

KITCHEN Bar stools, Great Dane. Porcelain benchtop, Artedomus. Icon tapware, Astra Walker. Borghini Calacatta marble splashback and Bianco Grande Italian terrazzo floor slabs, all Anterior XL. Full-height cabinetry finished in European-oak veneer. George Nelson 'Saucer Bubble' pendant light (above island), In Good Company. Dipping pendant (above dining table), Est Lighting. Joseph Giles Collett-Zarzycki handles, The English Tapware Company. Artwork by Leonie Barton, sculpture by Humble Matter, both from Curatorial+Co. Resin pieces, Dinosaur Designs. Green bowl, Planet. Ceramic plate, Robert Gordon Australia. Ceramic cup, Chinaclay. Ceramic vessel, Ignem Terrae Ceramics. Bell dining table, The Wood Room. Seattle dining chairs, Poliform. Builder, DCB.

RETRO FIT

This remodel of a 1980s home on Sydney's Lower North Shore pays homage to a fun and flamboyant era.

STORY *Chris Pearson* | STYLING *Claire Delmar* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Prue Ruscoe*

THIS IS THE LIFE

The family of seven spends most of their time on the main level, which includes the open-plan kitchen/dining/family room. "The joinery in the downstairs retreat, which contains the kids' toys, has retractable pocket doors," she says. "We generally leave the doors open for easy access during the day, but then everything can be quickly shut away at bedtime."

The owner of this six-bedroom home on Sydney's Lower North Shore adores the exuberant 1980s, with its signature pastels and puffed-up furniture. So it was love at first sight when she encountered this largely untouched relic of the decade back in 2018. "The aspect and light were amazing," says the owner. "It immediately felt like home." With its sweeping curves, pink palette, porthole windows and solid construction, it was the architectural equivalent of a power suit (with shoulder pads).

Designed and built in the early '80s by the previous owner, an art lover and an engineer, the three-level

house was a time capsule of the period - with all its pros and cons. "The layout in the living areas was very modern - separate spaces flowed into more open zones," says the owner. But while 1980s Florida and its echoes of Art Deco were part of the original inspiration, the house had its own Miami vices. And they would need correcting for a large family, which has grown to include five children, all now under 11.

The basement level was severely underutilised, comprising a warren of rooms used largely for storage and poorly ventilated. Meanwhile, five bedrooms, including the main, on the top level were serviced by just one bathroom and an ensuite. But, most of all, the house needed a cosmetic update. ▶

KITCHEN/MEALS/FAMILY Bell table, The Wood Room. Manta dining chairs, Poliform. Dipping pendant, Est Lighting. Resin pieces, Dinosaur Designs. Ceramic plate, Robert Gordon Australia. Ceramic cup, Chinaclay. Ceramic vessel, Ignem Terrae Ceramics. Timber side table, Kate Nixon. Timber vessel, The DEA Store. Hem Puffy lounge chair and ottoman, District. Tosca outdoor dining chairs and Illum Slim outdoor table, Cosh Living. Barbecue, Wolf.

“We wanted to build on the existing curves,” says the owner. “Today’s building technologies meant we could add curved glass, for example, and remove the angular lines on the facade.”

The couple commissioned interior designer Suzanne Gorman of Studio Gorman and architect Peter Tout of Peter Tout Architects to turn vexations into virtues. The brief? “Maximise light, practical and pretty but not so precious that my kids can’t be kids,” says the owner. “Plenty of storage, plenty more curves and a Palm Springs ambience.” The latter, though, morphed into Miami along the way.

“We wanted to bring remnants of an original pastel pink palette through to the new design,” adds Suzanne. “Pastels are a hallmark of 1980s interiors, and we were fortunate that the owners were all for using them here. Miami encapsulated the cool 1980s feel perfectly and we moved in that

direction. Art Deco also influenced that era, which, in turn, influenced this home.”

A spiral staircase, the spine of the three-storey house, and round stained-glass windows were retained to achieve a blend of old and new architecture. Original porthole windows in the kitchen became integral to that space’s overall design. “The owner loved the home’s curves, so we added more and used flowing organic forms throughout,” says Suzanne.

Downstairs, idle spaces were repurposed into a cellar, bar and workshop. Suzanne also borrowed space from a large L-shaped family room to create an extra bedroom and ensuite for guests. The laundry was shifted from the ground floor to this level too.

The middle level needed little rearranging, as it already comprised a generous open-plan area on the northern side and, behind that, separate ▶



FAMILY ROOM *This page, opposite top and opposite bottom left* Voluptuous curves are omnipresent in the 1980s-inspired furniture choices, as well as the architecture. Valley sofa, Jordan. Hem Puffy lounge chair and ottoman, District. Timber side table, Kate Nixon. Austere floor light, Great Dane. India Scandi Revival rug, Cadrys. Ronnie sideboard, Grazia & Co. Textural vase and wooden vessel, The DEA Store. Blue jug, Becker.Minty. Checker dish, Tigmi Trading. Custom coffee table by Claire Delmar. Wooden bowl and glasses, Space. **HALL** *Opposite bottom right* Balustrade painted Porter’s Paints Washington Cherry. Eclectic Genetic sculpture by Elliott Routledge, Olsen Gallery.

“We wanted our home to be light, practical and pretty, but not at all precious.” HOMEOWNER



DINING This image and below right Jewel dining table, Zuster. Crown dining chairs, In Good Company. Custom sideboard. Paintings by Maria Kostareva and sculpture by Emma Lindegaard Studio, all Curatorial+Co. Bottle vase, Walter Auer. Bowl, Dinosaur Designs. Trapeze 7 pendant, Apparatus. Engineered European-oak flooring, Nash Timbers. Textured plate, The DEA Store. Dish, Chinaclay.

