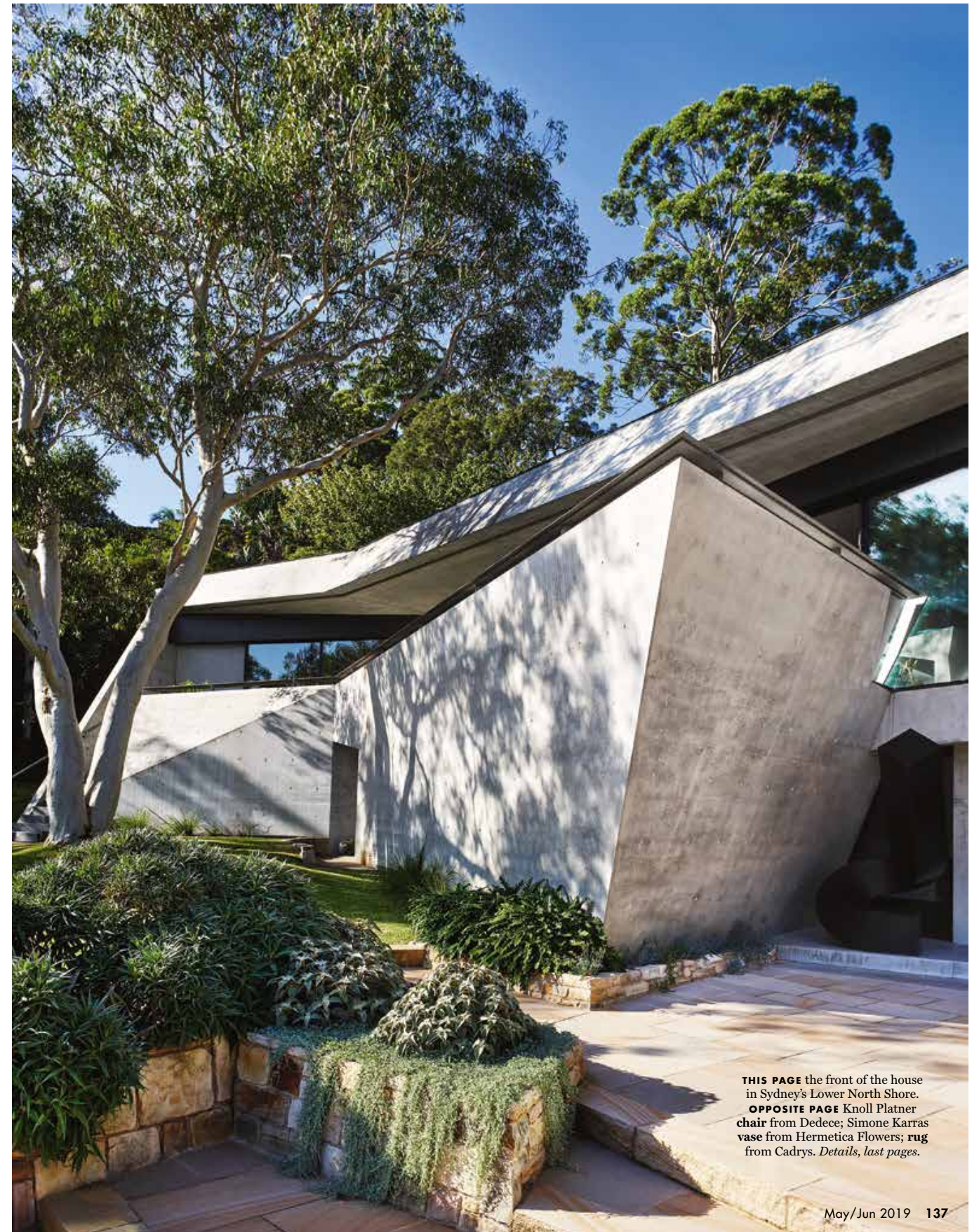


# ROCK SOLID



Inspired by the work of mid-century architect John Lautner, James Bond luxe and the unique forms of Sydney's dramatic sandstone escarpments, this distinctive hillside home radiates raw glamour.

