

FOOTLOOSE fiesta

An Australian idyll gets colorful
with bold art and Mexico-inspired vibrance

BY STEPHANIE HUNT PHOTOGRAPHS BY PRUE RUSCOE



The sunroom cools things off with rose marble pavers and classic wicker sofas featuring cushions by Lucy Montgomery. Hand-painted swirls on French-washed ceiling beams provide artistic flair, as does a floor lamp by Kettal for Mobilia.

Earthy reds enliven the living and dining rooms, with painted checkerboard details by Creative Finishes and sombrero-inspired woven pendants from The Together Project. A custom kitchen island by Med Marble is designer Yasmine Ghoniem's ode to a tequila sunrise.



Blue water and breathtaking shorelines are as much a Sydney signature as its iconic Opera House, but along the metropolitan hub's northernmost coastal stretch, Palm Beach has an allure all its own. "Think the Hamptons of Sydney, but more relaxed," says Yasmine Ghoniem, founder of YSG Studio, the Sydney-based interior design, architecture, and curation studio behind this fiesta-infused retreat for two Sydney professionals and their four young children.

The family loved the chill vibe of Palm Beach and the home's breezy beachfront location overlooking a serene inlet and dramatic ocean headlands, but its two-decades-old floor plan and clichéd seaside decor needed a refresh. Given YSG's multicultural team and Ghoniem's own Egyptian-Australian heritage, it's no surprise that borders get crossed and boundaries unbounded in a renovation bowing to the home's earthy surroundings.

"I knew I'd be blown away by the water views, but the dense jungle greenery is equally phenomenal," says Ghoniem, who infused her own vine-wild whimsy into the project—artwork borders grow out onto the walls; vivid color blooms at will. In lieu of traditional nautical blues and bright whites, she ushered in saturated ochres and terra-cotta reds, checkerboard patterns and stoneware art pieces—a playful Mexico meets Côte d'Azur mash-up geared for comfort and ease.

Central to the renovation, new windows, doors, and re-envisioned room openings are equally about bringing the outdoors in and the indoors out. Ghoniem continued the tumbled-marble checkerboard pool decking into the sunroom and reworked the kitchen and dining room

A display of Seletti Hybrid dinner plates in a sunny living room corner echoes the home's vivacious spirit. Varying textures and shapes, like a stone coffee table by DenHolm and vintage kimono pillows, happily coexist.



“Fortunately these clients have a playful personality. You walk in and feel transported to a different place” —designer Yasmine Ghoniem



Ghoniem maximized the home's outdoor living spaces, where expansive views overlook Pittwater inlet, with multiple seating areas. The armchairs are by Adam Goodrum; the side tables are by Kartell.



Both the primary suite and kids' bunkroom enjoy access to the balcony overlooking the pool, with sunbed upholstery by Rematerialised. Cheeky black-and-white awnings frame the vistas. In the primary bedroom (left), the headboard and sofa fabrics are by Think Positive Prints; the wooden coffee table is by Livio Lucca Tobler.

flow for easy entertaining. “The family wanted to tap into a dreamy resort vibe—a feeling of summer all year round,” she says.

The home's cheerful palette and light-hearted tone emanate from the centerpiece living room artwork from artist collective Studio of the Sun. The painting provided Ghoniem with a jumping-off point: Its palm tree motifs are repeated on one of the primary bedroom suite doors and on the kids' bunkroom wall; sombrero-inspired dining room pendants echo its hats-off cheekiness; the step-up to the dining level repeats its folksy red and white checks (and double as a clever tripping caution). It all suggests a cohesive sense of story, with elements from the artwork coming to life throughout the home and its residents and guests becoming central characters. The narrative unfolds in a zesty, let's-have-fun spirit, thanks to the sun-splashed stage that Ghoniem has set—black-and-white awnings frame the action; saucy touches, like the ombré hues of the marble kitchen island, are “a hint of freshly poured tequila sunrise,” she says.

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Happy to trade tradition for spunk, Ghoniem opted for red striped lamp shades in lieu of nautical blue, and mixed zebra prints with botanicals for the YSG-designed custom headboard. Whether it's office hours at the bedroom's custom desk or game time on the deck, breezy views abound.



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—Yasmine Ghoniem



Because even fun retreats occasionally include a little work, Ghoniem turned one of the two guest rooms into a second primary suite, creating double suites with sweeping second-floor views, both with integrated workspaces, thanks to custom marble-and-wood desks by Med Marble. The kids’ bunkroom embraces a touch of youthful rodeo rowdiness in the form of hand-painted walls and cowboy motifs. In the primary and guest rooms, headboards are upholstered in fabrics by Australian textile powerhouse Think Positive, showing off decidedly non-nautical zebra stripes and Grecian urn prints that up the “unexpected” ante.

From coffee tables and chairs in jazzy shapes to earthen reds spritzed with splashes of citrus to clusters of clay vases and sculptural ceramics, this Palm Beach abode is full of personality, “as all homes should be,” says Ghoniem. “Fortunately these clients have a playful personality.” They welcomed a beach home that doesn’t scream “beach” as much as it invites adventure. “You walk into this pad,” Ghoniem adds, “and feel transported to another place.”

