

G R O O V Y B A B Y



To do its impressive design legacy justice, a 1960s hexagonal house in Sydney got the right kind of renovation for the freestyling family of five who live there

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cheat sheet

Who lives here Oli Flower, an intensive-care physician; his wife Christine Bowles, an emergency physician and trauma specialist; their daughter Isabelle, 10, and sons Max, five, and Jack, two; plus Daisy, a guinea pig.

Style of home A double-storey 1960s hexagonal house that's been turned into a contemporary mid-century-stye mansion.

🕒 The seven-month renovation was completed in December 2019.

\$\$\$\$ About \$1.6m, including the cost of moving out and renting during the build.



EATING AREA (this page and opposite): Chris and son Jack near their hexagonal island bench painted Dulux Billiard Ball with top in Corian Designer White. The striking 'Nau' Bell pendant is from Cult.

As doctors in intensive care and emergency medicine, Oli Flower and Chris Bowles are used to making decisions quickly. Such was the case in 2012 when they first laid eyes on a quirky 1960s house overlooking the water in Sydney's Cremorne, which had been owned by the same family since it was built 45 years earlier.

"Chris and I were looking for something a bit different and so we instantly loved the unique style of this place with its wide eaves, mostly hexagonal rooms and [early Modernist style] construction that was sympathetic to the local environment of rocks and trees," Oli explains.

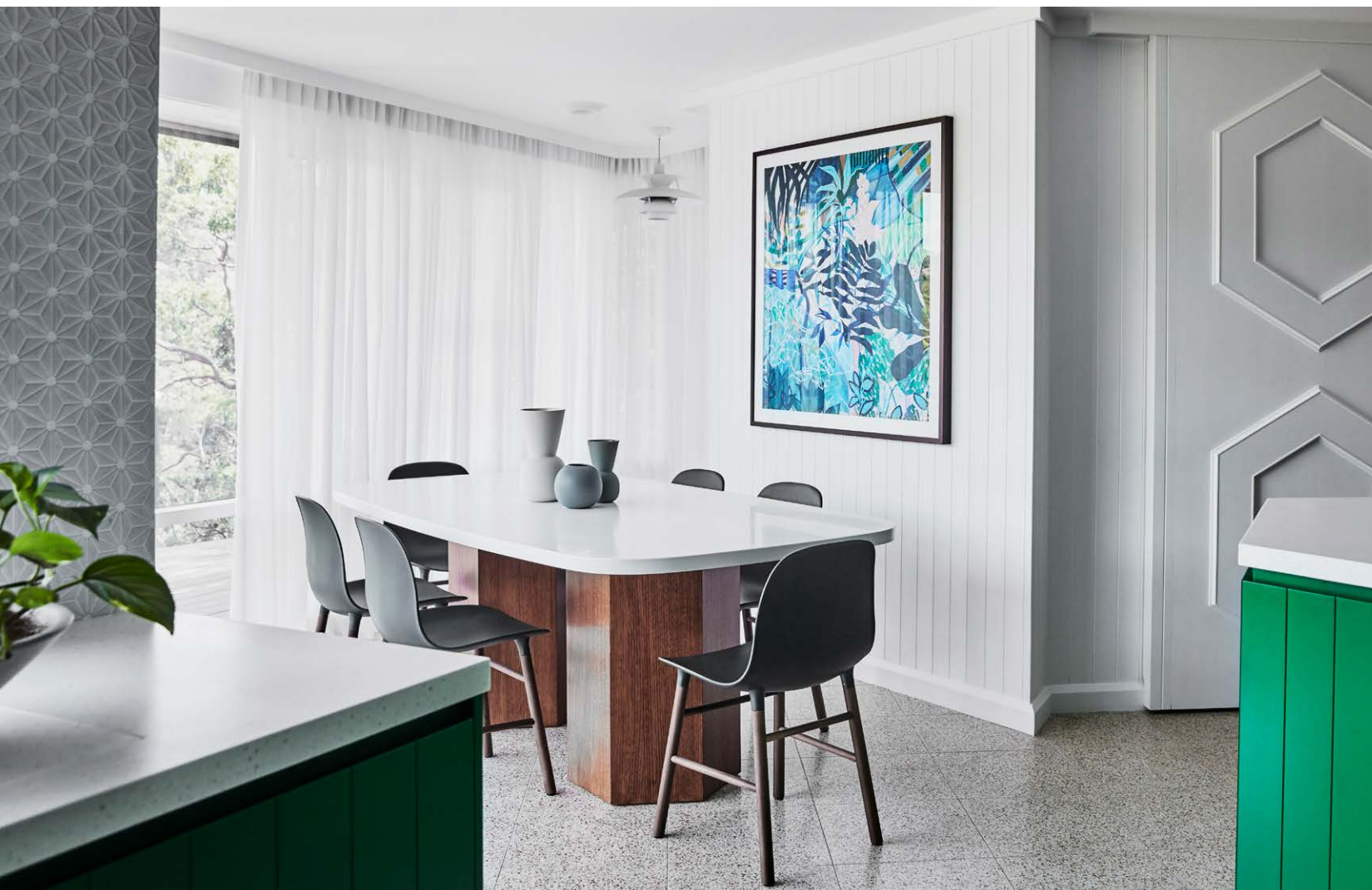
The house had been inspired by the work of legendary US architect Frank Lloyd Wright and his iconic Walker Residence in Carmel, California, so it appealed to the couple's love of all things 1960s and 1970s. "We've always been into that era, whether it's the music or design," Oli says. "But ultimately, even though this was our first serious house, we didn't want it to be a serious kind of thing. We wanted a place that was fun."