By Verity Magdalino Photographed by Anson Smart Styled by Joseph Gardner



**THIS PAGE** the front of the house in Sydney's Lower North Shore.  
**OPPOSITE PAGE** Knoll Platner chair from Dedeece; Simone Karras vase from Hermetica Flowers; rug from Cadrys. *Details, last pages.*





**H**idden down a discreet driveway on a block overlooking the bushland of Sydney's Lower North Shore is a newly completed family home by Terroir architects — a striking concrete- and zinc-clad residence that counters the ubiquitous bungalow-style homes that seemingly blanket the northern suburbs. “Some people don't like it because they're traditionalists but I like the fact that this house creates a discussion,” says Fiona, a talented chef who owns the home with her husband, Chris. “And it has some impact. We felt very strongly about building something that was not a beige house, that pushed the envelope and wasn't afraid to be bold.”

Architect Chris Rogers of Terroir had a decisive brief for a five-bedroom dwelling “that wasn't a McMansion” for the couple, plus their collective of six daughters — only two of whom, Mimi (24) and Georgina (16), still reside at home. “The family wanted something that would sit into the land,” says Rogers, who came up with a geometric concept that mirrored the sandstone-strewn surroundings and enveloped an existing eucalypt tree. “We wanted to capture the monumentality of the site but then you've also got to live in it, so it has to be intimate.”

Enter interior designer Pascale Gomes-McNabb, who was lured from her commercial hospitality work (including Cumulus Inc, Monopole, Stokehouse, Jackalope and, in another partnership with Terroir, Cirrus) into this, her first major residential project. “Pascale pushed it to the next level,” says Rogers. “She and Fiona really connected.”

Fast-forward the mind-bending intricacies of a five-year build — which pushed trades to the limits of quality and craft — and the initial idea of inserting timber to soften the concrete interior was developed by Rogers and Gomes-McNabb into a series of intimate living spaces that all open to the spectacular view. >>



**THIS PAGE** Chris, Fiona and daughter Georgina in the living area; Knoll Womb chair and ottoman by Eero Saarinen from Dedee; Cassina Refolo low table by Charlotte Perriand from Space Furniture; Commissioned Editions Library Stairs side table from Criteria; small rug from Cadrys; large rug from Loom Rugs; *Scrub Man* (2013) artwork by Polixeni Papapetrou; **OPPOSITE PAGE** at the entrance, *Upstart 1* sculpture by Clement Meadmore.

FIONA AND GEORGINA WEAR RANGLES FROM DINOSAUR DESIGNS, DINOSAURDESIGNS.COM.AU





**THIS PAGE** in the kitchen, Mac, a shitzu poodle; **island bench** in concrete, topped with a mixture of concrete and stainless steel; **upstand and counter** in mild steel; **back counter** in marble; **splashback** in bronze mirror; **joinery** in oak veneer with Black Japan stain.



