

72⁺ page Smart Spaces-zine

THE UPSIDE OF DOWNSIZING

AUSTRALIA

Cafe society
*the new
hospitality designers*NEXT LEVEL
CREATIVE
Spaces, places
and faces

RUG HAUL

Our favourite
floor hitsLUXE
COASTINGWATERSIDE WINNERS
from PALMY to PORTSEA

A photograph of a villa's interior hallway. The floor is made of dark, rectangular tiles in a herringbone pattern. A dark wooden door stands closed on the right, while an open doorway on the left leads to a bright outdoor area with a tree. A large, ornate lantern hangs from the ceiling. On the right wall, there is a small table with a vase of flowers and a candle. A large, arched doorway is visible on the far right.

VERY VERONA

The owner of this villa on Sydney's northern beaches has been dreaming of its design since she was growing up in Italy. Now she is revelling in the reality.

Photographs **FELIX FOREST** Words **CHRIS PEARSON** Production + styling **IMOGEN NAYLOR**



In the dappled shade of a crepe myrtle, the air filled with the scent of climbing roses, the owner of this house on Sydney's northern beaches reclines in her cooling courtyard, her mind drifting back to her childhood in Verona. In that evocative setting, she nurtured her romantic notions for the ideal home.

Years later, when she and her husband bought this site, her dreams came true. But not immediately. The location, fixed firmly in the Australian landscape, is on a private battleaxe block on a ridge, and soaks up Pacific Ocean views to one side and peaceful Pittwater to the other. For 20 years, the owner, her husband and their family had used the humble brick bungalow as a weekender. When they retired, the couple decided to build their main residence here. Along with designer Walter Barda, they masterminded this new home in classic Italian style, the living areas centred on a columned courtyard.

"The site, exciting, beautiful and ultra-private, was deserving of a bespoke Italian villa," says the owner. "I knew exactly what I wanted. My family home was the inspiration, with a large central courtyard, a loggia and a colonnade, filled with hydrangeas and pink roses. I wanted to create the perfect atmosphere for entertaining and sunbathing."

This snapshot of 'la dolce vita downunder' is a heady mix of constant cross-breezes, sunlight and wall-to-wall views. On the entry level, behind four-metre antique cedar doors, sit the main living areas – living, dining, library, main bedroom, guest bedroom and kitchen – which enclose a lawned courtyard on three sides. On the fourth side is a colonnaded loggia abutting an all-weather pergola with a glass ceiling that draws the eye into a canopy of eucalyptus and banksias.

Further down the sloping site, the home's lower level consists of a "baronial-style" hallway-cum-art-gallery, sitting rooms and bedrooms, kitchen and laundry, with a separate entrance and, in true Italian style, a bocce area off a conservatory-style sitting room.