Oli and Chris snapped it up and celebrated moving in with Champagne on the deck overlooking the water on a 42°C day. Then, with the help of interior designer Lauren Mahoney from Decoroom, they set to work on an initial overhaul, which included installing a new kitchen, bathroom and flooring, and repainting the dark wooden internal panelling white.

Then their thoughts turned to other areas of the house. "We always saw the potential to create more space, but couldn't work out the best way to do that," says Oli. "But as we loved the home's style and quiriness, we wanted to make it work for us."

In an effort to come up with the best possible design, the couple obtained preliminary plans from four architects, only to put everything on hold when their careers and family life – son Max joined big sister Isabelle in 2014 – became very busy.

It was only when they found out they were expecting their third child, Jack, in 2017 that the decision to either renovate or move had to be made. They opted to stay, choosing architect Madeleine Scarfe to refine plans for another storey, containing a further two bedrooms, a sitting room and a bathroom.



KITCHEN Mottled Italian terrazzo tiles from Surface Gallery tread the middle ground between the room's bold patterns and block colour. Mini triangle splashback tiles, Teranova. **DINING** (opposite) Dulux Vivid White is the perfect foil for bright colour and used on all the non-coloured walls, windows and trims. Table (designed by Decoroom) and chairs, HG Furniture Solutions. Artwork by Kate Mayes.



MAIN BEDROOM Artwork by Paul Klee looks just the part here. Ambert console, Horgans, Kizu lamp, HG Furniture Solutions. Vintage glassware. **STAIRCASE** Directly opposite the green front door is this Brunswick & Fils Feuillage Blue wallpaper and Tom Dixon 'Cut Surface' wall light. Stairs painted Dulux Night Life. The walnut cabinet cleverly hides the family's shoes. **LIVING** (opposite) A vibrant green rug by Tappeti reflects the room's unconventional shape. Blue velvet modular sofa, Jordan. Curtains in Carlucci 'Aurigio' fabric. Armchair, Design Nation.

Fourteen revisions later ("I really got into it and would send her ideas for knocking down walls and changing this and changing that," says Oli), the structural plans were finalised and they moved on to the interior-design phase, again working with Lauren to bring their idea of a colourful, fun home to life. Lauren relished the challenge. "They're a young family and, as doctors, Oli and Chris take their jobs seriously but didn't want their home life to be serious, too. A lot of people are scared to use colour, but Oli and Chris were on board with everything I put on the table. It was a dream job," she explains.

