

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

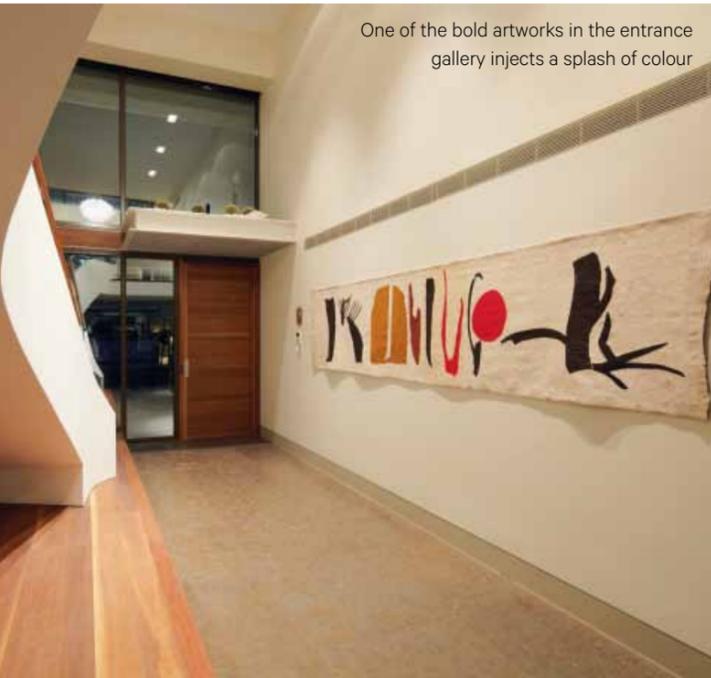
Uninterrupted views of dazzling Port Phillip Bay and a strong street presence bring this abode to life

■ WORDS / Tatyana Leonov

■ PHOTOGRAPHY / Sebastian Gollings Photography

At night, the home is dazzling





One of the bold artworks in the entrance gallery injects a splash of colour



The sinuous staircase links the grand front door entry to views over the bay

Antonio Russo and his wife Silvana both come from seaside towns in Italy, so it's no surprise they have always gravitated towards the water when choosing a place to live. "Our previous family home, where we raised our children and lived for 30 years, was by the bay and we have always been interested in living by the water in any subsequent home," Antonio explains.

The Brighton purchase fitted their ideals perfectly. "It was bought quite spontaneously after viewing the property for the first time on auction day purely out of curiosity," Antonio laughs. "We just loved the location for its spectacular views and development potential."

The original 1970s house did not suit their living requirements, so the decision was made to demolish the existing house and start afresh. All that's left of the original residence are a mature palm tree on the northern boundary and a couple of smaller ones on the southeast boundary.

Excited about owning a property in such close proximity to the water, Antonio and Silvana worked closely with their architects, Williams Boag Architects, and used the location as inspiration for the design. "We wanted to build a home with generous living areas and a strong connection to the outside yet providing a safe haven from the external elements, particularly the prevailing winds from across the bay," Antonio explains. "Internally, we wanted a substantial and impressive entry space that immediately connected us with the bay views at the rear of the site. We also wanted an easily maintained house to suit our lifestyle and respond to our focus on entertaining and family."

Today, the majestic Brighton house is a three-level dwelling complete with a basement car park

The pebble-covered roof garden provides liberal views out over the bay



■ *The highest level is the opulent roof terrace. Accessible by an external spiral staircase connecting to the first-floor northern balcony, the terrace provides spectacular bay views set against a landscaped ballasted roof covered in pebbles* ■

and a roof terrace that takes advantage of the views.

The basement has provision for nine cars (a spatial generosity implemented because of Antonio's love of classic cars) and is also home to the lavish home theatre, a wine storeroom and a powder room.

The ground floor houses the double-height main entry space with feature stairs and an adjoining gallery. The three bedrooms, including the main bedroom, are on this level and each one features a walk-in wardrobe and ensuite. The family room is also found on the ground floor and houses a kitchenette, gymnasium, steam room and laundry.

