



# Small wonder

Using clever visual tricks, interior designer Greg Natale has given this once drab terrace in Sydney's inner west a light and airy feel.

PHOTOGRAPHS ANSON SMART WORDS CHRIS PEARSON



THESE PAGES In the living room, the flowing, organic curves of Arne Jacobsen 'Swan' chairs provide a strong contrast to the square lines of the Minotti 'Kline' sofa. Noguchi coffee table is from Living Edge. The custom-made rug, created by the home's interior designer, Greg Natale, was made by Designer Rugs. Cole & Son 'Woods' wallpaper from Radford Furnishings. Blauet 'Reflexion 80' pendant light from ECC Lighting + Furniture; Kartell 'La Bohème' stool from Space. Antlers by Illumanon, bird moneyboxes by Pols Potten, and Blow Up side table by Alessi lend an air of whimsy to the scene. Artwork by Scott Petrie.



Good things come in small packages – well, they do in the case of this glamorous, translucent terrace. The compact three-bedroom home of Anthony Semann and Colin Slattery in Sydney’s inner west is infused with light and an uptown decorating touch that belie its 4-metre width and humble origins. “It was a dingy terrace screaming for life to be put into it,” says Anthony. Despite that, it had “a lovely energy” and plenty of potential for a Cinderella transformation. And, as in the fairytale, glass would have a major role to play.

The pair approached designer Greg Natale, of Greg Natale Design, who was confronted with the problem of how to make the most of the dark, narrow house. True to his reputation, Greg ventured outside the square: “With a terrace, the temptation is to rip everything out and open up the back with bifolds, but we left everything where it was – living and dining areas at the front, kitchen in the middle, and bathroom at the rear overlooking the courtyard. It would have felt disconnected with the living areas split in two.” And there would have been little room for the lavish

bathroom that Anthony was so keen on. What’s more, every square centimetre had to work for its living.

“Anthony and Colin wanted a place where they could entertain – something warm, luxurious and glamorous, with lots of light and lots of glass,” says Greg. There’s certainly plenty of both. A vast mirrored wall, which extends all the way from the front door to the kitchen, visually doubles the living spaces and bounces light off all the interior surfaces. It also lends a glossy, up-market sophistication to the rooms.

Also, unconventionally, Greg eschewed an open-plan layout – not only because it could make such a slender house seem even more elongated, but also because the clients wanted a sense of separation between the zones. Instead, he extended the opening between the living and dining rooms to the ceiling to create a connection between the two. And the wall that divides the two rooms extends up into the stairwell on the dining room side. It is covered in Cole & Son wallpaper with a forest print; the trunks of the trees soaring skywards over two levels. A floating metal staircase with a plain



THIS PAGE In the dining room and kitchen, mirrored finishes promote a sophisticated mood. Charles and Ray Eames 'Eiffel Tower' base chairs from Living Edge. Artwork by Scott Petrie. OPPOSITE PAGE A vast mirrored wall that runs through the living room to the dining room beyond serves to visually enhance the size of the spaces.

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glass balustrade emphasises the feeling of airiness. Similarly, a cabinet below the staircase is wall mounted to keep the floor clear. And, forget conventional two-pack polyurethane fronting the kitchen joinery – Greg has placed mirrored finishes here, too.


But perhaps the biggest surprise of all is the bathroom at the rear of the house, with floor-to-ceiling glass louvres on two sides, travertine floor, slick sunken bath and Swarovski crystal pendant light. "I will be sitting in the bath with a tea, watching the sun come up. It's like a womb," says Anthony.

The sunken bath makes the room seem larger and ensures sightlines are uninterrupted. "From the front door to the backyard, you can see right through the house. It works," says Greg. "You can feel a really strong connection."

Furniture selection was "organic", says Greg, a gradual process, the result of a toing and froing between him and Anthony and Colin to get the mix right. Here, Greg had the chance to explore his love of all things retro and use one of his favourite colour combos – 70s-inspired orange and green. "The furniture is classic and modernist," he says. "The two [Arne Jacobsen]

Swan chairs in the living room were chosen for their shape. We needed something small, but with flowing lines and organic curves." Their curves are echoed by the Noguchi coffee table. Meanwhile, the Minotti 'Kline' sofa, its squarish lines a counterpoint to the Swan chairs, is covered in black chenille "for luxurious texture".

Ironically, oversized Blauet 'Reflexion' pendant lights in the living and the dining rooms actually make the two areas feel larger. "You wouldn't use an oversized chair to do that, but it works with the pendants," says Greg. "They become statement pieces." The striped rug (his own design) also draws the eye towards the back of the house and helps ensure continuity throughout. So, too, does the copious travertine in the kitchen, the bathroom and the courtyard beyond, which creates a smooth transition between the spaces and reinforces the indoor/outdoor connection.

Although the result of Greg's handiwork is unconventional, even a little quirky, Anthony and Colin wouldn't change a thing in their elegant terrace – just like that snug slipper, this glass creation is a perfect fit. 

## SYDNEY HOME

THIS PAGE In the dining room, an oversized Blauet 'Reflexion 80' pendant ironically makes the room feel larger. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Greg used a retro green and orange colour scheme in the bedroom, which features a Missoni bedcover and patterned cushions from Spence & Lyda; Verner Panton 'Panthella' table lamp from Corporate Culture, and artwork by Scott Petrie. Light pours into the main bathroom, where a sunken bath from Argent Australia and travertine tiles from RMS Natural Stone & Ceramics create a streamlined feel, and a Bruck 'Cristello' hanging pendant light adds a touch of glamour. In the kitchen, the rangehood and refrigerator have been built in to the joinery to preserve its clean lines. Benchtop is Corian; oven is from Miele; accessories are by Stelton.

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**SPEED READ** Greg Natale of Greg Natale Design has given this once dingy terrace in Sydney's inner west a Cinderella transformation. + Going against conventional wisdom, he didn't create a living area at the home's rear; instead he opted to create a luxurious bathroom overlooking the courtyard. + Greg also eschewed an open-plan layout, choosing a graphic feature wall to separate the living and dining room. + Clever design devices, such as mirrored finishes, evoke a sense of space.

