFratesi from Space is positioned under an artwork by Leisl Mott in an annexe off the bedroom. Atelier de Troupe 'Navire' floor lamp from Spence & Lyda.

SPEED READ

» Principals Justine Hugh-Jones and Katrina Mackintosh, of newly relaunched design studio Hugh-Jones Mackintosh, were called on to reprise their role as designers on the clients' beach house at this, their primary residence in Sydney's eastern suburbs. » The clients requested a Moroccan influence, specifically using the green tiles that they had admired during a stay at Marrakech's El Fenn. » Justine and Katrina lightened the palette, painting the house white and introducing green accents throughout that echo the stylish and lush courtyard at the front of the property. » Layers of texture in vintage furniture, rugs, fabrics, artwork and accessories lend the home visual interest and a unique personality.