

THESE PAGES Organza curtains in the living area soften the light reflecting off Sydney Harbour without obstructing the view. A sliding panel in blackheart sassafras veneer divides the space from the apartment's only bedroom. On the polished Bianco Perlino marble tiled floor sits a Knoll Platner coffee table and Dubuffet sofa by Minotti, both from de de ce.

COOL CHANGE

MARBLE, WOOD AND MIRROR CREATE A DRAMATIC BACKDROP FOR A SOPHISTICATED

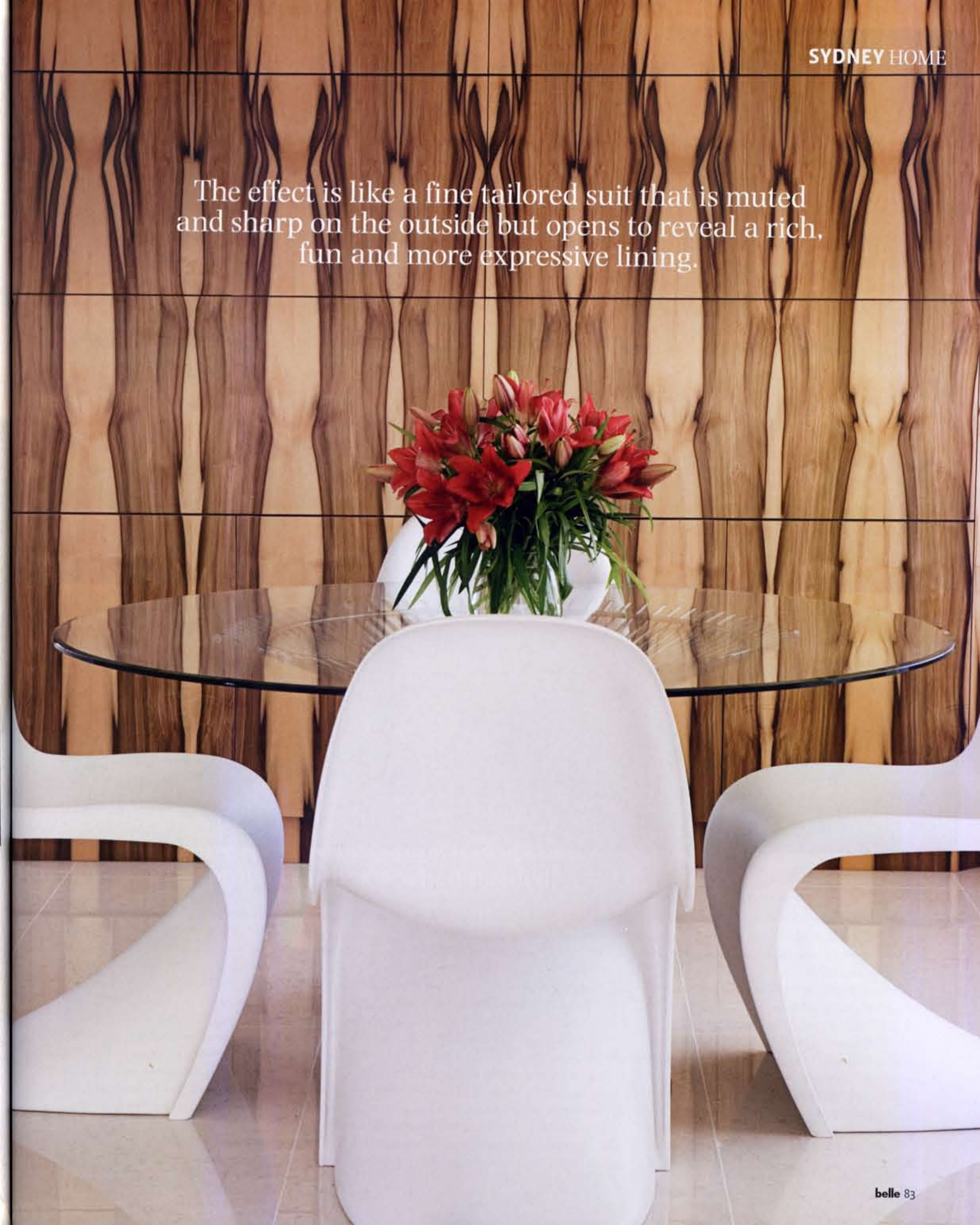
MAKEOVER OF A SYDNEY APARTMENT, COMPLEMENTED BY MESMERISING HARBOUR VIEWS.

PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON KENNY/CONTENT WORDS PENELOPE BARKER

THIS PAGE The kitchen is finished in blackheart sassafrass veneer with a mirrored splashback and marble island bench. Tom Dixon Mirror Ball light fittings from de de ce. OPPOSITE Knoll Platner table with Verner Panton chairs from Space Furniture in the dining area. The panel behind opens to reveal a study area with a desk and storage space. All the joinery was made by Onsite Building Services.



The effect is like a fine tailored suit that is muted and sharp on the outside but opens to reveal a rich, fun and more expressive lining.



After a complete gutting and overhaul by architects Cracknell & Lonergan, this apartment, located on the second level of a 1970s building, now has all the sophistication and sparkle to complement its water's edge position on Sydney Harbour. Luxurious white marble floors and white furnishings are offset by planes of blackheart sassafrass panelling to create a space that is cool, calm and minimal yet dynamic.

The owners, Chris and Yo Derham, are based in Canberra and bought the apartment 12 years ago as a place to stay in Sydney when visiting their sons and grandchildren. The apartment had one bedroom and a study, with a separate kitchen,

bathroom and living room and was decidedly on the tired and outdated side. "Finally I couldn't stand it any longer," says Yo. "It was so grubby I insisted we had to do something!"

The couple had met architect Peter Lonergan when he was charged with refurbishing the foyers of the apartment building. "We've always loved his ideas," they say, "and he really excelled himself with such a tiny space."

Interior architect Diana Ribarevski of Cracknell & Lonergan says, "The clients' brief was for an open living style that housed a bedroom, study, kitchen, bathroom, laundry and living area. They expressed a need for entertaining space and room for a dining table. All existing doors and windows

were to remain untouched together with all exterior elements."

With an interior area of only 70 square metres, the challenge for Peter and Diana was to create a flexible and adaptive environment that challenged conventional living arrangements.

"With a deliberate and precise placement of form within the interior, this project is a clever way of summarising the required functional elements of a liveable space," says Diana.

"Small spaces have to be maximised to contain multiple uses. So the bedroom now unites with the living area, which adjoins the dining area, that contains the study space. These are attached to the kitchen, and in turn attached to the

THIS PAGE The lone antique in an otherwise modern collection is an 1860s Australian red cedar chair. OPPOSITE The bedhead is upholstered in Balthazar fabric by Métaphores from Boyac, which is also used on the dividing panel. The bathroom and robe lead off the bedroom. The basin is from Rogerseller and taps are by Vola from de de ce. Walls are painted in Dulux Pollinate.

SPEED READ Tired 1970s one-bedroom harbourside apartment was in need of a complete overhaul.

- The owners, Chris and Yo Derham, wanted a multi-functional space with a separate dining area and study room.
- Now a sophisticated, open-plan apartment perfect for entertaining friends or relaxing with visiting grandchildren.
- The use of a large sliding panel in blackheart sassafrass is an inspired design choice, separating the main bedroom from the living area, yet allowing the space to be opened up if desired.
- Study area is concealed behind a panel in the dining area and contains a desk and storage space.



Small spaces have to be maximised to contain multiple uses. A sliding panel between the living area and bedroom allows the space to be completely opened up or provides privacy when needed.

bathroom and robe." A sliding panel between the living area and the bedroom allows the space to be completely opened up, and also provides privacy when needed.

Reinventing the spaces also required a complete rethink of the furnishings. "Peter told us to throw all the furniture out," say Chris and Yo, whose Canberra house is filled with fine 18th century antiques. "However, he did let us keep one really nice piece – an 1860s Australian red cedar chair."

Diana has deftly juxtaposed the clean lines of the design with the elaborate timber veneer and fabric selection and the soft appearance of the organza curtains. The three main elements are marble, timber and mirror, with a mirrored

splashback in the kitchen allowing Yo to see the reflected view outside while she is cooking.

"The lines of the space are uncluttered and clean," says Diana, "but there is a tremendous amount of precision and detail." Behind immaculate marble and the sliding panel on suspended stainless steel rails are tactile rebated drawer pulls and edges and rich fabric backings. "The effect is like a fine tailored suit that is muted and sharp on the outside but opens to reveal a rich, fun and more expressive lining."

An important element of the design is not obvious immediately either – the emphasis on sustainable design principles. The large windows offer panoramic views and also allow abundant natural light into the interior. This minimises

energy use and the cost of artificial lighting. In the winter months, sunlight warms the marble floor and significantly reduces the need for heating, while in summer, blinds block the sun and keep the apartment cool without air conditioning.

"Now we just love coming here," says Yo. "We also entertain a lot and it's a real pleasure to have friends over for dinner or drinks on the balcony."

"The place is refreshingly minimal," she adds. "We both come from families who love antiques and are quite traditional in their decorating. I guess we've both been retrained in our thinking!" ■

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