

LIVING WITH A MOODIER PALETTE

# INSIDES

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# RENOVATE

**DREAM IT. DESIGN IT. DO IT.**

## tropic *wonder*

Brimming with tropical touches, a resort-inspired renovation has resulted in a laidback Sydney villa among the palm trees

ARABESCATO MARBLE, GRANITE & MARBLE WORKS (THROUGHOUT), BRUSHBOX FLOORING (THROUGHOUT), ARTWORKS BY CONCHITA CARAMBANO (LEFT) AND EMMA WARD (RIGHT), WALLS, CEILINGS AND TRIMS PAINTED DULUX NATURAL WHITE (THROUGHOUT).

WORDS LOUISE O'BRYAN STYLING HELLEN PAPPAS PHOTOGRAPHY FRANÇOISE BAUDET



living room

The linen sofas, leather ottoman (both Jordan), resin cocktail table (Coco Republic), and felted-wool rug (Tappeti Fine Handcrafted Rugs+Carpets) deliver textural interest. Birch pendant lights from Fred International and palm-leaf prints from Designer Boys Collections link the interior with the courtyard outside. The Triple X coffee table from Spence & Lyda references the console in the entry.



ARTWORK BY MARIE SCHLEDERER (CONSIDERBOARD).

**A**s incredibly busy professionals, Melanie Corlett, founder of fitness centre Women of Treign, and her husband Hamish, who works in finance, wanted nothing more than to return to an inviting and relaxing home at the end of a long day. In 2016, with family plans on the horizon, the couple bought this four-bedroom villa in Sydney’s east. “We were drawn to the home’s quiet, secluded location and open-plan layout,” says Melanie. “The structure was sound and there was great flow from one room to another. It just needed some TLC to bring it back to life.”

An added bonus for the couple, who welcomed their daughter Emme in July 2018, was the abundant greenery surrounding the property. “With views of mature palms from most of the windows, the home almost feels like a treehouse,” Melanie adds. “It’s so peaceful and calming that we were keen to extend that feeling – a sense of tranquillity – inside.”

After undertaking some minor structural changes to achieve their ideal layout, the couple’s builders, Jarred Isaacman from Bear the Builder and Ron Efrat from Orishon Projects, recommended interior designer Hellen Pappas of H Interior Design to help give the home a cosmetic refresh. Hellen’s timeless, sophisticated style and attention to detail appealed to the couple instantly. “We researched her work and loved the way she used custom joinery, statement lighting and beautiful artworks to bring elegance to her interiors. It was very us,” says Melanie.



entry, master bedroom

Feature Brunswick & Fils Feuillage wallpaper from Elliott Clarke in the entry (left) sets the tropical tone, complemented by a Balinese-style console from Boyd Blue and timber pendants from Marz Designs. In the master bedroom, a Line Series walnut sideboard from Spence & Lyda provides additional storage and a display space for art and other treasures.

cheat sheet

**Who lives here:** Melanie and Hamish Corlett, their daughter Emme, 8 months, and two French bulldogs Kona and Lou.

**Style of home:** A two-storey, four-bedroom villa on a sloping block. Its location, adjacent to a nature reserve in Sydney’s east, imbues the property with an oasis feel. Custom joinery, a tropical resort-inspired palette and natural materials work together to connect every room with its surroundings.

**🕒** The couple bought the villa in 2016. After making some minor layout changes, interior designer Hellen Pappas was engaged to refresh the decor. The project took approximately six months.



DREAM IT.

Hamish and Melanie desired a sophisticated yet family- and pet-friendly home, including functional furniture with timeless appeal. Taking this brief on board, Hellen sought to create mindful spaces with restorative qualities. “It’s long been proven that spending more time in nature helps boost our wellbeing, so it made sense to add consistent references to the verdant outlook the house enjoys,” says Hellen.

As Hamish and Melanie didn’t want to include any of their existing furniture in the revamped interior, Hellen had a blank canvas to work with. Taking inspiration from the surrounding landscape, a neutral palette of greys and whites is used throughout, layered with textural natural materials – Arabescato marble, rich timber for the flooring and statement furniture, cool linen upholstery. “The natural elements deliver a light and breezy tropical vibe, enhancing the interior’s connection with the outdoors,” says Hellen.

DESIGN IT.

Hellen’s calm, laidback style was the perfect fit for Melanie and Hamish’s relax-and-unwind brief. “I don’t do loud interiors,” says Hellen. “I think the vibrancy and dynamism of my designs comes through in the detailing.”

Working closely with her clients from start to finish, Hellen compiled comprehensive moodboards (including samples of joinery timber and fabrics), which helped Melanie and Hamish clearly visualise the finished product. “Hellen provided us with several pages of different concepts and we would pick and choose what we liked,” says Melanie. “Working with her took a lot of the hard work out of the project for us.”

The interiors are peppered with timber accents, especially walnut, both upstairs and down. “Bringing the outside in was always front of mind,” says Hellen. “We wanted to capture elements of the home’s surroundings and breathe life into the interiors, so we applied the same natural palette and textural details throughout for cohesion and flow.” Hellen designed many of the furnishings herself, including the linen-upholstered headboard in the master bedroom, which features a stitch detail that echoes the detailing on the vanity in the adjacent ensuite.

Hamish and Melanie’s preference for natural materials comes together in the living room. Key furnishings are neutral-toned but textured – a wool rug, linen upholstery for the sofas, a tan leather ottoman – and teamed with sculptural timber furniture and lighting. Hellen introduced colour via accent cushions and palm tree-themed artworks, the green hues picking up on the verdant views through the floor-to-ceiling windows. Statement Brunschwig & Fils Feuillage wallpaper in the entrance expresses the couple’s personality and hints at the delights to come.

the moodboard



Ercol ‘Capena’ dining chair, \$625, Temperature Design. Petunia rug (1.82 diameter), \$750, Armadillo & Co. Sean Dix ‘Triple X’ side table in American Walnut, \$495, Spence & Lyda. Alby ottoman in Stella wool/Blizzard, \$554, Jardan.

