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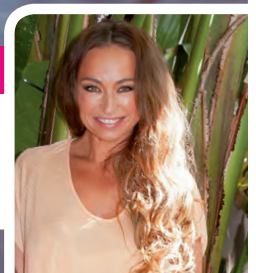


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PEEK INSIDE...

the homes of leading fashion designers Camilla Franks and Jayson Brunson





Manhattan Chic ON SYDNEY HARBOUR





MH | AT HOME WITH RACHEL AND GARETH

There are few couples with a young child who would contemplate renovating a 1900s Arts and Crafts home in Sydney while living overseas, but that's just what Rachel and Gareth Uys did. The key it seems was finding the right interior designer.

STORY DIANA SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY TONY POTTER
STYLING VICTORIA WATERS DESIGN PTY LTD FLOWERS BY LAVANDE DESIGNS





THIS PAGE: A cleverly concealed home office means a quick reshuffle of chairs is all that's needed should guests come over.

RIGHT: Rachel loves the way the neutral colour palette complements the artwork.





MH | AT HOME WITH RACHEL AND GARETH



Buying their Sydney property as an investment in 2009, Rachel and Gareth lived in New York and Hong Kong while they planned minor alterations to the Sydney property that would incorporate the furniture they'd acquired overseas. As well as furniture, they wanted additional modern amenities to ensure it would become a wonderful family home.

A MANHATTAN AFFAIR

It was clear the professional couple needed to convey their ideas remotely throughout the

renovation, so after some research Rachel hired Victoria Waters of Victoria Waters Design to provide assistance with interior design and project management, and to be the central point of contact for everyone involved in the project.

Rachel and Gareth spent plenty of time compiling images and ideas and had many discussions over the phone, via email and over Skype with Victoria. The original brief was to transform the home from plain and white into a New York style apartment.

Rachel had many detailed ideas for the style and feel she wanted and, with

Victoria's help, refined the design to create her dream home. "I consolidated Rachel's ideas with additional concept images and prepared an inspiration board," Victoria explains. "The board featured images of key design elements and a selection of samples including tiles, carpet, paint colours, wallpaper and fabrics."

To ensure the success of the Manhattan-chic look Rachel desired, Victoria introduced some luxurious elements such as crystal chandeliers, a marble bathroom, detailed cabinetry in the lounge, bathroom and study, wallpaper feature walls and dark floorboards

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Just like a stylish New York apartment, this open living space incorporates a large lounge area and dining section too.



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ABOVE The best of both worlds – the formal dining room benefits from natural light and stunning sea views.

TOP RIGHT Natural light floods into the kitchen through stylish white plantation shutters.

BOTTOM RIGHT Dark floorboards complement the neutral colour palette. Foldable doors that match the kitchen cabinetry conceal the laundry.

throughout the apartment. “The house has a grand and significant presence with wonderful characteristics,” Rachel says. “Overseas we had been living in modern surrounds, but we are naturally drawn to buildings with a sense of history and unique characteristics. The position of this building on a quiet harbour-side reserve overlooking Taronga Zoo is priceless.”

GETTING STARTED

With details and contracts in place, the gutting process began while the Uys family was still in Hong Kong. Rachel came to Sydney to view the progress and make

selections. “Victoria would be onsite checking on the progress most days or at suppliers choosing fixtures or finishes,” Rachel says. “She was excellent in directing us to suppliers or showing us options for say, the balcony tiles, and we could simply make a choice from those.”

While Rachel and Gareth had a budget estimate in mind they kept it flexible in certain areas as they wanted to create a high-quality finish to the apartment. This gave Victoria some room to move when sourcing items such as lighting, furniture, floor rugs, wallpaper and accessories.

THE BIG TRANSFORMATION

Rachel, Gareth and their young daughter had moved back to Sydney by the time the internals were being fitted. Luckily, their plan didn't include major structural changes, rather spaces were opened and converted. The kitchen was extended by removing the double glass doors and nibs on the adjoining sunroom and undercover balcony. The newly opened sunroom was then widened to

WALLPAPER

- Porter's Narrow Stripe Putty in dining room, entry and hallway.
- Osborne & Little, Finches in the nursery.
- Osborne & Little Pompadour, Du Barry in kitchen.