The main living spaces are located on the first floor, with Antonio citing this space as his favourite area. The cleverly designed floor incorporates an array of free-flowing spaces, enhancing the feeling of space and connection within. The living room features a distinctive fireplace and a niche area for the baby grand piano, while the connecting dining area is serviced by a front-of-house kitchen that features a generously sized island bench, which adjoins a second back-of-house kitchen with walk-in cool room.

The highest level is the opulent roof terrace. Accessible by an external spiral staircase connecting to the first-floor northern balcony, the terrace provides spectacular bay views set against

a landscaped ballasted roof covered in pebbles. It's truly a space where balance and harmony are captured through a refined palette of materials.

Regular site visits with the architects meant that a greater understanding was developed from the drawings and models that had previously been presented. "We were very fortunate that during the building process we did not need to change the structural design significantly," Antonio remembers, citing just a few minor changes in the positing of the walls and doors to better meet their needs.

"The building process has not been as easy task," Antonio reflects. This was largely due to the complications presented by the site. For example, excavating a basement below sea level increased the amount of time and effort it took to obtain a watertight basement, but through a collaborative approach between the architect and the builder "we were able to achieve all we desired with minimal complication or worry".

The house is anchored by the spine, which is the central organising feature of the dwelling. It acts as a gallery and contains a water feature, artworks, the roof ballast garden and a sinuously curving staircase that links the front door to views over the bay. The strong shape of the stairs and the resulting negative space are instrumental in the creation of this space, which distinguishes the architectural experience of the house.

Fluidity and connection between rooms, levels



Living, dining and meals spaces connect seamlessly in a free-flowing design

The living room looks out onto Port Phillip Bay



■ *The majority of materials used in the construction of the house were chosen because of their robust nature and ease of maintenance in response to the harsh bay environment* ■

and the indoors and outdoors were pivotal in the design process. Antonio and Silvana wanted the house's rooms to transition seamlessly and connect with the family. "The rooms flow from one to the other and, although spacious, the house does not feel too big," Antonio says.

Floor-to-ceiling doors and windows feature prominently in the living space, allowing for visual and direct interaction with the outdoors while also providing an abundance of natural light. Because the views of the bay are located on the western side, high-performance, thermally broken aluminium windows with double glazing were used to capture the view while maintaining the thermal comfort inside the house.

"I really love the living rooms," explains Antonio. "A lot of thought and effort were put into the large rectangular space, which comprises the kitchen, dining and lounge areas — all with large glass doors and windows facing the spectacular views of the bay. It's one spacious room where the family can gather, feel close and comfortable yet have plenty of space to move."

Fluid space was a key element in the design of the dwelling. Every room, walkway, balcony and ensuite offers ease of use and optimum functionality. "I was looking to create a home that would be easy to maintain, suited my lifestyle and responded to our love of entertaining," Antonio says.