LIVING Right and opposite B&B Italia 'Camaleonda' sofa, Space. Nichetto Kim nesting table and bench, Spence & Lyda. Le Klint 349 floor lamp, Great Dane. Volley swivel chair, District. Cloud 19 pendant, Apparatus. Vintage rug. *Hovering Mist* artwork by Marisa Purcell.

POWDER ROOM Below left Arch Pendant 02, Snelling. Custom mirror, Timorous Beasties 'Merian Palm' wallpaper. Zafiro blue marble benchtop, Surface Gallery. Bianco Grande terrazzo floor tiles, Anterior XL. Skirting and ceiling painted Porter's Paints Hailstorm Half.



living and dining rooms, a study and powder room. The former laundry is now a very 21st-century mudroom, complete with generous storage.

The children's bedrooms, located on the top level, were long and narrow, so Peter and Suzanne rearranged the floor plan to make them a more functional shape plus add a second family bathroom. In the main bedroom suite, a lone toilet directly off the hallway has been removed, that space reclaimed as part of a generous walk-in wardrobe. A structural step has been seamlessly incorporated into the joinery. "It's a lovely place to sit and put on my shoes," says the owner.

The palette of finishes balances timeless style with the rough and tumble of family life. "The home needed to be robust, so young children could play without anyone worrying about damage," says Suzanne. "Durable and natural finishes make living easy for the family while paying homage to the owners' love of colour, organic materiality and light-filled spaces." Terrazzo floors, marble, brass and splashes of pastels combine to create "playful, engaging spaces with personality."

"With a base of warm white, the colour scheme was built around a contemporary interpretation of pastels, including lemon, duck-egg blue and ▶

"Durable and natural finishes make living easy for the family." SUZANNE GORMAN, INTERIOR DESIGNER

MAIN BEDROOM Circle chair, Great Dane. Custom bedhead and side tables. Pinch OI Sculptured pulls, Spark & Burnish. Cushions, Montmartre Store. Fizi pendant, Articolo Lighting. Oxford LED-cured flooring, Nash Timbers.
MAIN ENSUITE Barcelona bath, Victoria+Albert. Icon Plus tapware and Assemble showers, Astra Walker. Resin stool, Dinosaur Designs. Carrara C TicTax finger tiles and Fiorito floor tiles, Anterior XL. Custom mirrors. ▶

“The house is uniquely ours – quirky and calming, with pops of colour throughout.” HOMEOWNER

THE PALETTE

Porter's Paints Washington Cherry (balustrade)

Porter's Paints Himalayan Salt (main living and dining)

Porter's Paints Hailstorm Half (powder room)

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



FAMILY BATHROOM Marset Concentric LED wall light, Est Lighting. The Water Monopoly Soho bath, The English Tapware Company. Icon Urban Brass showerhead and towel rail, Astra Walker. Towels, Polite Society. Vessel, Damon Moon. Green dish, The DEA Store. Le Corbusier Terre Sienne Pale wall tiles, Artedomus. Bianco Grande Italian terrazzo slab floor tiles, Anterior XL. **LAUNDRY** Bianco Grande Italian terrazzo splashback and floor tiles, Anterior XL. Porcelain benchtop, Artedomus. Icon mixer, Astra Walker. Appliances, Asko.



and blush, together with injections of cobalt,” says Suzanne. Fuchsia features in the powder room and playfully accentuates the balustrade on the staircase that winds sinuously through all three levels.

Statement furnishings include the Crown dining chairs upholstered in a textural lemon fabric. “We needed something really special for the dining room as it’s in the middle of the house and on view all the time. Their angular and sculptural shape made them a standout selection,” says Suzanne.

Similarly, the inviting Camaleonda sofa in the adjacent living room is also incredibly sculptural, curvaceous and inviting. “It’s modular, so it can be rearranged to suit the family’s needs, such as increasing the amount of seating or circulation space for a party,” says Suzanne. Its design predates the 1980s, but it’s that era in spirit.

“I love that the house is uniquely ours - quirky, neutral and calming, but with pops of colour throughout, especially in the furniture,” says the owner. And, happily her beloved 1980s style lives to see another day - with a welcome modern twist.

Studio Gorman, Paddington, NSW; 0414 936, 571 or studiogorman.com.



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THE SOURCE

Strong colours exude confidence and a sense of fun; shapely curves are easy on the eye.



Produced by Shayne Burton.

1 Nelson ‘Saucer Bubble’ pendant light, \$990, Living Edge. 2 Inoda+Sveje bar stool, \$4100, Great Dane. 3 Trudon ‘Abd El Kadr’ candle, \$139, Myer. 4 Smeg stand mixer with glass bowl, \$799, Harvey Norman. 5 *Side Paddock After The Firing #2* artwork by Leonie Barton, \$1000 (framed), Curatorial+Co. 6 Zip ‘Arc’ mixer tap in Brushed Gold, \$995, Winning Appliances. 7 Bell dining table, POA, The Wood Room. 8 Le Klint 349 floor lamp by Aage Petersen, \$5350, Great Dane. 9 Composite-quartz surface in Circa, from \$700/m² (installed), Caesarstone. 10 B&B Italia ‘Camaleonda’ modular sofa by Mario Bellini, POA, Space. For Where to Buy, see page 192. H&G