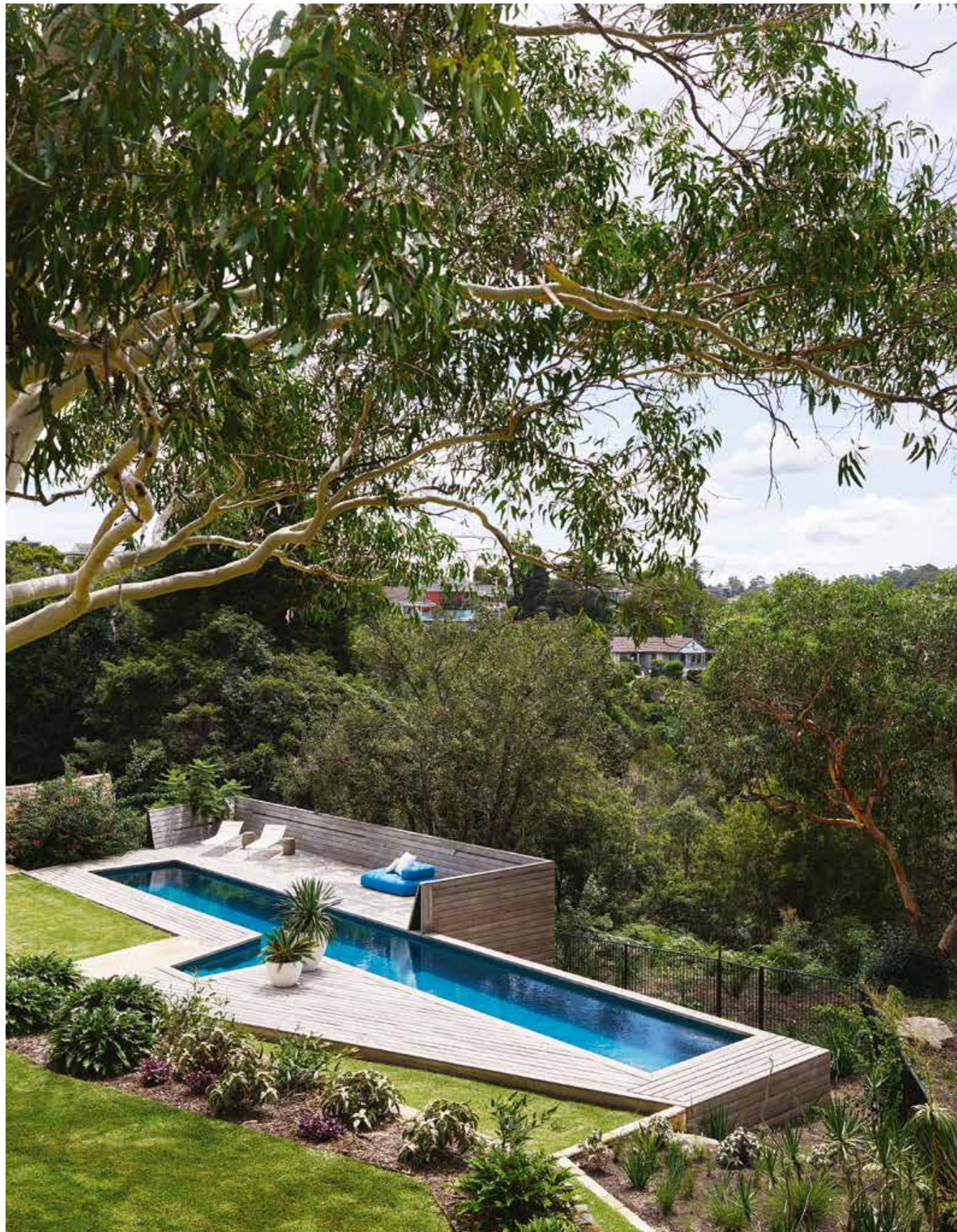
**THIS PAGE** in the living area, Airport sofa by Paola Navone from Poliform; Moroso Bohemian armchair and Fjord ottoman by Patricia Urquiola from Hub; Knoll Tulip side table by Eero Saarinen from Dedee; custom blackened mild steel shelves by Pascale Gomes-McNabb Design; Tolomeo Mega floor lamp from Artemide; Duke cushions from Jordan; Cloud Bell vase (on side table) from Marmoset Found; bowl (on table) by Alana Wilson; Fort Standard standing bowl from In Bed Flagship; (on shelf) Still Life 1 (2018) artwork by Robert Malherbe from Michael Reid; Rushka (2018) sculpture by Carol Crawford.