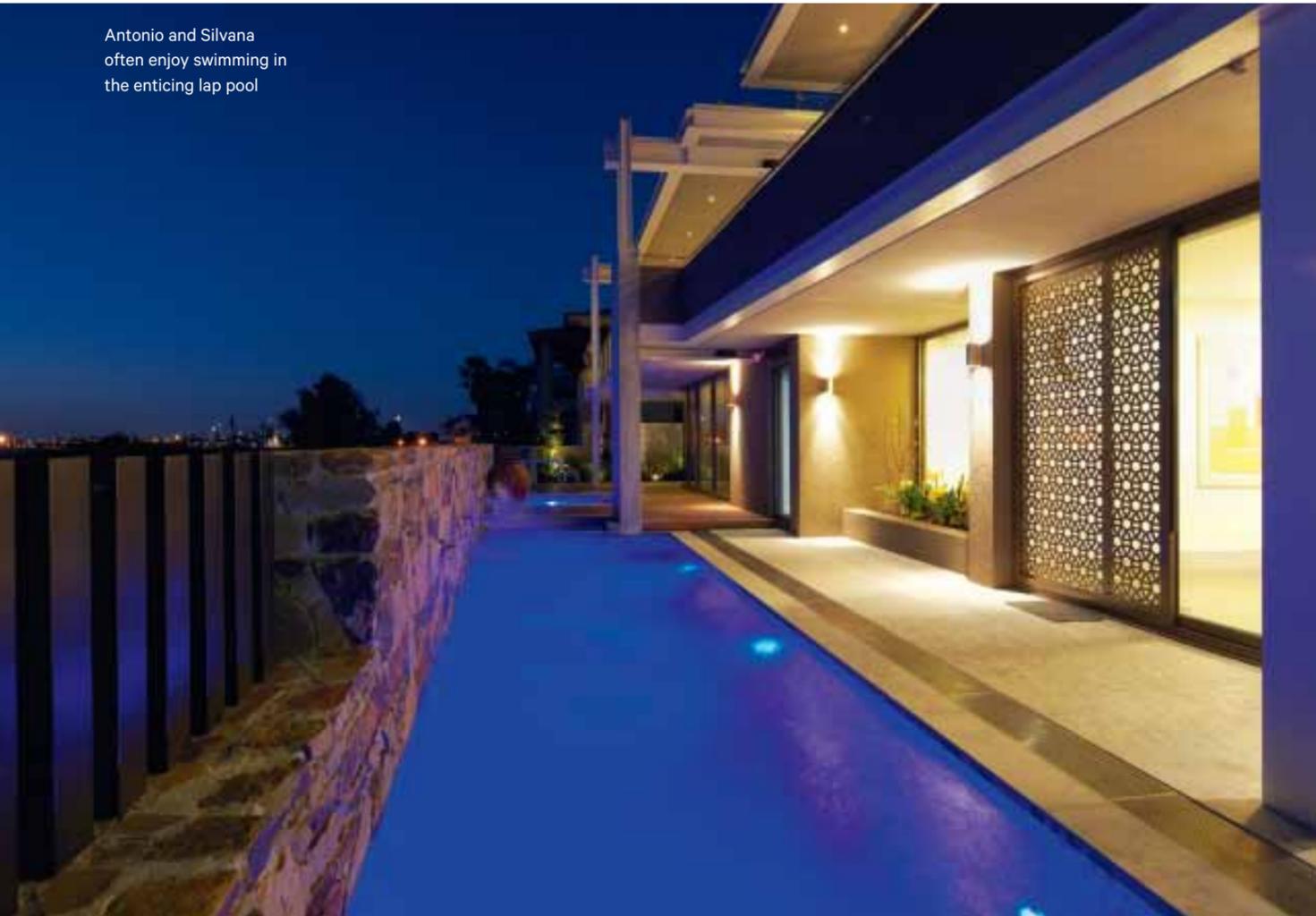
The majority of materials used in the construction of the house were chosen because of their robust nature and ease of maintenance, particularly with regard to the harsh bay environment. Low-VOC finishes were used where possible and the spotted gum floors were finished with Organoil floor finish, which is a natural tung-oil-based product without the issues of off-gassing as with traditional polyurethane floor finishes.

The house has two in-ground water tanks for harvesting rainwater, which is used to irrigate the garden, and a hot-water ring main system installed to provide hot water instantly when a tap is turned on, therefore preventing unnecessary wastage.

The ballasted roof is covered with succulents and has rigid foam insulation underneath, which significantly reduces heat gain and transfer to the internal spaces. A C-Bus management system was installed to monitor and regulate the energy used within the house.

This may be Antonio and Silvana's last home and they are incredibly happy with the result.