Melanie and Hamish’s wishlist

- + A magnificent master suite, incorporating a luxurious ensuite and walk-in wardrobe, that felt wonderfully inviting yet totally private.
- + Play up the ‘treehouse’ feel and create a good connection with the outdoors through light, textures and playful tropical patterns.
- + A facelift for the existing kitchen, with a show-stopping marble feature wall that incorporates the extractor.
- + An entry that oozes relaxed simplicity with plenty of storage.

lessons learnt  
“It’s worth investing in furniture and paintings that make your heart skip a beat. The few pricey pieces we splashed out on, which made me feel uncomfortable at the time, have turned out to be well worth every cent and will bring us joy for years to come.”

MELANIE CORLETT, HOMEOWNER

kitchen/dining

Melanie and Hamish wanted a robust eight-seater dining table that would accommodate their extended family and have substantial presence in the open-plan kitchen/dining area. The strong, sleek lines of the Boss dining table and Mia chairs, both from Fanuli, are balanced by the organic grain of the kitchen’s Arabescato marble splashback. The KAV Classic ceramic and walnut pendant light over the dining table, from ECC Lighting+Furniture, visually links the kitchen’s white joinery and stone-composite benchtops (both existing) with the timber elements.



ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON





### bathroom

The ensuite was designed as a pod between the bedroom and walk-in wardrobe. Cloud-like Harper marble is used for the vanity benchtop and tiles. Handmade bone handles from Mood Furniture are a highlight.

### the best bits

- ✦ **The ensuite.** "It's a real spa-at-home sanctuary," says Melanie. "The delight is in the details – the handmade bone handles on the vanity and the exquisite ceramic pendant lights."
- ✦ **The custom-made joinery.** "The walk-in wardrobe was designed just for me, with enough storage to accommodate all my shoes, handbags and accessories. It has made the morning rush so much easier."
- ✦ **The 'treehouse' feel.** "The combination of dark timber, jungle-green accents and crisp white has given us the tropical-resort vibe we were looking for."

### bedroom

Light and airy is the name of the game. A Gervasoni 'Gray 45' side table, used as a bedside, offers versatile (and moveable) storage, and glass panels allow glimpses of the luxe Bocci pendants from Hub Furniture in the ensuite. The upholstered headboard, designed by Hellen, echoes the ensuite's cabinetry. Paul Cadovius 'Butterfly' shelves from Great Dane complement the walnut tables.

## DO IT.

By knocking through to the existing self-contained apartment adjoining the house, Hamish and Melanie doubled the size of the master bedroom. "The previous owners had renovated the apartment just prior to selling so we felt awful demolishing it, but it had to happen to achieve Melanie and Hamish's dream of creating a luxurious retreat," says Hellen.

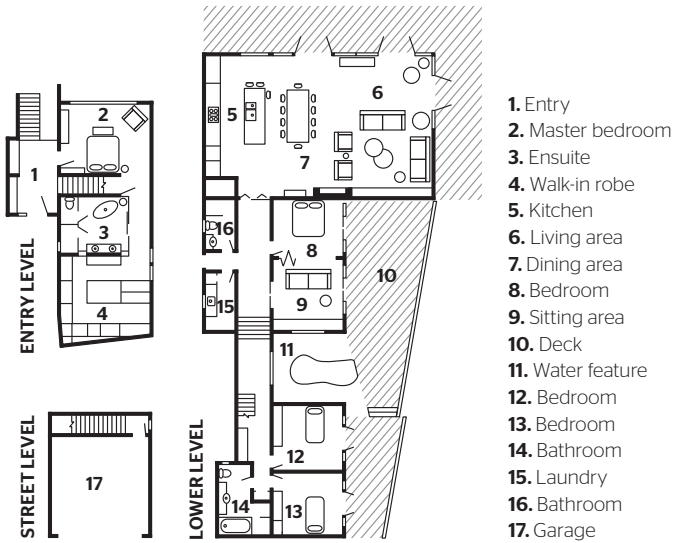
The generous new bedroom suite is divided into three zones, with a marble-tiled ensuite pod separating the bedroom and walk-in wardrobe. "We installed glass panels along one wall of the bathroom in order to maximise natural light in the ensuite," says Hellen. "The glass also allows light from the bedroom to flow into the dressing area beyond."

As the renovation progressed, Melanie and Hamish's plans evolved to include a new front door and stairwell rejuvenation. They boxed in the dated wire balustrade and opted for floating timber treads to keep the area light and fresh. The bottom three steps are clad in Arabescato marble, a visual link with the kitchen.

"The living area has to be our favourite room – it feels like you're sitting outside surrounded by nature," says Melanie. "The calming tones, the richness of the timber, the layered textures and statement lighting... It delivers the serenity and connection with the outdoors we were dreaming of." 10

See more projects by H Interior Design at [hinteriordesign.com.au](http://hinteriordesign.com.au).

The builders were Bear the Builder ([bearthebuilder.com](http://bearthebuilder.com)) and Orishon Projects ([orishonprojects.com.au](http://orishonprojects.com.au)).



- 1. Entry
- 2. Master bedroom
- 3. Ensuite
- 4. Walk-in robe
- 5. Kitchen
- 6. Living area
- 7. Dining area
- 8. Bedroom
- 9. Sitting area
- 10. Deck
- 11. Water feature
- 12. Bedroom
- 13. Bedroom
- 14. Bedroom
- 15. Bathroom
- 16. Laundry
- 17. Garage