**LEFT** in the dining area, Lowe Furniture custom **dining table** from Hub; Gubi Beetle **dining chairs** by GamFratesi from Cult; **Flo table** by Patricia Urquiola from Driade; B&B Italia Canasta '13 circular **armchair** by Patricia Urquiola from Space Furniture; Deknudt Edvard **mirror** from Hub; Wooden Drop **vessel** by Joao Manardu from Alm; Cassina Réaction Poétique **centrepiece** by Jaime Hayon from Space Furniture; Infinity **bowl** from Lightly; Lariat **chandelier** from Apparatus; *Gateway artwork* by Marisa Purcell; *Savannah (2015)* panel **artwork** by Patricia Piccinini.







**THIS PAGE** in the guest bedroom, custom blackened mild steel **desk** by Pascale Gomes-McNabb Design and Terroir; Knoll Platner **chair** from Dedee; Glas Italia Kooh-I-Noor Specchi **mirror** by Piero Lissoni from Space Furniture; Society Limonta **quilt**, from Ondene; **rug** from Cadrys; *Woman 6 (2017)* **artwork** by Robert Malherbe from Michael Reid; *Pointy Gold Head (2017)* **sculpture** by Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran from Sullivan + Strumpf.

« “I didn’t want overwhelming proportions in the rooms,” says Fiona. “If you think about how people live, you don’t live in rooms of a large size. And although the house is quite bulky externally, it feels intimate inside... Pascale took us in a direction where I wouldn’t have had the balls to go myself.”

Gomes-McNabb defers all inspiration to the generous spirit of her clients. “We just spoke about what Fiona and Chris wanted,” she says. “They’re very accepting and giving people — of their time and themselves. They like embracing new concepts, and are willing to push boundaries. They’re interested in quality, craftsmanship and design in all its aspects. Architecturally it was a long journey with this house. In the design there are so many beautiful details and they wanted this quirkiness reflected in the interiors and also imperatively for it to be an inviting and comfortable, livable family home.”

Cue reworking the kitchen into a smaller, more crafted yet still handsome space; expanding the dining room to embrace Fiona’s love of entertaining; and adding linen to the bedroom walls to soften the timber and concrete surfaces. The bathrooms, too, swerve from the functional elements of the original idea. “And Chris loves them,” says Gomes-McNabb. “Especially the ensuite with the marble and mirrors on the ceiling... and downstairs, the guestroom is just so sexy. For the guest bathroom we used black mosaic disco tiles and custom-designed brass fittings. The family calls it the James Bond room.”

For Fiona however it’s the kitchen that brings the most joy. “It’s the heart and soul of the house,” she says of the galley space with its custom-built concrete island that acts as the bow from where she can survey the majority of the home. “You can become so productive here — and incredibly creative.” The display of contemporary art sparks a similar feeling of delight. “I’m into design, furniture and fashion and I believe in not being over the top, or a mindless consumer,” she says.

From the Ziggy Stardust-esque sculptural forms and mirrors — crafted to reflect and connect the viewer to the bushland — that make up the internal spaces, to the Kubrickian vision-of-the-future exterior, the property exudes pure escapism. It’s a mood that’s enhanced by the home’s dramatic positioning, which flows with the topography of the landscape. “It even has its own microclimate,” says Chris. “You can have a strong southerly blowing and because we’re tucked down behind the hill, it feels perfectly still.” Fiona adds, “The house breathes and it’s peaceful. I’ve gone for periods of not leaving the property for up to four days and been perfectly content.” Rogers explains why. “It can feel resort-like,” he says. “It’s this classic thing in Sydney — if you have the right location and the right space, you can completely escape.” **VL**

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**THIS PAGE** in the guest bathroom, handmade glass mosaic **tiles** from Byzantine Design; **vanity bench** in Nero Tempesta honed limestone from CDK Stone; mirror **cabinet** by Pascale Gomes-McNabb Design; brass-finished **tap** from Vola. *Details, last pages.*