Antonio and Silvana often enjoy swimming in the enticing lap pool

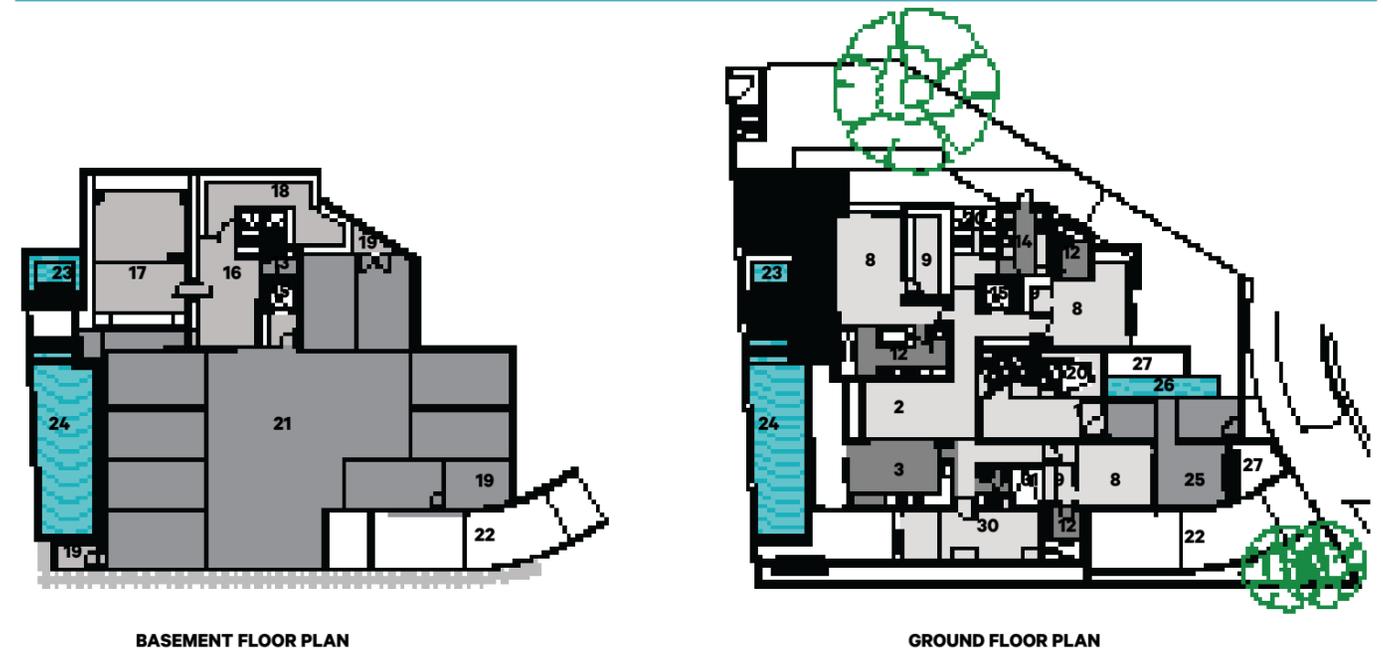


“Much effort has gone into the planning of the property to ensure it can take us and our expanding family well into the future and it’s been so beautifully designed by our architect who has incorporated various finishes and used natural materials and neutral colours,” Antonio explains. “The external areas feature clean, crisp lines focusing on simplicity and sophistication, while the internal areas have also been kept simple and minimalistic but still encompass a warm and inviting feel, accentuated with the soft blues, greens and browns that bring the outside in”.

The couple say living in the house has provided them with a new appreciation for the beauty of nature. Perhaps it even takes them back to their carefree childhood memories of Italy by the sea. “It’s easy to slow down and take in the view, enjoy breakfast on the balcony, watch the waves in the water, the ships coming in and out of the port, the stunning sunsets, the movement and sounds of the people and children in the surrounding areas,” Antonio muses. “At home, I feel so calm and relaxed.”