FABRIC

- Warwick Fabrics, Lumiere, Sky for the banquette upholstery.
- Osborne & Little, Pompadour, Du Barry for the cushions

PAINT

- Dulux Lamarque Acrylic half-strength on the ceilings and cornices.
- Dulux Lamarque Gloss Enamel on the doors, architraves, windows, window frames and skirtings.
- Dulux Hog Bristle Low Sheen Acrylic on the bedroom, lounge/ dining and hallway walls.
- Dulux Whisper White Low Sheen Acrylic on the kitchen and sunroom walls.





incorporate an informal dining area and a home office.

The second toilet was reconfigured into a generous laundry space by blocking its doorway and pushing through the side-wall before concealing the appliances behind bi-fold doors. The internals of the wardrobes were redesigned to make full use of the space.

Rachel and Gareth both feel the design stayed true to their two main must-haves – that all the spaces flow well and that there is plenty of purpose-built concealed storage to maximise the living areas. They are especially happy with the home office concealed within the custom-designed bookcase in the sunroom and the velvet diamond-buttoned upholstered banquette dining area in the kitchen.

THE KITCHEN

Staying with the Manhattan theme, Victoria assisted with the kitchen design, preparing the plans, selections of fixtures, fittings, colours and benchtop surfaces. A wallpapered feature wall at the end of the kitchen was introduced as a key design

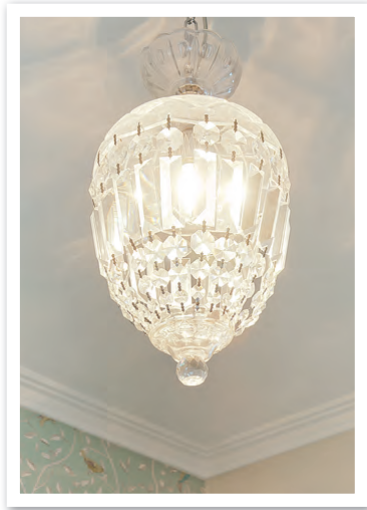




element and the pattern was repeated on the cushion fabric of the banquette seating.

Victoria says the transformation of the kitchen was quite amazing, and Rachel and Gareth love the ample bench space and practical layout.

A favourite of Rachel's is the built-in banquette seating in the kitchen sunroom. "It's a focal point and work of art by a senior upholsterer at Jade Upholstery who has been practicing for years," she says.



ABOVE LEFT Arts and Crafts style light fittings have been installed with dimmers.

ABOVE Rachel and Gareth's young daughter's restful bedroom features hints of soft colour and texture.

LEFT Osborne & Little Finches wallpaper adds colour to the nursery.

HARMONIOUS DESIGN

The apartment was painted a few years earlier in neutral shades that Rachel and Gareth wanted to keep, so Victoria worked with this colour scheme and chose complementary wallpapers and accent colours. Rachel and Gareth prefer neutral palettes as it gives them flexibility to create feature walls with individuality. "I love how the palette accommodates our various artworks," Rachel says.

Lighting is another area that benefited from Victoria's careful planning – the softening effect of dimmer switches throughout the house adds another dimension and caters to every occasion.

