

SOMEWHERE



BEYOND THE SEA

Helen McKenzie discovers a fresh seaside escape in Sydney's Northern Beaches, the permanent home to a family of four.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK WATT

At first glance, this Northern Sydney Beaches house smacks of seaside holidaying but for a family of four, including two children in their late teens, it is their permanent home. "It's a beach/city home, for a family who are big on surfing and kayaking and it is only a ferry ride from the city," says interior designer **Andrew Waller**. The perfect location presents only one problem for the family - where they should go on holiday?

Built in the late 1970s, the house had a

perplexing layout that included variable ceiling heights and an internal spa located in the centre of the house. The new owners' brief to Waller was simple: "They wanted the house restructured and opened up. The kitchen and bathrooms were to be reworked and the internal spa, that created a weird space, dealt with. They wanted us to propose what we thought, so we did the main build proposal first and as their confidence in us grew, we moved on to furnishings and furniture and eventually the art," says Waller.



Craig Ruddy's Leo packs a graphic punch in the kitchen.

OPPOSITE: When budgets prohibit original artworks, beautifully crafted and curated objects such as ceramics, weaving and basketware can add just as much beauty to a room, says **Jane Stark** of the *Art Edit* design council.



ABOVE: **Craig Ruddy's *Dance of the in between* creates soft interest above the dark grey bedhead. John Oisen's print *Lake Eyre - The Desert Sea IX* is propped on the credenza, paired with beautifully crafted ceramics for a fresh contemporary feel.**



TOP: **A woven artwork from Ghana is paired with washed oak and white wishbone chairs, adding layers of texture and interest.** ABOVE: **A limited edition watercolour from Quercus & Co hangs in the entry foyer, set off by rattan pendant lights.**

After the layout of the house was remedied, whitewashed timber flooring, v joints in the cabinetry and a soft blue, green and white colour scheme became the canvas for the new design. "We could have gone with totally flat polyurethane doors, but at the heart, the house is not like that," says Waller. "Architecturally it is a late 1970s property so there's no period detail. Basically it is a square white space with no quad in the ceiling, the v joint detail in the doors does add softness and a tactile feel. We overlaid textures with the floors, the rustic tiles and the whitewashed oak; we didn't want a sterile architectural space. We needed to add some tactility, so that it feels like a really relaxed space to be in, not over-thought or over-designed."

Art selection for the new-look property was given careful consideration. Artist **Craig Ruddy** is a favourite of Waller's and some of the works chosen are from one of the artist's limited edition print ranges. The works met both the allocated budget and fitted well with Waller's

vision for the house. "Ruddy's original works are getting up there price wise and don't align with every budget. The prints we chose are very delicate and free and not heavy, they add to the lightness to the space. We didn't want anything too serious or moody in this house."

Art and light fittings have been cleverly used to accentuate high ceilings and disguise low ceilings in the house. In the entrance hall, which has a double height ceiling, rattan pendant lights showcase a limited edition watercolour print by Quercus and Co titled *Tapestry in Prussian Blue*. In the sitting room, there is an arrangement of porcelain (and some melamine) plates on the wall behind the sofa. The wall and ceiling are identically painted. According to Waller, "the ceiling runs into the wall and you don't really notice how low the ceiling is there".

As the project evolved, the owners' delight in Waller's work also grew: "We had immense trust in Andrew and were very happy and excited to see what he came up with."

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The natural soft palette of this interior is given depth with the use of organic art, rattan and wooden elements. Hand glazed, hand drawn, hand woven or hand blocked, the art keeps a consistent look and is skilfully situated in each space.

Brett Mickan
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