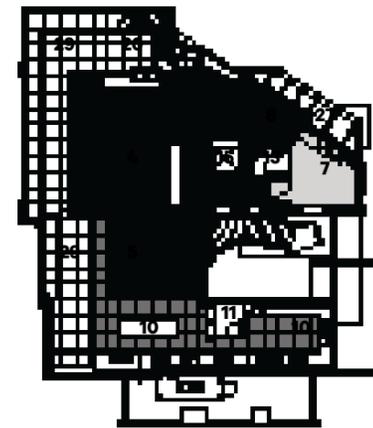


Antonio and Silvana often find themselves relaxing in their lavish home theatre

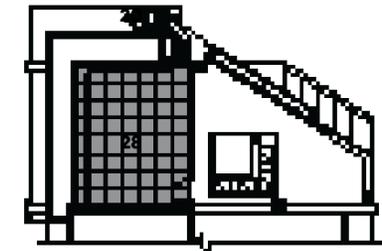


BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PART ROOF PLAN

LEGEND

- | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Entry | 7 Study | 14 Laundry | 21 Carpark | 28 Roof Terrace |
| 2 Gallery | 8 Bedroom | 15 Lift | 22 Ramp | 29 Balcony |
| 3 Family Room | 9 Walk-in robe | 16 Lobby | 23 Spa | 30 Gym |
| 4 Living | 10 Kitchen | 17 Home Theatre | 24 Pool | 31 Steamroom |
| 5 Dining | 11 Cool Room | 18 Wine Store | 25 Courtyard | |
| 6 Piano Room | 12 Ensuite | 19 Store | 26 Water Feature | |
| | 13 Powder Room | 20 Stair | 27 Planter | |

PROJECT TEAM

- **PROJECT TEAM Architect and Interior designer** Williams Boag Architects (williamsboag.com.au)
- **STRUCTURAL TEAM Builder** Monde Construction and Refrigeration Pty Ltd (03 8325 8600) **Building Surveyor** Builde Permits & Inspections (03 9572 3111) **Structural Engineer** Intrax Consulting Engineers (03 8371 0100)

- **STRUCTURE External Stairway** Stilcon (stilcon.com.au) **Mechanics, Electrics and Hydraulics** BRT Consulting Engineers (03 9417 2971) **Structural Steel** Stilcon (stilcon.com.au)
- **FIXTURES AND FITTINGS Architectural Lighting Solutions** INLITE (inlite.com.au) **Bathroom & Living Room Joinery** Creative Cabinets (creativecabinets.com.au) **Bathroom & Plumbing** Reece (reece.com.au) **Composite Stone Slabs & Tiles** Quarella (quarella.com.au) **Elevator Timber** Australian Recycled Timber (australianrecycledtimber.com.au) **Engineered Stone Surfaces** Caesarstone (caesarstone.com.au) **Island Bench** Quarella (quarella.com.au) **Kitchen Bench** Caesarstone (caesarstone.com.au)

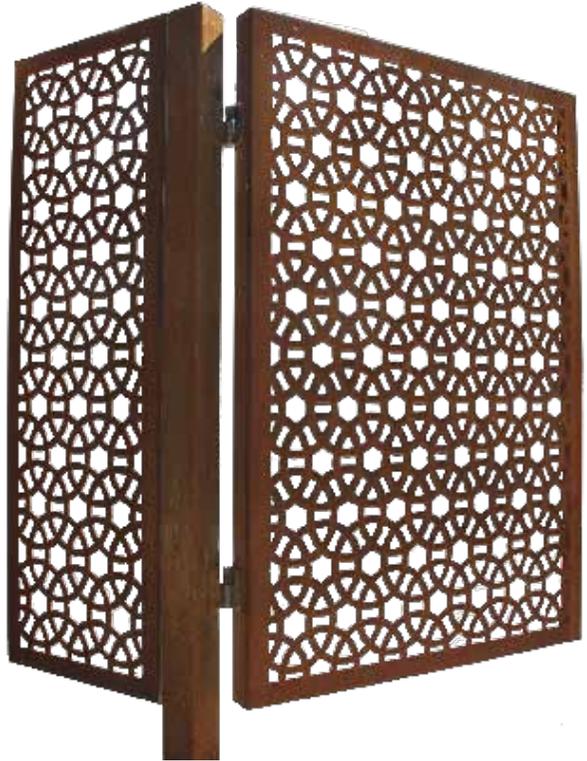
- Thermally Broken Windows** Element Windows (elementwindows.com.au) **Mosaic Tiles** Trend-vi (trend-vi.com) and Bisazza Mosaics (bisazza.com) **Feature Walls** Pyrenees Quarries Castlemaine (pyreneesquarries.com.au)
- **FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS Cabinetry** Creative Cabinets (creativecabinets.com.au) **Dining Room Light** Luceplan (luceplan.com) **Floor Lamp** Artemide (artemide.com.au) **Kitchen Paint** Dulux (dulux.com.au) **Screens/gates** Martin Hodge Design (martinhodgedesign.com.au) **Hallway Tapestry** Australian Tapestry Workshop (austapestry.com.au) **Timber Oil Finish** Organoil (organoil.com.au)