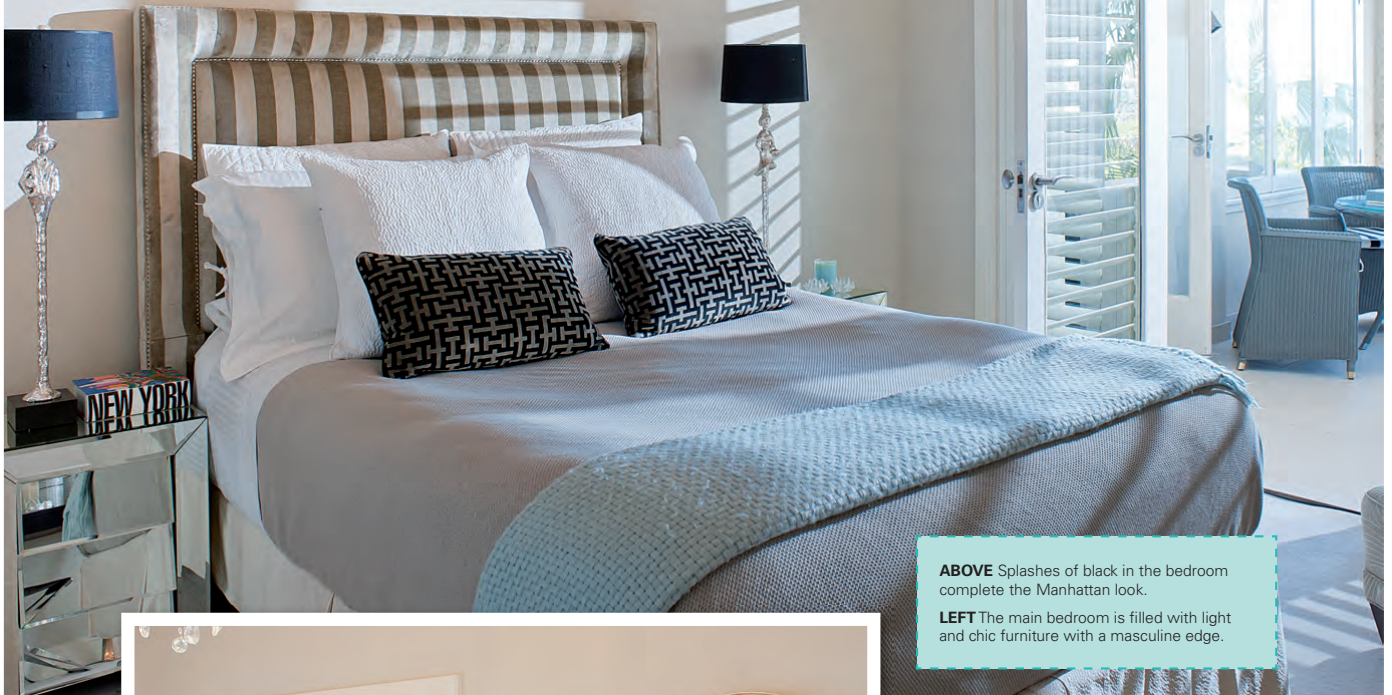
With New York as Rachel and Gareth's





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“NEW YORK STYLE WAS THEIR
DECORATING INSPIRATION.”



ABOVE Splashes of black in the bedroom complete the Manhattan look.

LEFT The main bedroom is filled with light and chic furniture with a masculine edge.



inspiration it's no surprise most of the furniture is actually from the Big Apple itself. Mostly neutral in colour, allowing for other playful focal points such as the geometric black and white rug that Victoria had custom made by Designer Rugs in Sydney, the stunning house is just as much at home in Sydney as it would be in Manhattan.

LUCKY FINDS

Rachel and Gareth were rewarded many times on this project for planning ahead and being hands-on. One memorable moment was at a vintage store when they found cut-glass cabinetry handles – they both love how something as small as this can really add to a look.

Another lucky find was Victoria herself. “The key to everything was Victoria, who was great in ensuring our ideas were always kept in mind when the team was working on the project,” Rachel says. For typically high-end projects such as this, Victoria says she is confident about delivering the best result because of her professional team – Aqua Building Solutions, Platinum

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THIS PAGE Rich cream and soft white colours make a luxurious statement in the bathroom, while pretty pink flowers add fresh hues and a beautiful scent.

BELOW RIGHT Rachel and Gareth enjoy clear views across Sydney Harbour from their balcony.





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Electrical, Provincial Kitchens and Mark's Cabinet Making.

FRESH FLORALS

For Rachel, owner of boutique floral design studio Lavande Designs, flowers are the defining layer to an interior because they are natural. Their scent, colour, size, stems and texture add unexpected appeal to a room and make visitors feel welcome. "I love anything delicate, ruffled and scented," Rachel says. "Sweet pea, ranunculus, grape hyacinth (muscaria), lily-of-the-valley and winter rose (hellebores) tick these boxes. I also love larger blooms such as peonies, hydrangea and lilac and in autumn mixing textural elements such as cumquats into designs."

This understated approach ensured the success of the renovation as each beautiful element quietly draws the eye and is reminiscent of downtown New York City – but with the stunning water views of Sydney.



VICTORIA'S DECORATING TIPS

- Plan – prepare a mood board of images to help you visualise the overall design concept of your home. For continuity ensure your design scheme flows throughout the home.
- Budget – prepare an itemised budget plan to keep you focused and ensure all your selections are within your finances.
- Quality – ensure you use reputable suppliers and trades for a quality professional finish.

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