Agreeing on a 'mid-century with modern flair' brief, they also decided on a core colour palette of brilliant blue, yellow, green and orange mixed with Dulux Vivid White. "I've always dabbled with art and graphic design and find it exciting to live with colour, especially if it works across the whole house," says Oli.

The interior colour explosion includes an emerald-green kitchen – positioned where the dining space used to be – and an electric-blue staircase linking the three levels. There is also vivid blue upholstery and feature walls of bold botanical wallpaper throughout, plus more electric-blue cabinetry in the laundry. The new ensuite and ground-floor bathroom are no less colourful, with rich walnut vanities, terrazzo walls and retro cement tiles from designer Sarah Ellison's Beach Club range.

Then there's the home's unusual hexagonal shape, which resulted in some furniture pieces, such as the dining table, having to be custom made. The six-sided shape was also used as a motif in various design features, such as the hexagonal screen adjacent to the kitchen, and hexagonal mouldings on some of the doors and cabinets. Coloured-glass panels in the stairwell add another colourful, retro touch.

Now that the renovation is finished, the couple couldn't be happier with their bright and beautifully designed home. "We love it," says Oli. "It's a retreat from our busy careers and a great place to hang out with the kids, especially the kitchen/dining area where we spend most of our time."

"Isabelle also loves her new bedroom, although Max is just happy he has a *Star Wars* poster on his wall," says Oli, laughing. "Jack spends most of his time in our bed so it's irrelevant to him at the moment, but I'm sure he'll appreciate it when he's older!" ¹⁰

Decoroom: decoroom.com.au. Madeleine Scarfe: madscarfitec.com.au



“Our designer came up with some fantastic ideas for artwork but I wanted it to be more personal so very carefully chose it myself”

OLI FLOWER, HOMEOWNER



LESSONS LEARNT

“Changing plans at the 11th hour was stressful but the results were worth it”

OLI FLOWER, HOMEOWNER

“Just before we started the build, we decided to make a substantial change and swap the kitchen and dining spaces to open up the lovely views and transform our main living area. This required a modification of the DA, which caused a delay and lots of stress. But even though it would have been better to do that before submitting our original DA, we got a much better result because of it.”

ENSUITE Cinque Terre cement tiles from Sarah Ellison's 'Beach Club' collection are teamed with Platinum Terrazzo wall tiles from Teranova. Mint concrete basin, Nood Co. Blind fabric from Catherine Martin's 'La Palma' range. Metropolis tapware, Astra Walker.

MAIN BEDROOM (opposite) Lauren designed the bedhead to reflect the 1960s feel of the house, Cheshire metal lamp, Design Nation. Artwork by Paul Klee.



GREAT FINDS



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Normann Copenhagen 'Form' steel **chair**, \$485, District. Mercer & Reid 'Marais Mustard' **bed throw**, \$119.99, Adairs. Rising Splendour synthetic Sorona **carpet** in Mossy Glade, \$40 per sq m, Carpet Court. Sarah Ellison x Teranova 'Cinque Terre' cement **tile**, \$189 per sq m, Sarah Ellison. Nau 'Bell' spun-aluminium **pendant**, \$840, Cult. Dulux Wash & Wear acrylic **paint** in Billiard Ball and Night Life, both \$91.55 per 4L, Bunnings. Urna glass **vase** in Amber, \$375, Marimekko. Pill surface-mount concrete **basin**, \$790, Nood Co. Ava velvet-look **cushion** in Moss (50cm x 50cm), \$55.95, Weave.

VERANDAH Nothing says 1960s like a macramé piece. Bellevie bench, Design Nation. Side table, Cane-line. Floor tiles, Teranova. Plant hanger, Tait. **BEDROOM** Daughter Isabelle has a custom bed built above a bookcase, which makes great use of the curved wall behind. "There's space for a bean bag or cushions underneath, so she can hang out and read her books there," says Lauren.



ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON

