

THE HOME IS AN ENVIABLE MIX OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY PIECES MELDED TOGETHER AS IF THEY



MAIN PICTURE ANGLO-INDIAN CHAIRS - ONE DRAPED WITH A HERMES BLANKET, FLANK AN OLD FRENCH FIREPLACE FROM KALINKA WHICH IS THE FOCAL POINT OF THE LIVING ROOM. THE CONTEMPORARY PAINTING, ALABASTER SKY NUMBER 2, 2000 BY MATTHEW JOHNSON FROM TIM OLSEN GALLERY HANGING ABOVE THE FIREPLACE CONTRASTS WITH AN ANTIQUE CHINESE PAINTING FROM AUSTRALIAN GALLERIES. SISAL MATTING FROM THE NATURAL FLOORCOVERING CENTRE PROVIDES A NEUTRAL CANVAS UPON WHICH TO DISPLAY PIECES SUCH AS THE CHINESE SIDE TABLE, RUSSIAN TELEVISION CHEST AND MOROCCAN STOOL. HAMEL CUSTOM DESIGNED THE SOFAS, UPHOLSTERED IN BRUNSCHWIG & FILS FABRIC.

OPPOSITE PAGE SEA SHELLS COLLECTED IN BALI BY INTERIOR DESIGNER THOMAS HAMEL FOR THIS BEACH RETREAT. **THIS PAGE** A PAIR OF OLD WING CHAIRS IN THE STUDY WERE BOUGHT BY HAMEL ON A SHOPPING TRIP IN CONNECTICUT WITH RENOWNED AMERICAN DESIGNER JOHN SALADINO. THEY SIT WITH A MOROCCAN TEA TABLE, BLACK-STAINED TIMBER DOORS OPEN ONTO A TERRACE PAVED WITH BLACK BALINESE STONE.





as if they were designed in conjunction with each other. Hamel is quick to acknowledge other designers' styles: "You can't live in a bubble. I love to see other people's work too—to see a more modern architectural approach as opposed to classic cornices and architraves."

American-born, Hamel attended design school in New York and London. His international training and penchant for travel has undoubtedly contributed to his broad use of styles. Moroccan, Indian, Russian and Scottish pieces can be found throughout, confirming his confidence to mix anything and everything. "It boils down to the proportion of things and how they meld together," says Hamel of his knack of combining classics with the unexpected. For this home, Hamel wanted to achieve: "Something a bit exotic. The client had existing Anglo-Indian furniture and I just added to the collection."

Views to the coast on one side and back to Hardys Bay on the other were Hamel's primary concern when he addressed the window design. Black window surrounds frame the view and dark-stained timber venetians allow for unobtrusive viewing. Opening up the back of the home helped combat the blustery winds from the ocean frontage.

As with most weekends, the garden requires minimal maintenance. The environment – strong coastal winds, salt and poor soil quality – added further restrictions. Hamel employed Spirit Level Designs to create the new garden scheme. All that remains from the original garden was a large jade plant and the front wall, fortuitously built by the previous owners to create a private enclave. Collections of succulents and palm trees now dominate the site, providing an ideal environ for a beach locale.

Exposed rock cliffs behind the home were integrated into the scheme. Hamel opted for a Murobond custom mix to sensitively tie the home into its surrounds. Step inside and "the mileage of things from everywhere" gives the impression that you could be anywhere in the world. It's the perfect escape. □

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE FACT FILE.

WERE DESIGNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH EACH OTHER.



Flanked by pristine white beaches, New South Wales' Central Coast is popular with Sydneysiders in search of the perfect getaway. Such a vast coastline offers the perfect balance between isolation and cosmopolitanism. There is just enough to do without feeling you have to do anything, and it's not too far (a leisurely one hour on the freeway) away from the city. Just enough time to feel you've escaped.

Sydney designer Thomas Hamel had completed a city abode for a client and was asked to create a second home on the Central Coast. The plan was to divide time between the two properties, so it was essential all the creature comforts of home were provided.

A suburban 1970s beach hacienda was the starting point for Hamel. Built for a brood, the five-bedroom blond brick home was virtually reduced to a shell to make way for a more gracious space. There are now only two bedrooms and two bathrooms of much greater proportions.

"Initially the clients thought the property had good bones, and only a minor renovation would be needed to re-create the desired spaces. However, everyone soon realised the main problem was the low ceiling height," Hamel says of the decision to rebuild the internal walls and ceilings.

"After removing the hip roofs and three side walls, we were only left with one wall from the original structure."

The internal staircase was moved to create more space and the windows on either side were filled in for added privacy. Upstairs, Hamel has completely opened up the living, kitchen and dining areas which all interrelate allowing for long cross views, and ventilation.

Exposed timber beams on the ceiling were added throughout with skylights fitted into the bathroom and living area. Ceilings are an airy three metres high, creating a sense of space and light. Blackbutt floorboards, sourced from an old wharf in Newcastle, have been stained an almost black, complementing the timber on the ceiling. Dark finishes cool the space, which is painted in a fresh neutral tone – Dulux Sea Pearl.

There is nothing predictable about this beach house. Where you might traditionally find blue-and-white-striped deck chairs synonymous with the Mediterranean, here you will find antique iron wing chairs – picked up by Hamel in Connecticut. There are, however, references to the beach: sisal matting on the floorboards and glass jars filled with seashells collected from Bali. The home is an enviable mix of classic and contemporary pieces melded together >

THIS PAGE, FROM LEFT DESIGNER THOMAS HAMEL; AN AFRICAN SHIELD FROM ORIENT HOUSE HANGS ABOVE A COLLECTION OF SHELLS AND STACKING BASKETS FROM BALI.

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OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT ANTIQUE GERMAN CABINET IN THE MASTER BEDROOM; THE ANTIQUE CLAW-FOOT BATH FROM ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE WAS TREATED TO BRING IT BACK TO ITS FORMER GLORY. CUSTOM MADE MIRRORS FROM GOWRIE GALLERIES SIT ABOVE A PAIR OF VANITIES WITH HONED BLACK GRANITE TOPS; ANTIQUE CHAIRS FROM GRAHAM GEDDES - UPHOLSTERED IN EXISTING FABRIC, ARE PAIRED WITH A FRENCH REPRODUCTION DINING TABLE WITH SLATE INSET; **THIS PAGE** EPITOMISING LUXURY IS THIS 1830s SCOTTISH BED, STRIPPED OF ITS DRAPING, TO COMPLETE THE MASTER BEDROOM IS AN ANTIQUE FRENCH COMMODE AND MIRROR.