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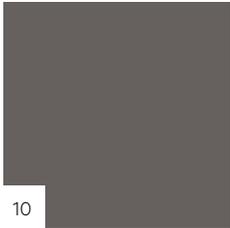
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GET THE LOOK

Take some inspiration from Antonio and Silvana's beautiful home with these stylish pieces



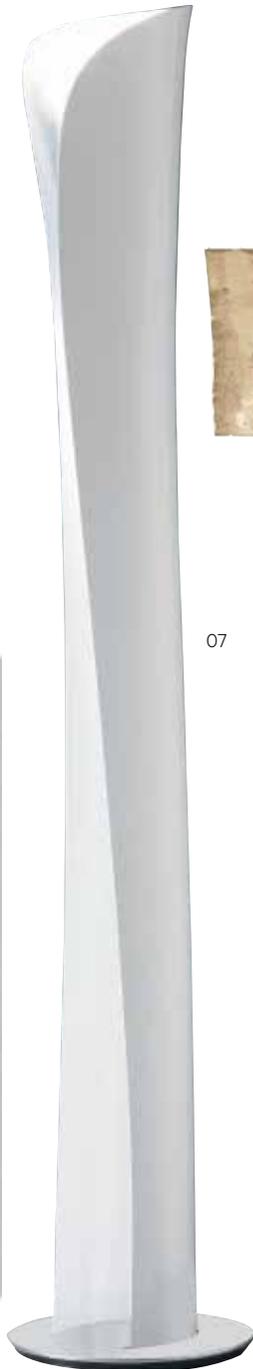
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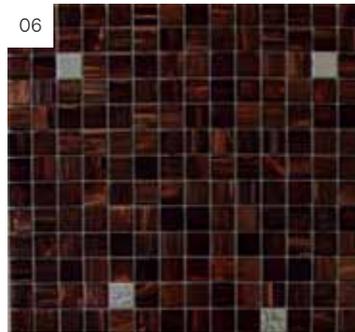
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01 Hope suspended light from Luceplan. luceplan.com

02 Spotted gum timber with various planks finished with Olde Style Danish Oil. Available from Australian Recycled Timber and Organoil Natural Timber Preservation Oils. australianrecycledtimber.com.au and organoil.com.au

03 Self-closing sliding screens to the pool area are a feature by Martin Hodge Design. martinhodgedesign.com.au

04 G.W. Bot Tapestry woven by Amy Cornell, Emma Sulzer and Cheryl Thornton from Australian Tapestry Workshop. Other tapestries are also available. austapestry.com.au

05 Liz dining chair by Corporate Culture. corporateculture.com.au

06 Spectacular mosaic tiling in the steam room by Trend Group USA. trendgroup-usa.com

07 Cadmo Terra lamp in white by Artemide. artemide.com.au

08 Nettle and wool from the Nepalese Naturals range at Cadry's. cadrys.com.au

09 Limed White Half by Dulux. dulux.com.au

10 Alfresco Haven by Dulux. dulux.com.au